



Birds as Pollinators

In North America hummingbirds, family Trochilidae, are the primary bird species to provide pollination. The migratory Ruby Throated Hummingbird spent their winters in Mexico and are the only breeding species in New England. While hummingbirds are the only bird species providing pollination in this region, you will see many other birds around flowering plants. Birds forage on the associated insects and fruits, and even aid in seed dispersal.

Hummingbirds require an abundance of nectar in order to support their high energy systems and are drawn to plants that provide an ample amount of nectar from one source. Hummingbirds consume up to twice their weight in nectar daily!

Hummingbirds have evolved to have long straw-like beaks able to reach nectar hidden deep within flowers. This trait gives them preference to tubular flowers that they can thrust their long beak into to reach the nectar at the base, and in doing so, they coat their feathers in pollen which is then transferred to the next flower. One advantage hummingbirds have over other types of pollinators is that they are capable of hovering above a flower. This hovering technique allows them to frequent flowers without strong stems or landing pads.

Bird Flower Characteristics:

Ample nectar, large tubular shape, strong perch support, bright colors scarlet, red, orange or white

Plants Frequented in This Garden:

Cardinal flower, Bee Balm, Blazing Star, Summersweet, and Red Columbine



nature.mdc.mo.gov

