

Bluebird Bird House

A few years ago we built a set of bluebird houses, a few for ourselves and some for friends. Since then we have watched many generations of bluebirds, chickadees and wrens use the boxes to raise their young. We enjoy watching them during meals outside on our deck, from our windows and while working in the garden. Like our honeybees, they are great companions to share our yard with.

Bluebird Bird Houses Feature:

- Box dimensions sized specifically for Bluebirds and approved by the National Bluebird Association.
- Interior front wall has slats cut to help fledglings grip to reach the hole.
- Hole sized specifically for Eastern bluebirds to minimize invasion by starlings.
- Interior of birdhouse is left unpainted.
- Easy to use side clean-out door.
- Appropriate ventilation holes to allow airflow.
- Painted version is painted in attractive light, natural low profile colors.
- No perch or other attachments that would make it easier for other birds to invade. Bluebirds don't need perches.
- Available painted or unpainted.
- Available with mounting pole and hardware.

Unfinished Bird Houses

We recommend painting your unfinished bird house with one coat of primer and two coats of exterior paint. Light brown, dull green or grey are suitable colors that mimic nature and prevent the boxes from overheating in the summer months.

Bird House Installation and Maintenance

- Bluebirds prefer open spaces and forest edges. Backyards are also suitable as long as there is enough open space for foraging and nearby perches (e.g. low hanging branches, small tree or shrubs).
- Opening should face east, south or west.
- Bluebird houses should be mounted 4 to 6 feet above the ground on a pole. Trees and fence posts are not ideal as it makes it easier for predators. However, some people do have success with mounting boxes on fence posts in open areas.
- After a pair has raised their fledglings, it's time to clean out the box to make it ready for a new nest.
- Bluebird houses can be installed any time of the year.

Why attract bluebirds?

Bluebirds were once a very common North American bird, now endangered by housing, commercial development, agriculture and competition from the European Starling and House Swallow.

Bluebirds are bug eaters and eat up to 2,000 bugs per day! Often catching them on the fly, a few bluebirds can keep the mosquito population around your home to a minimum.

Why Bluebirds Need Houses

All bluebirds are cavity-nesting species, and they need safe, secure locations to raise their broods. Unfortunately, they are not assertive, and more aggressive species can easily drive bluebirds out of prime nesting spaces.

European starlings and house sparrows, both invasive species, will easily usurp nesting cavities, evicting and even injuring or killing bluebirds in the process. Bluebirds may also be subject to brood parasitism from brown-headed cowbirds, and young cowbird chicks can smother bluebird hatchlings and keep them from getting sufficient food and care.

Continuing human development, particularly in the eastern bluebird's range, has removed many natural cavities these birds need for successful nests, making proper birdhouses even more critical.

What do bluebirds eat?

Bluebirds are insectivorous, which means they primarily eat insects such as grubs, caterpillars, crickets, ants, termites, spiders and mosquitos.

Once insects die off at the end of fall, bluebirds will also eat berries, fruits and seeds from native plants. Providing them with suet (especially sunflower and mealworm suet) during the winter months is a wonderful way to keep them in your yard year-round.

How long will it take before bluebirds use a nest box?

This depends on many factors and may require a bit of patience. Sometimes, bluebirds prefer a box that is somewhat aged, like a cavity in a tree. They may ignore a bird house for a year but then love it afterwards.

Food and water sources are also important because bluebirds don't fly very far to find their daily meals. Native plants and trees nearby are home to a wide range of insects that bluebirds can feast on. Lawns treated with pesticides on the other hand, have very little life left in them and do not provide birds with food.

If you have any questions about creating a bird-friendly habitat, feel free to reach out to us and we will be happy to share what we have learned over the years.