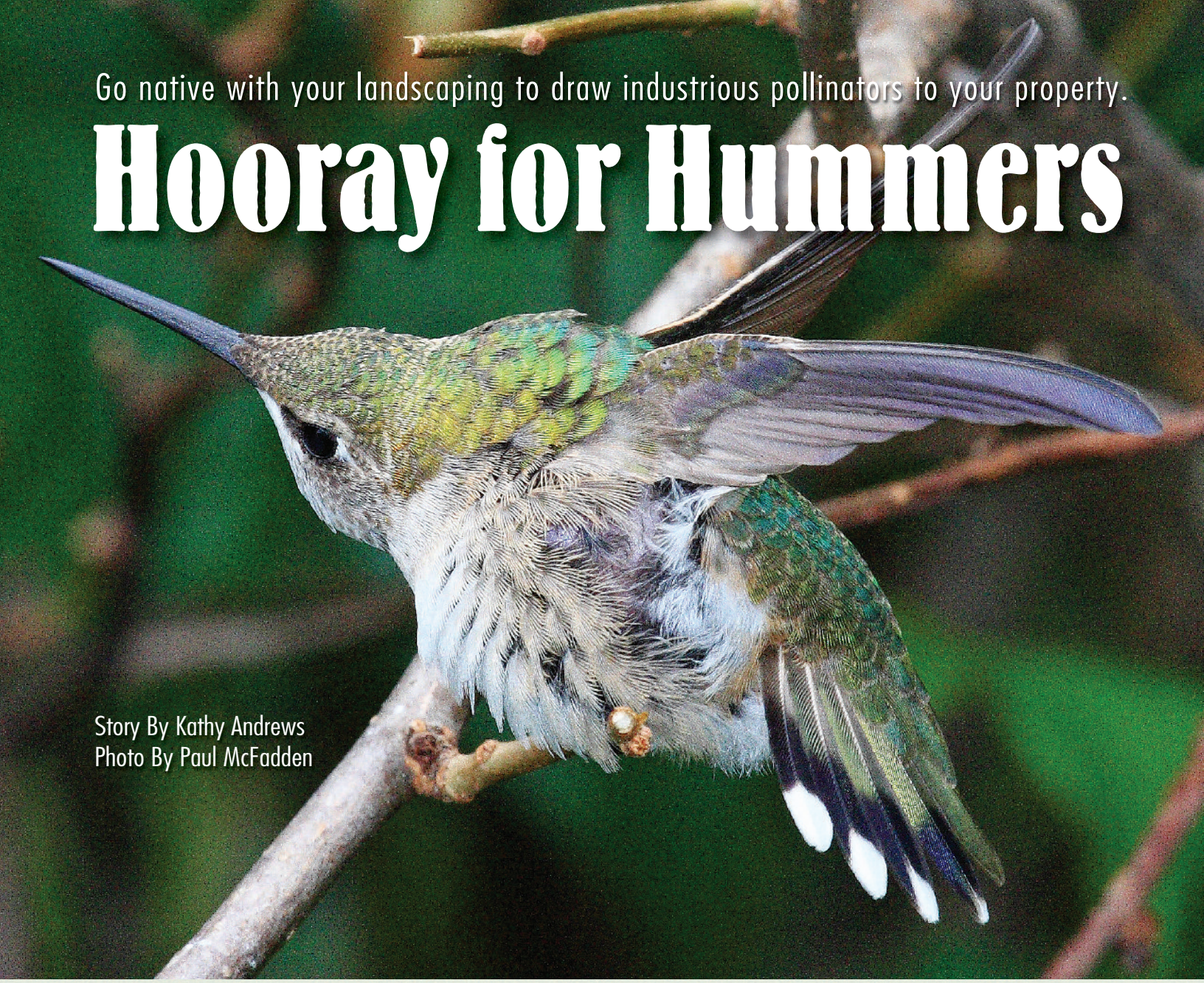
Go native with your landscaping to draw industrious pollinators to your property.

Hooray for Hummers



Story By Kathy Andrews
Photo By Paul McFadden

The aerial antics of the ruby-throated hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*, provide hours of amusement for those fortunate to have attracted these winged wonders. Flapping its wings more than 50 beats per second requires considerable food stores be available each day during the nesting season. As they prepare for their return to wintering grounds in Central America, these little dynamos must add fat equal to half their normal body weight to power a journey that may span 1,800 miles.

Hummingbird feeders serve a purpose, if care is taken to change the sugar water often, especially in hot weather, and feeders are not positioned to allow cats to prey on visitors. A more dependable and long-term attractant is the use of brightly colored native plants with trumpet- or bell-shaped flowers. Here's a few choices.

Plants

Beardtongue, *Penstemon pallidus*
wild bergamot, *Monarda fistulosa*
blue cardinal flower, *Lobelia siphilitica*
butterfly weed, *Asclepias tuberosa*
cardinal flower, *Lobelia cardinalis*
columbine, *Aquilegia canadense*
evening primrose, *Oenothera biennis*
goldenrod, *Solidago* sp.
hyssop, *Agastache* sp.
indian pink, *Spigelia marilandica*
prairie blazingstar, *Liatris pycnostachia*
royal catchfly, *Silene regia*
spotted jewelweed, *Impatiens biflora*
vervain, *Verbena* sp.
wild geranium, *Geranium maculatum*

Vines

crossvine, *Bignonia capreolata*
morning glory, *Ipomoea pandurata* or *I. lacunose*
trumpet creeper, *Campsis radicans*

Trees

crabapple, *Malus* sp.
hawthorne, *Crataegus* sp.
red buckeye, *Aesculus pavia*

Receiving the Judges' Award as Best-of-Show in Volo Bog State Natural Area's annual photography contest, Paul McFadden, Algonquin, titled his ruby-throated hummingbird photo "I'm a Lean, Mean Fighting Machine." Shot with a Canon 40D, 100-400mm IS lens, 1/100 sec, f14.0, ISO 1600, 340mm.