

# Blue tit

**As our climate changes, gardens are becoming even more vital to wildlife and people. They can provide shade, absorb carbon, soak up flood water and help to cool buildings. A well managed network of gardens stretching across the Sussex would also help wildlife to move more freely and adapt to climate change enabling us to create a living landscape**

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## Nest-site necessities

The nestbox species, which you really can provide with an ideal home. Nestboxes should be up by mid-April at the latest. The hole needs to be about 25mm (1in) in diameter, and there should be no perches on the outside of the box, which should be about 150mm (6in) deep and 90cm<sup>2</sup> (15in<sup>2</sup>) in cross-section. Natural holes are unusual in garden trees, but holes in walls and buildings may be used for nesting.

## Building materials

Moss is the basis of the nest pad, but the lining needs to be hairy. Unravel part of your old sweater and put out the chopped wool on the birdtable. Beware blue tits have no colour sense, and so the nest may be a case for the style police.

## Chick care

Keep feeding the adults so that they can use all the natural food they find for their chicks. Think about the planting in your



garden, pick plants that host lots of invertebrates.

Young Blue tits / Darin Smith

## Special dietary requirements

Keep feeding the adults through the breeding season and they will bring their new families to the food straight away. The only proviso is to make sure they cannot take away whole peanuts, which could choke their chicks.



Blue tit / Dave Kilbey

## Night shelter

The hen roosts in the breeding box until the young fledge, then in foliage until the autumn. Over winter, blue tits roost in nestboxes or other suitable nooks and crannies.

## The ideal territory

Will have some native trees and shrubs in it – preferably Oak, Beech, Birch, Alder, Willow or Hawthorn. If it doesn't, the breeding pairs success may be poor.

## When it's all happening

Last week of April for the first egg – young fledge in early June, to take advantage of the flush of caterpillars in the woods. Very seldom do blue tits have more than one brood.



Blue tit / David Ball

**Breeding Starts:** mid April

**Number of Clutches:** 1-2

**Number of Eggs:** 5-16

**Incubation Days:** 12-16

**Fledge Days:** 15-23

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