



# Top 20 Perennials for Hummingbirds

This is a list of some of the best perennials that are favorites of hummingbirds. It is not a current inventory list, but a good starting reference for those who wish to support these important native pollinators.

## **Acanthus, Flame**

*Anisacanthus wrightii* - Deciduous. Native. For full sun and hot, dry locations. Grows 3' x 3' or larger, becoming a woody subshrub over time. Flaming red-orange, tubular blossoms are a favorite of many pollinators, including hummingbirds.

## **Agastache, Hummingbird Mint**

*Agastache* spp. (Popular varieties include 'Tutti Frutti', 'Apricot Sunrise' and 'Golden Jubilee') – Deciduous. Thrives best in full sun and provides fragrant, minty foliage and plumes of flowers in colors from white, red, orange, and purple. Grows easily from seed to 18"-30" by same and may re-seed itself freely in the garden.

## **Beardtongue, Penstemon**

*Penstemon* spp. - Deciduous. Many native species are available, as well as many hybrids including 'Garnet' and 'Husker's Red'. Most grow to be between 18" and 36" in bloom, and send up graceful stems with tubular flowers that vary from pale pink to deep red and violet. Most are happiest in full sun areas.

## **Bee Balm**

*Monarda* spp. – (Popular varieties include native species *M. citriodora* and *M. punctata* as well as hybrids 'Jacob Cline'). Varying in color and form across native species & hybrids. Clusters of tubular blossoms are a favorite among pollinators; and native species are easily started from seed in mid to late summer. Typically 18"-36" inches in height and thrive in full sun.

## **Columbine**

*Aquilegia* spp. (many hybrids and varieties)- Deciduous perennial. Native varieties red (*A. canadensis*) and golden (*A. hinckleyana*) are easily grown from seed and can freely re-seed themselves once established. Appreciate dappled light and are best in areas with morning sun but afternoon shade. Typically grows 18"-24" tall.

## **Crossvine**

*Bignonia capreolata*- Evergreen perennial. Tough Texas native, producing large masses of tubular, tangerine flowers in mid-spring. A woody vine for sunny areas that unusually keeps its leaves in winter and flowers well, even in part shade. Mature plants will continue to flower on and off through summer.

## **Cypress, Standing**

*Ipomopsis rubra*- Technically a deciduous biennial, this Texas native also readily re-seeds itself. Tall, airy wand-like stems reaching 3'-4' in height with delicate foliage produce spikes of brilliant red, tubular flowers that are irresistible to hummingbirds. Best in areas with full sun and space to spread over time.

## **Desert Willow**

*Chilopsis linearis*- Deciduous tree. Fast growing native with willow-like leaves and a very drought tolerant nature. Multiple cultivars of varying colors, all with large, orchid-like blooms summer to fall that are very attractive to hummingbirds and bumblebees. All average 15 x 15' at maturity in areas of full sun in good drainage.

## **Firebush**

*Hamelia patens*- Deciduous perennial to tropical. A long-blooming favorite for hot weather, firebush's red, tubular flowers are a hummingbird magnet in the heat of summer. Plants are 2-3' rounded shrubs in full sun and well-drained soil.

## **Firecracker Plant**

*Russelia equisetiformis*- Semi-Evergreen. Airy, arching branches smothered in brilliant red-orange, tubular blossoms make this an appealing shrubby perennial for gardens with plenty of space. Can reach 4' x 4' and thrives best in full sun with consistent moisture. Once established, it is tolerant of some drought conditions.

## **Hesperaloe**

*Hesperaloe parviflora* (several hybrids and varieties)- Evergreen. Often called red yucca, this native thrives best in full, hot sun and is tolerant of drought and poor soils. Tough, grassy foliage to 2'-3' in height with taller bloom spikes reaching up to 5' in height depending on variety. Blooms in colors from pale yellow to dark red. 'Brakelights' is a popular, more compact variety.

## **Honeysuckle**

*Lonicera* spp.- Evergreen or semi-evergreen. Multiple species and cultivars, several of which are native to Texas. Forming woody vines that will sprawl over neighboring shrubs or fences, their fragrant, tubular flowers are a favorite nectar source for many pollinators. Coral honeysuckle, *Lonicera sempervirens*, is a native species with tubular red blossoms tipped in yellow.

## **Lantana**

*Lantana* spp. - Annual and perennial species, with several native. All lantana produce quarter-size groups of multi-colored flowers in large masses from late spring through summer and into fall, with some producing black fruit. Lower varieties start at 10-12", and shrubbier types grow up to 4-5'. A huge favorite for pollinators such as butterflies and hummingbirds, give them full to part sun and good drainage in containers or beds. Lantanas become quite drought tolerant when established.

## **Mexican Oregano**

*Poliomntha longiflora*- Deciduous, tender perennial. Fragrant foliage on a semi-woody, sprawling subshrub that is covered with tubular, lavender flowers in early summer. Grows best in full sun and can reach 3'-4' in height and width.

## **Mexican Petunia**

*Ruellia* spp. - Deciduous. Another Texas native plant with a variety of hybrids and species, all attractive to hummingbirds and blooming in either pink, lavender, or blue. Upright forms can grow to 3' in height and spread aggressively through re-seeding and rhizomes, while dwarf hybrids such as 'Katie's' are more clumping and compact.

## **Pentas**

*Pentas* spp.- Annual. These dramatic bedding plants produce groups of pink, lavender, white, or red flowers in exploding stars that are highly attractive to hummingbirds and butterflies from late spring and into fall. Best in full to part sun and moist soils, the mounding plants are perfect for massing in color bed and featuring in containers.

## **Phlox, Summer**

*Phlox paniculata*- Deciduous, with several hybrids available including 'John Fanick', 'Robert Poore', and 'David'. Popular garden flower for height and interest; forms clumps of bushy foliage and sends up tall stems with clusters of fragrant, tubular flowers in shades from pink, violet, white and orange. Best in full sun areas. Can reach 3'-4' x 2-3' wide.

## **Salvia**

*Salvia* spp. (many species, cultivars and hybrids available, both perennial and annual)- Deciduous or semi evergreen, depending on variety. Some native varieties such as *S. lyrata* or 'Lyreleaf Sage' are suitable for shady spots, while familiar native favorites such as Autumn Sage (*S. greggii*) or Mexican bush Sage (*S. leucantha*) are best in full sun. Many forms, sizes, colors and growth habits are available, but all produce tubular flowers that are a hummingbird favorite.

## **Torch Lily, Red Hot Poker**

*Kniphofia uvaria*-Semi-evergreen. Tough, xeric perennial that forms attractive clumps of grassy foliage and sends up striking bloom spikes packed with red/orange and yellow tubular blossoms in spring and early summer. Ideal for full sun areas and tolerant of drought once established. Grows to 2'-3' tall with similar width.

## **Turk's Cap**

*Malvaviscus arboreus* - Deciduous. Another Texas native plant that will tolerate more shade than many hummingbird plants. Can spread aggressively when well established. Either white, pink or (most common) bright red flowers that resemble small, whorled hibiscus blooms. Typically 3-6' with an open, slightly branching form.

Speak with a Garden Advisor for questions and availability.

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