

Tips to Stop Leaking Tube Feeders

We have sold many stoppers for those who make their own hummingbird feeders or just replacing an old stopper. The “inverted bottle” style of feeders that use cork/plug style stoppers can be prone to leaking at times, due to the physics involved in this kind of design. Here are 4 simple ways you can maintain a hummingbird feeder to stop it from leaking.

1. Keep the feeder as full as possible.

Dripping can be a sign the feeder is running low on liquid. These types of feeders depend on gravity and pressure to work properly, and will function best when full. We suggest filling the feeder completely full while allowing no air to enter the glass. This will create the vacuum needed for the feeder to operate as it should. The weight of the liquid and the difference in air pressure inside the feeder help keep things flowing as they should.

2. Protect the feeder from heat and wind.

High temperatures can have a negative effect on the way a hummingbird feeder works. The sun’s rays will heat up the liquid inside, increasing the air pressure inside, which causes leaks. Start by filling it with cool nectar fluid early in the morning, and hang the feeder in the shade where it will be protected from the hot sun. Likewise, any strong wind currents will cause leaking because of the tossing and shaking motions. Hang a hummingbird feeder in less windy areas if possible.

3. Clean the feeder.

Remove the stopper and tube and wash everything in warm water. Don’t use soap, because it can interfere with surface tension and contaminate the nectar. Clean out the tube with a pipe cleaner and rinse it thoroughly to allow a smooth flow of liquid. Sometimes soaking the stopper in very hot water will help to soften it. Then it can be re-inserted for a tighter fit and better seal.

4. Check for damage on the feeder itself.

If the the stopper is split, torn or deteriorated, especially around the hole for the tube, this can cause leaks. If the rim or neck of the glass bottle is cracked or chipped, this will also cause problems. In this case, it may be time for an “upgrade” or replacement. For those who are making a “Homemade” feeder, try another bottle.

Using these 4 tips, you’ll help keep hummingbird feeders working properly so they can be enjoyed by all your feathered friends—and your human ones—for a long time to come.