

Making a bird box

Instructions

Natural nest holes don't come in standard sizes, so please use the following sizes as a guide. Use a plank about 150 mm wide and 15 mm thick. Use the diagram to help you. Do not use CCA pressure-treated timber as this can harm the birds.

The inside of the box must be at least 100 mm square and the bottom of the entrance hole must be at least 125 mm from the floor. If it is less, young birds might be scooped out by a cat.

Use galvanised nails or screws. The inside front surface should be rough – this will help the young birds to clamber up. A drainage hole in the base or leaving gaps at either side of the base will also help to stop the box getting damp inside.

Hinge the lid with a strip of leather or rubber (an old piece of bicycle inner tube would do). Do not nail the lid down unless it is an open fronted box. (you will need to clean out the box in autumn). Instead, use a catch to keep it closed.

The entrance hole size depends on the type of bird you want to attract:

- 25 mm for coal tits, marsh tits and blue tits
- 28 mm for great tits and tree sparrows
- 32 mm for nuthatches and house sparrows
- A starling box needs to be 25-30% larger with an entrance 45 mm across

If you remove the top half of the front panel, the same type of box could attract robins, pied wagtails or wrens to nest. Spotted flycatchers prefer an even shallower, open-fronted box.

Tips

See diagram below for template.

The cut between the front and roof is at an angle to help get a good fit.

Make your hole before you start cutting all the pieces out as it is easier to do on a longer length of wood. Make the hole at the top of the front section.

I tend to leave cutting the base section until I have assembled most of the box so I can measure exactly the size I need, this is due to varying sizes of wood we use.

Siting the box

Site it between 2 – 4 m above the ground preferably facing north or east with a clear flight path to the entrance hole.

