

2 SPECIES YOU'LL SEE

Ruby-throated Hummingbird

The only hummingbird that breeds in Massachusetts, and the only one you'll see May through September.

BREEDER

Rufous Hummingbird

The most frequent vagrant — about 50 records. A cold-season bird here, not a spring one.

RARE VISITOR

Six species are on the official state list. The other five — Rufous, Black-chinned, Allen's, Calliope and one Broad-billed — have roughly 75 records between them in the state's entire history.

MIGRATION WINDOW

REGION	HUMMINGBIRDS PRESENT	HANG FEEDERS BY
Most of Massachusetts	Late April – late September	Last week of April
Berkshires & higher ground	Early May – mid-September	Last week of April

One window covers the state. From the Berkshires to Nantucket is under 190 miles, and the arrival spread is days rather than weeks. Busiest stretch: **the last week of August**.

FEEDER CARE BASICS

Nectar ratio	4 parts water : 1 part sugar
Red dye, honey, raw sugar	Never — dye is useless, honey harmful
Change nectar (above 90°F)	Every 1–2 days
Change nectar (70–90°F)	Every 2–4 days
Change nectar (below 70°F)	Every 5–6 days
Pest control	No insecticide — use HummGuard™ tips

TOP NATIVE PLANTS

MAY — FIRST ARRIVALS

Eastern Red Columbine

MIDSUMMER

Wild Bergamot

Joe-Pye Weed

LATE SUMMER — PEAK

Cardinal Flower

Jewelweed

Two things to know. The red bee balm sold everywhere (*Monarda didyma*) is a garden escape here — wild bergamot is the native one. And skip purple loosestrife and the bush honeysuckles: all are on the Massachusetts Prohibited Plant List.

PERFECT LITTLE SANCTUARY® — IN MASSACHUSETTS

- ✓ White Yarrow— *Massachusetts native*
- ✓ Black-Eyed Susan— *Massachusetts native*
- ✓ Sundial Lupine— *native, and host to the Karner blue*

Best planting window: **October–November**, sown around the first frost. Massachusetts winters give 9 of the blend's 12 varieties exactly the cold, moist stratification they need. Purple Coneflower and Lance-Leaved Coreopsis perform well here but arrived from elsewhere.

THE NOVEMBER SURPRISE

Massachusetts' own hummingbirds are gone by early October. But **Cape Cod and the Islands** produce a wildly disproportionate share of the state's rarest hummingbird records — and nearly all of them turn up in **late fall and early winter**.

Rufous, Black-chinned, Allen's and Calliope have all been found at New England feeders in November and December. Several have overwintered. If something turns up after the season should be over, photograph it and report it.