



Design + Build
center

Helpful tips for your new bird home!



Tips on Attracting Birds

It may take some time for birds to discover your nest box, even a couple of breeding seasons, so be patient. *LEAVE UNFINISHED, no paint or stain.*

- Plant native trees and shrubs for food and shelter
- Avoid using insecticide sprays whenever possible
- Leave grass and bush cuttings for nesting material
- Provide clean water in a birdbath
- Plant colorful wildflowers that will attract insects for birds to eat
- Leave 1-inch to 4-inch lengths of string or yarn for nesting material
- Set out a feeder or two to entice suet and seed eating birds

Placement and when to put up

Some birds begin courtship and nesting activities as early as February, but most birds select sites from late March through May. This is also the time when most migrating birds return to Washington. Nest boxes can be set out as soon as you notice new birds arriving.

However, newly made bird houses need to be set out in winter to weather and air out. To prevent house sparrows and European starlings from setting up house in them before other bird species arrive, plug the entrance hole until you observe the preferred species.

Where

Boxes should be somewhat concealed, in partial shade and placed where predators can't get to it. Check to be sure birds have an adequate, clear flight path to the entrance hole. If possible, the entrance should face away from the prevailing wind. It usually helps to put the box on a habitat edge: between a group of trees and low-growing bushes, or between bushes and an open meadow, lawn or water.

All nest boxes should be firmly attached to a support post or a tree. When attaching a nest box to a live tree, use lag screws and washers. These screws can be loosened each year, preventing the back of the box from breaking and allowing the tree to grow without any deformities.

How Many

A good rule of thumb is to allow 1/4-acre between most houses. Most birds are territorial and the average-sized yard will probably only hold one nesting pair of a particular species. Territory size varies among birds - tree swallows require only several feet of space, robins need less than half an acre, while chickadees and nuthatches usually need several acres. Other birds, like purple martins and wood ducks, don't defend territories. That's why martin houses are the "apartment" type.

For more information:

www.wdfw.wa.gov/living/projects/nestboxes/

ironsbc.com

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