



Nest Box Tips

Compiled by the DuPage Birding Club

Many kinds of birds nest in holes in trees, but in most urban and suburban neighborhoods, such trees are removed for safety reasons. Many birds, fortunately, accept nest boxes (bird houses) as a substitute. Such houses are easily constructed from scrap lumber, and since birds are not interested in appearing on HGTV, the construction details can be less than perfect; in fact, imperfect cabinetry results in good ventilation.

Boxes can be stained or painted in neutral colors, or left to weather. Building a number of houses is a fine project for a youth group.

Almost any kind of lumber can be used, although treated lumber should be avoided. Cedar is an excellent choice. Boxes can be assembled using nails or screws. Ideally, one side of the box should be removable to clean out an old nest in late winter. Boxes should be placed about ten feet above the ground and facing south.

Bird	Entrance Hole		Floor Dimensions (Interior)	Total Height of Box
	Diameter	Height above floor		
Bluebird	1 ½	6-7	4 x 4	11-12
Chickadee	1 ¼ - 1 ½	6-7	4 x 4 to 5 x 5	9-12
House Finch	1 ½ - 2	5-7	4 x 4 to 5 x 5	9-12
House Wren	1 - 1 ½	6-7	4 x 4 to 5 x 5	9-12
Nuthatch	1 ½	6-7	4 x 4 to 5 x 5	9-12
Downy Woodpecker	1 ¼ - 1 ½	8-12	3 x 3 to 4 x 4	10-14
Red-bellied Woodpecker	1 ¾ - 2 ¾	10-14	5 x 5 to 6 x 6	14-16

Robins and several other kinds of birds will nest on covered shelves. A floor measuring 6 x 8 inches and a height of eight inches, suspend ten feet above the ground, is ideal.

There are many excellent books with detailed instructions. A classic is *Songbirds in Your Garden* by John K. Terres.

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