

Lamorinda

OUR HOMES

Lamorinda Weekly Volume 16 Issue 10 Wednesday, July 6, 2022



Handyman discusses gas mains ... read on Page D4

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Humming along



You might get up close and personal when you add a Rose of Sharon hibiscus to your hair.

By Cynthia Brian

“Like the hummingbird sipping nectar from every flower, I fly joyfully through my days, seeing beauty in everything.”— Amethyst Wyldfyre

After tucking a hibiscus plucked from my mother’s garden behind my ear, I was immediately the object of desire for a hungry hummer. The iridescent red crown identified the hovering nectar hunter as a male Anna’s hummingbird. The females and young have green crowns. What a photo op, but alas, no camera or iPhone in sight.

Of the known 331 species of hummingbirds, 27 types are found in the United States, and 14 reside in California. Hummers only live in North and South America. When most people think of pollinators, bees, butterflies, bats, beetles, birds, and moths may come to mind. Yet, hummingbirds are some of the greatest pollinators as they can



Bee balm is a favorite for hummers.

Photos Cynthia Brian

visit one to three thousand flowers in a single day. As they whiz from flower to flower, pollen from the stamen sticks to their long bills and forehead as they feed. They prefer plants with tubular-shaped flowers and many plants have evolved (some with the help of human intervention) to be more attractive to hummingbirds with brighter colors, higher nectar counts, and daylight blooms. Because they have long, slim bills, hummingbirds can feed deep into chambers and cannulas that bees or other pollinators cannot reach. They also eat tiny insects and spiders that are detrimental to flower beds and vegetable gardens.

Native and navitar plants that are red, blue, orange, yellow, blue and purple are favorites. What is the difference between native and navitar plants?

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