

Eastern Bluebird Nest Box Plans

Things you'll need

- 6-foot piece of 1-inch x 6-inch untreated lumber
- Tape measure and pencil
- 17 1½-inch nails
- Hammer
- Saw
- Drill with ⅛-inch and ¼-inch bits and 1½-inch hole saw

Quick Construction

Measure, mark and cut the board at the lengths shown in Diagram 1. Make sure to drill ¼-inch vent holes near the top of the side pieces and ¼-inch drain holes in the bottom piece. Drill a 1½-inch hole in the front about 2 inches from the top. Nail the left side of the house to the bottom, top, front and rear, making sure to keep all edges flush (Diagram 2). Nail the right side in place, using only one nail from the front and rear, about 1 inch from the top of the board. (This will act as a hinge.) Drill a ⅛-inch hole through the front into the right side board, about 1 inch from the bottom. Insert a nail through the hole to serve as a latch.



No perch is necessary on a bluebird house. Photo by Charles Brutlag.

Diagram 1

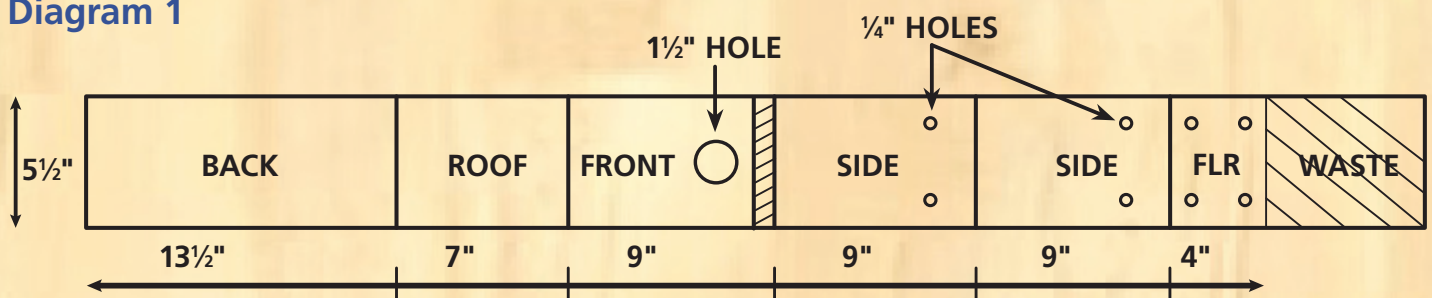
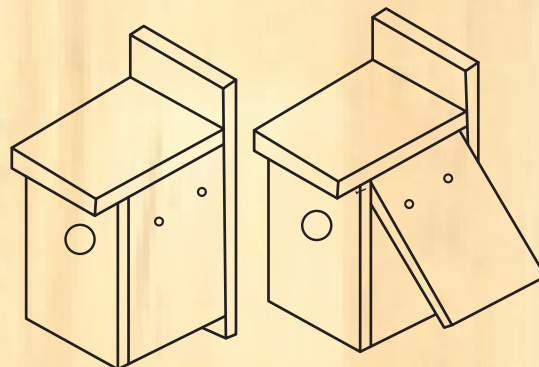


Diagram 2



Location, Location, Location

Bluebirds prefer nesting in cavities 4 to 6 feet off the ground. You can nail the box to a tree, storage building or fence post.

Many songbirds like to nest where forests meet fields. This “edge” offers fast access to food as well as shelter. Bluebirds, in particular, nest in objects that are closer to the open side of the “edge,” such as fencerows.

Raccoons, snakes and squirrels will destroy bluebird nests and eat the eggs. But the largest threat to both mother bluebird and her chicks is the common housecat. Mount the box far enough from branches and fences so that a nest predator can't jump on the box or stick a paw through entrance.



It Takes Time

Sometimes birds may move in within days, but some birdhouses may sit vacant for a few months before birds find your offering.

Once a pair of bluebirds find the box, it takes a few days to build their nest. The female will lay one egg per day until she has four to six eggs in the nest. Once the last egg is laid, the female and male will take turns incubating the eggs for 12 to 15 days before they hatch. The fully fledged chicks will emerge from the box 15 to 18 days later.

It's called a bluebird box, but there's no telling what songbird may come calling. Carolina chickadees, Carolina wrens, tufted titmice and even an occasional tree swallow may take up residence. You may even open the box one morning to find a flying squirrel tucked away inside.