

Songbirds of Missouri

Hummingbird



Vocabulary

Match the word with the definition, then write a sentence using each word. Share your sentences with the class.

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| _____ Extract | A. Quantity that makes up a whole when added to another part |
| _____ Canopies | B. To hang in the air, or suspended in flight |
| _____ Migrate | C. To transfer pollen from one flower to another |
| _____ Precede | D. To pull out by force |
| _____ Fledge | E. Sweet fluid in flowers that attracts insects |
| _____ Hovering | F. To move from one region to another |
| _____ Nectar | G. To go before or ahead of someone or something else |
| _____ Native | H. An overhanging protection or shelter |
| _____ Pollinating | I. To acquire the feathers necessary to fly |
| _____ Deplete | J. To empty |
| _____ Complement | K. Someone or something original to a particular region |

(Missouri Show-Me Standards: CA.1; CA.6; Goal 2.1)

Short Answer Q&A

1. What two special abilities do hummingbirds have that other birds don't?
2. What important function do hummingbirds fulfill in the natural world?
3. Hummingbirds migrate to Missouri in the spring from what country?
4. Where do ruby-throats commonly nest?
5. Hummingbirds are very small birds. How big are their nests? How many eggs do they lay?
6. What do hummingbirds drink from backyard feeders?

(Missouri Show-Me Standard: Goal 1.5)

Classroom Activity

 Grade levels: 4-8

Objectives: After completing this activity, students will be able to:

- Build their own hummingbird feeder
- Describe what types of feeders work best for hummingbirds
- Describe what is the best type of solution to put in hummingbird feeders
- Describe where Missouri hummingbirds migrate to each winter
- Explain why late summer and fall is an important time to feed hummingbirds

Materials:

- Baby food jars or other small glass jar with a screw-on cap. You will need enough jars so each three-person team in the class will have its own.
- Hammer and a 10-penny nail or electric drill with 1/8-inch bit
- Enough pieces of bright red felt so each team can cut a flower shape for its feeder
- Enough brushes (or paint pens) so each team has one
- Red felt, scissors, heavy string, pen or pencil, notebook

Background:

Providing abundant amounts of food to hummingbirds in autumn is important to the birds because they need to store energy for their long migration south. This activity will show students how simple it is to attract a large number of hummingbirds and how much they eat.

Procedure:

- 1) Clean and dry the jar and lid. In the lid, make an 1/8-inch hole with hammer and nail or drill. Flatten the sharp points around the hole by hammering them down from the other side. (You may want to have the school

shop class or shop teacher prepare the lids in advance.)

- 2) Trace flower patterns on pieces of red felt, leaving a center hole the size of the mouth of your jar. To duplicate the exact size hole of the mouth of the jar, turn your jar upside down on the felt, place it in the center of your flower, trace around the jar mouth, then cut the piece out to leave the center hole. Next, slip the felt flower around the jar's mouth, fill the jar with feeding solution, and replace the lid. (Feeding solution should be mixed with one part sugar, four parts water.)
- 3) Tie the string tightly around the jar's neck. Number your feeders and assign each team to a numbered feeder. Hang the feeders from low-hanging branches of a tree outside the classroom. Or, a makeshift feeder-holder can be set up as long as observation is easy.
- 4) Begin feeding as early in September as possible. Set up a schedule to observe feeders every other day and have team members rotate duties. One should keep the feeder filled and measure how much solution is being used, one should count the hummingbirds at their team's feeder and one should clean the feeders every other day.
- 5) Continue the activity through October. In November, discuss the number of hummingbirds seen at the feeders. Discuss the amount of solution used at each feeder. If your feeders were in a good location where hummers could feed relatively undisturbed, you may be surprised by the amount of solution used. Locate Missouri and Central America on a map and discuss the energy the birds need to migrate from one spot to the other.

(Missouri Show-Me Standards: S.3, S.4, Goals 1.2 and 1.3)