

*The Ray Collett Rare and Extraordinary Plants Lecture
Series presents:*

Jewels of the Garden: A Darwinian Natural History of Humming Birds



Featuring UCSC Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Bruce Lyon

Tuesday August 23, 7pm
UCSC Arboretum Horticulture Building

Abstract from Dr. Lyon: I will explore hummingbird natural history from the perspective of a scientist who studies bird ecology and evolution. I will start with a brief overview of the discovery of hummingbirds, some of their unique features and their evolutionary diversification. I will then consider an amazing feature of Arboretum—its extraordinary number of hummingbirds. A survey of the different nectar-feeding birds from around the world, and the flowers they feed on, makes us realize that we have a biogeographic mismatch: New World nectar-eating birds feeding on Australian plants that evolved with a completely different cast of nectar-eating characters. More generally, all hummingbirds have very close relationships with flowers so we will explore some of the most interesting ecological and evolutionary relationships between hummingbirds and the flowers they visit and pollinate. What are the different ways that hummingbird species make a living? How do plant features shape the evolution of hummingbird adaptations? Is there a limit to the number of hummingbird species that can be packed into one location? Hummingbirds also make wonderful subjects for scientific studies, particularly for investigating how animals see the world and make foraging decisions (what to eat, where to eat it and when to it). Hummingbirds are easily trained to visit artificial feeders, which can then be altered to offer different food rewards or the cues the birds use to find their food plants. I will end the talk with a summary of a couple of these intriguing studies.

For directions, go to <http://arboretum.ucsc.edu/visit/directions/>

Donations welcome!