

Put up a bird nesting box

With the decline in songbird numbers, we are all looking for ways to help.

Many of us feed our birds, but how many of us have put up a nest box?

With so many trees, natural borders and traditional nesting sites gone, it is vital that we give our feathered friends a hand.

Although autumn is the preferable time to put up a nest box, this can be done any time before mid-February when birds first start pairing up in preparation for nesting season.



What sort of nest box?

Before putting up a nest box, you will need to think about which birds will be using them.

Different species like different sort of boxes. Tits and nuthatches like a smaller, round hole with a deep, wide base. Robins and wrens like an open front. Sparrows are quite sociable so can take to colony-style boxes.

Where should you put up a nesting box?

Sparrows, starlings and tits are happy to nest in boxes that are between two and four meters high, on a wall or in a tree. House sparrows, and again, starlings, will nest under the eaves of your buildings.

Place the nest box so that it faces either north or east, so that your visitors don't get too hot on sunny days. Find a spot out of prevailing winds so they don't get too cold on windy days.

Try to keep a distance from your feeders, as the constant fluttering and nibbling can disturb a nesting pair. Also, any predators visiting feeders are 5 times more likely to notice a nest nearby – so keep nesting and feeding well apart from each other.

The location of your nest box needs to be away from pests, such as squirrels, and out of reach, from cats and dogs. If you are placing the box in a tree, be sure to check the entrance is clear.



How should I put up a nest box?

Try to use wire if your chosen location is a tree, to tie the box to a branch or the trunk. Screws and nails can do unnecessary damage.

Don't forget to check for cables and pipes when attaching a nest box to a building. Be sure to use stainless steel or galvanised screws, as these won't rust.



You can do a lot to stop squirrels getting to your bird box by where you place it, but it's definitely worth fitting a metal plate, cage or guard around the entrance in order to deter them. Squirrels don't make good housemates if you haven't yet learned how to fly!

A nest box will be at its busiest in spring, although many varieties of birds will use them over the cooler months, to roost, feed and shelter from bad weather.

Let us know how you get on!

Whether you already have nest boxes up, or if you decide to do it now, we would love to hear about them.

Tell us what visitors you have and share some photo's too, if you have some.

Share on our socials @SongBirdSBS or send us an email to dawn-chorus@songbird-survival.org.uk

Learn more about National Robin day and what you can do to help all birds and wildlife at:

www.songbird-survival.org.uk/national-robin-day



National Robin Day
The awareness day
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