

Hummingbird Moths

By Sophia Randall, first place, fifth grade and Grand Champion

Lynn Johnson, teacher

It is the weekend and it's summertime. I can really slow down to appreciate and enjoy all the little things around me that make me really happy and peaceful. As I pull on my play shoes to head out in the backyard with my little brother, I am thinking of some amazing adventures for the day. What will we pretend to be today, botanists, paleontologists, geologists, or something else? What will we see; what will we hear? I look out across the sun-splashed yard one last time before dashing out the door and realize I could not be happier growing up anywhere else but here—where we call “home” in Franklin Township, NJ!

Because we live in a rural area, there's lots of open space for wildlife; things just happen naturally all around here! I have decided today's back yard adventures will take us on a hunt for butterflies, bees, and bugs. More specifically, I am looking for a unique species that flies and moves just like a miniature hummingbird, hovering over our garden flowers and fluttering its clear wings at amazing speed. When you know what you are looking at, you will realize what you are seeing is not a bird, but a moth, and if you are close enough, you will even hear a soft humming sound!

I know just where to look. It turns out these little visitors are Hummingbird Moths! They are most active in the daytime and feed on nectar, so our adventures take us straight to the flower beds where we have lots of native nectar-bearing plants like butterfly and blueberry bushes, honeysuckle, verbena, and coneflower. Not only are flower gardens an excellent way to attract lots of butterflies and bees, they make your home and community beautiful. To increase your chances of seeing unique wildlife, like the Hummingbird Moth, I recommend using some of your open space to plant flower gardens!

Before long, I have spotted two plump Hummingbird Moths moving swiftly across the yard to the flower bed. At first, they appear to be searching for something, until they just stop and suspend in the air in front of a flower and take a sip of nectar. As they hover for a while and then change flowers, I watch in amazement and think about how beautiful our nature is. Although the Hummingbird Moths only visit for a short while and then fly away to somewhere else, my heart will always live here in Franklin Township. I can't wait to wake up tomorrow and start the adventure all over again