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Rubythroats are now being sighted throughout most of their breeding range in the United States. (See the hummingbird migration map at <http://www.hummingbirds.net/map.html> [1].) So if you haven't already put up your hummingbird feeder, this is certainly the time to do it.

Most of you probably already know this, but just in case -- the formula for hummingbird food is 1 part white table sugar to 4 parts clean water. Please don't try to "improve" this formula, as this might put the birds at risk.

We used to tell people to boil the water (then let it cool, of course) before using it. However, the birds themselves can contaminate the water as soon as they put their beaks in it. It's far better and easier to just change the water frequently.

The water should be changed any time it looks cloudy or if you see signs of mold. This can happen very quickly in hot weather. Just to be on the safe side, I like to change the water routinely every few days, daily when temperatures are over 80 degrees F. When you change the water, rinse the feeder under the hot water tap and give it a thorough brushing, being especially careful to clean out spaces where mold could grow.

The hummingbirds.net site is a good source of basic information hummingbirds and how to attract them.

Image (optional):

