

Positioning your Bird Nesting Box

It is important to ensure that the box is not directly exposed to the midday sun as this will lead to cooked birds. Some shade is essential. If the proposed position is south facing it must have good shade from buildings, the leaves of trees, or similar. An east or west facing wall or side of a tree is ideal. For most garden birds, adjacent boxes for the same species should be at least 200 feet (61 m) apart –preferably 300 feet (91 m).

The box entrance should not face into the prevailing wind. If it is secured to a tree or to a post, please ensure that it does not incline backwards otherwise rain will enter the hole/opening and could lead to drowned chicks. Preferably lean box slightly forward.

Protection from predators is necessary. Cats, rodents, and larger birds can use trees to access boxes. Consequently when fixing to a tree, ensure that it is positioned part way up the trunk away from branches. It may become necessary to secure projecting wire mesh guards above and below the box when there is a particularly determined cat/squirrel around. These should be cone shaped to force the predator away from the trunk.

Fixing heights depends upon the species of bird that are likely to use the box. Heights are general. It may be worth changing a box fixing height if, after several months, no bird shows an interest. The table below gives some guide to height and specific position.

You must be able to access the box without endangering yourself. So ensure that your ladder can be position on level and firm ground and preferably get assistance. Branches don't grow to support your weight. Wear hand and eye protection when fixing amongst thorny shrubs and when drilling holes.

Do not site boxes near feeding tables or other feeding sites. Small birds will not nest in positions that expose them to the attention of other birds. A quiet secluded location is preferred. Cover, in the form of trees, shrubs and plants, will encourage birds to nest/feed.

Positioning Bat Boxes

Boxes can be fixed under the eaves on houses or in the canopy of trees. Small copses are even better locations. Fix between 12' (3.6 m) and 15' (4.6 m) above ground. Boxes can be grouped together – say three to a tree, facing SE, SW, and NW. Predators are not a problem.

Securing Boxes

Boxes must be securely fixed. Severe wind rocking will frighten the birds/bats into leaving & may dislodge the box. Normal swaying of stout tree trunks is perfectly OK. Use a 3" (75mm) or 4" (100mm) galvanised nail when fixing to posts and timber structures. Use a minimum of 2" (50mm) long number 10 screw into a plastic plug when fixing to brickwork. Crimped wire is ideal for fixing to small trees. You should slacken the wire each year to accommodate the tree growth. On larger trees a 4" nail will not unduly damage the tree, but PLEASE ensure that nails are never broken off and left unseen in trees.

Maintenance of Boxes

Do not tamper with the boxes during the months of March to July.

After the fledglings have flown you should unscrew the access plate of bird boxes and empty the contents. Do not line the box or use any spirit based preservative. Water based preservatives may be used if necessary. (Bat boxes must not be preserved.) Bat boxes need no attention.

Birds will often re-use boxes in the same year for raising a second brood or for roosting. If one pair of birds has been scared away, a new pair may take up residence and rear a late brood.

Robins may use their boxes throughout the year. Each Wren will have several roosting sites.

Fixing Heights / Situation

This table lists the type of bird that typically uses the different forms of box shown on the website. It shows the height for the entrance hole/slot above ground level and preferred situation.

BOX TYPE	TYPICAL USER	HOLE HEIGHT	SITUATION
Enclosed with 25mm hole at front	Blue Tit	1.2m - 4.5m	Any shaded spot. Love oak trees.
	Coal Tit	900mm - 2m	Isolated trees or a sparsely planted conifer copse.
	Marsh Tit	900mm - 2m	Crowded sites amongst oak & beech with lots of ground cover.
Enclosed with 28mm hole at front	Great Tit		Any shaded spot.
	Pied Flycatcher	3m - 5m	In the canopy of dense broad-leaf trees. Especially in small copses.
Enclosed with 32mm hole at front	House Sparrow	1.2m - 5m	Any shaded spot.
	Tree Sparrow	3m - 5m	Adjacent open fields, sparsely wooded area. Very sensitive to disturbance but will colonise.
	Wren	900mm - 1800mm	Hidden in dense tangled undergrowth, crevices, and rampant climbers or under overhanging roots at waters edge.
	Nuthatch	4m - 5m	Hidden within dense broad-leaf tree canopy. Will feed from hanging fat, nuts and seeds.
Open fronted wide slot	Robin	900mm - 1800mm	Concealed low down within climbing plants preferably with the protection of thorny shrubs.
	Pied Wagtail	1m - 4m	Exposed on walls, tree trunks, buildings.
Open fronted 30mm slot	Wren	As described for 32mm hole	
Enclosed with slot on underside	Bat	3.6m - 4.6m	Amongst trees, building eaves or accessible building roof structures.

The Friends of Colliers Wood thank you for taking a positive step in adding to the living environment in which we reside. Much enjoyment will come from your observations and a great satisfaction in sharing your home with our garden birds.