Hummingbirds naturally eat small, soft bodied insects such as aphids, gnats, fruit flies, and spiders as well as sip flower nectar which is mostly sucrose.

Feeder food is not as nutritious, but it gives hummingbirds energy to hunt for natural foods. Feeders are a great source of our enjoyment to watch these tiny creatures, but they can be lethal to the Hummers without constant care.

The danger lurking in feeders is fungi. If a hummingbird sips sugar water from a moldy feeder, they can develop a fungus infection that swells their tongue making it impossible to feed, leading to a slow painful death.

If mold, “slimy stuff” or cloudiness appears in the feeder, remove it to clean thoroughly and change the solution. Feeders should be scrubbed with hot water and a soap-free bottle brush or sponge. Soap leaves a residue, that if you must use it, rinse all parts well; followed by a bleach or vinegar solution rinse. Make especially sure that all feeding orifices and plastic parts are cleaned as well.

The Audubon Society suggests that the feeder and the solution should be so clean that it is fit for human consumption. Hanging the feeder in the shade will help keep the food fresh.

The Audubon Society recommends this schedule for cleaning and changing sugar water:

- Below 69 degrees: Every 3 days
- Warm weather (60—80 degrees): Every 2 days
- Hot weather (above 80 degrees): Every day

Making Food:
- Bring 4 parts of water to boil
- Add 1 part granulated white sugar.
Allow to boil for one minute to fully dissolve the sugar. Bring mixture to room temperature before filling feeder.

Avoid food coloring, honey (which is fatal to Hummers) and artificial sweeteners.

See seaandsageaudubon.org for more info.

Preparing for the Hummers

Natural Food Sources
Flowers, Shrubs, Vines and Trees That Will Attract Hummingbirds

Flowers
- Bee Balm *Monarda*
- All types of Salvies—Sages
- Lantana *Lantana camara*
- Columbine *Aguilegia* spp.
- Four O’clocks *Mirabilis*
- Impatiens *Impatiens* spp.
- Coral-Bells *Heuchera sanguinea*
- Hollyhocks *Althea* spp.
- Penstemen *Penstemon* spp.
- Petunia *Petunia* spp.
- Flowering Tobacco *Nicotania alata*

Shrubs
- Flame Acanthus *Anisacanthus quadrifidus* var. *wrightii*
- Butterfly Bush *Buddleia davidii*
- Flowering Quince *Chaenomeles japonica*
- Honeysuckle *Lonicera* spp.
- Autumn Sages *Salvia greggii*

Trees
- Flowering Crab *Malus* spp.
- Locust *Robinia*

Vines
- Honeysuckle *Lonicera heckrottii*
- Morning Glory *Ipomea* ssp.
- Trumpet Creeper *Campsis radicans*
- Trumpet Honeysuckle *Lonicera sempervirens*

Revised for our area from:
http://www.birdwatchers.com/debtips.html
~sm