

Nectar Recipe

1. Mix 4 parts water to 1 part table sugar in a pan. For example, use 1 cup sugar to 4 cups water. Make sure to use cane sugar only. If it doesn't say cane on the label it is probably beet sugar. We know of nothing harmful about using beet sugar, but a lot of anecdotal evidence suggests that the birds strongly prefer cane sugar. Do not use honey, Jell-O, raw sugar, corn syrup, turbinado, molasses or brown sugar. Especially do not use artificial sweeteners. Putting hummingbirds on a diet will kill them. They burn massive amounts of energy for their size and need real sugar. Do not use red food coloring. It is unnecessary and can harm the little hummers even in low concentrations because they eat so much nectar. If your feeder isn't red, tie a red ribbon on it. Do not add anything else that you might think of, just sugar and water, that's all.
2. Bring to a boil then remove from the heat. Stir it while it is heating until all of the sugar is dissolved. Don't boil it for long because that will change the ratio as water is boiled off. The reason for boiling is not to make syrup, but to drive out the chlorine in the water and to kill mold and yeast spores that might be in the sugar. This will help make the nectar last longer both in the feeder and in your refrigerator.
3. Cover and allow to cool before using or pouring into a storage bottle. We recommend making a large batch of nectar and storing it in the refrigerator in a 1 gallon juice bottle (washed thoroughly first). This makes refilling the feeder so easy that you won't mind doing it every few days.
4. Be sure to thoroughly wash the feeder by hand with soapy water and rinse thoroughly, **at least one a week.**



Bahama Woodstar (photo by K. Salveson)