



How to Maintain Your Hummingbird Feeders

Keeping your hummingbirds happy and healthy starts with a feeder and some good, safe habits. Maintaining a hummingbird feeder is easy if you follow these simple steps!

1 Select the Optimal Feeder and Location

For optimal hummingbird feeding, it's important to use a dripless feeder with small feeding ports, optionally with a perch and ant moat. The ideal feeder has minimal parts and crevices and is easy to disassemble and clean. When hanging the feeder, make sure it is positioned at least four feet off the ground, near flowering vegetation where hummingbirds can rest safely, but not too close to make them vulnerable to predators.

2 Drain and Disassemble the Parts

To clean the feeder, begin by disposing the old nectar, either in the sink or outside, away from the house, to avoid attracting insects or pests. Then, disassemble all the parts and rinse the feeder thoroughly with clean, hot water. Make sure to clean both the inside and the outside of each part and portal to remove any clogging and debris. Check for any signs of sugar build-up. Use a weak vinegar solution to soak the feeder to eliminate any mold or fungus present.

3 Thoroughly Clean and Scrub

It is crucial that every part, nook, and cranny of the feeder is cleaned and scrubbed meticulously eliminate any traces of mold, fungus, or bacteria. This means scrubbing both the inside and outside of the feeder with a mild dish soap solution, using a bottle brush to clean all the hard-to-reach corners inside the feeder, and a small bristle brush to clean the inside hole and the outside of the feeder ports. It is essential to be thorough; even if the feeder *looks* clean, tiny mold particles can hide in the crevices.

4 Rinse, Dry, and Reassemble the Parts

Once you have finished scrubbing, make sure to rinse each part of the feeder thoroughly, both inside and out, for at least 10 seconds, until there is no scent and soap residue left. After rinsing, place the feeder parts on the dish rack, dish towel, or paper towel to dry. It is important to avoid reusing the same cloth for your own dishes to prevent contamination from mold or feces. After drying, reassemble the feeder and inspect for sharp edges or damage that could harm your hummingbirds.

5 Make the Nectar

To prepare your nectar, use a ratio of 1:4, which is one part plain white sugar and 4 parts clean, filtered, warm water. While tap water is generally suitable, it is best to use distilled or pre-boiled water. Never use honey or any other type of sugar, including organic; their compounds can be harmful to hummingbirds. Always make fresh nectar as it spoils rapidly. Any access can be refrigerated for up to seven days. Now that you've prepared your nectar, you're ready to hang your feeder.

6 Frequently Change and Clean

It cannot be stressed enough that nectar spoils rapidly, and the microorganisms that develop in it and on the feeder can put the lives of our hummingbirds at risk. It's always better to err on the side of caution and replace the nectar more frequently during hotter days. According to the experts it is recommended to adhere to this cleaning and nectar replacement schedule: 70–84 F ~ at least every 3 days, 85–87 F ~ at least every 2 days, 88 F and above ~ every day.

Practice Hummingbird Safety

Hummingbirds are small and delicate creatures, making them more vulnerable to risks posed by toxins and chemicals. It's best to steer clear of any non-sugar sweeteners, honey, and nectars containing red dye. Additionally, avoid using household cleaners, detergents, bleach, Vaseline, insect repellants, pesticides, or any harsh chemicals near them, their feeders, or their environment. Remove any netting, fake spiderwebs, or other items that could ensnare them from their habitat.

Our Sources: [Cornell Lab of Ornithology](#)
[National Audubon Society](#)
[The Spruce](#)

[Why You Should Make Your Own Hummingbird Food](#)
[Attracting Hummingbirds to Your Yard](#)
[How to Make a Hummingbird Garden](#)

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