

A Bird Box

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 Sussex would also help wildlife to move more freely and adapt to climate change enabling us to create a living landscape.

Wildcall

Tel: 01273 494777
email: wildcall@sussexwt.org.uk



Sussex Wildlife Trust
Woods Mill
Henfield
West Sussex
BN5 9SD

Tel: 01273 492630

email: enquiries@sussexwt.org.uk
Web: www.sussexwt.org.uk

Skill level: 

Time of Year: **All Year**

Wildlife Friendly: If you have a lack of suitable natural breeding sites in your garden the addition of a bird box can provide welcome refuge. You can attract different species of birds by using differing styles of boxes.

Climate Friendly: By providing a garden with food, water and shelter in a neighbourhood it creates essential corridors for wildlife to move and adapt to climate change. While bird boxes offer fantastic homes don't forget that hedges and trees are the best natural habitat.

Creating a safe haven

Gardens that are well designed are easily capable of supporting families of blue tits, robins, blackbirds. However it is more difficult to get birds to breed than to feed in your garden. This is partly because the chosen nesting site needs to be in a territory which will provide most of the food that both the adults and young need during this busy phase. In addition to a good nesting site you need natural food and good highways connect your garden to the surrounding neighbourhood.

Design

Box 1

This is a simple closed box design to attract tits, sparrows and nuthatches.

By altering the diameter of the entrance hole you can attract different bird species

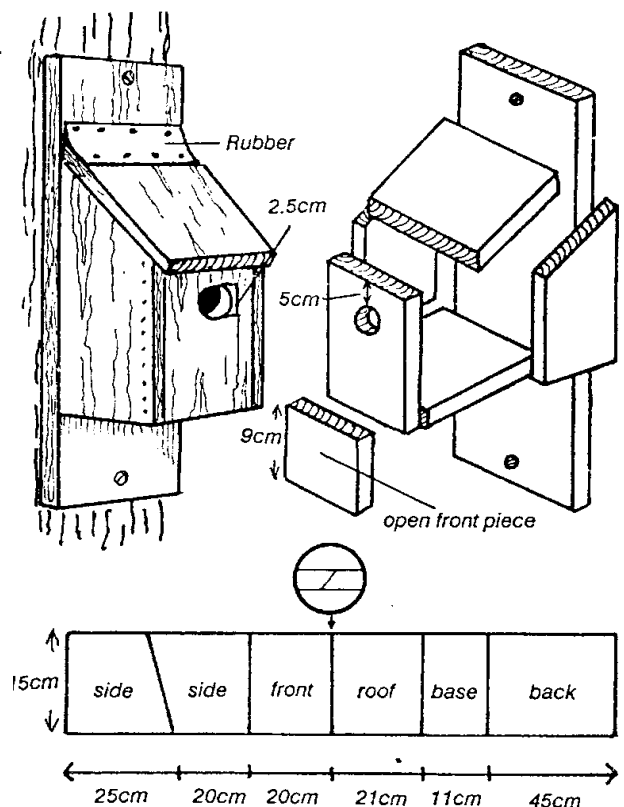
27mm—Blue, coal & marsh tits

28mm - Tree sparrow

29mm— House sparrow

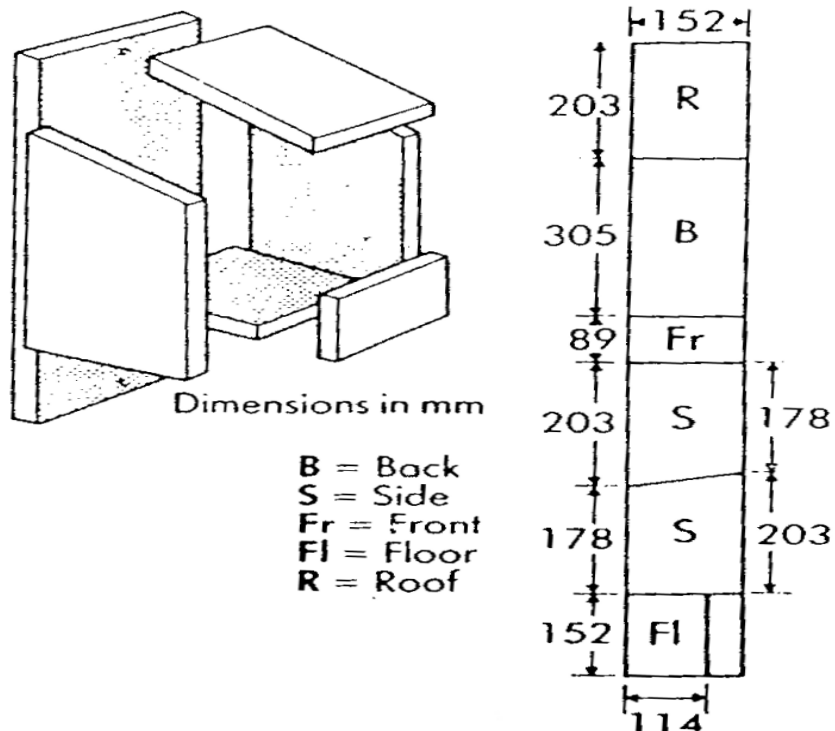
30mm— Great tits

32mm— Nuthatch, pied flycatcher



Box two

This is similar to box one but the upper front is removed to create an open fronted box. This box will attract robins, pied wagtails and wrens. Spotted flycatchers will prefer a shallower, open fronted box.



Location, location, location

Birds are also quite specific in their nest requirements. If you are thinking of putting up a bird box, position is crucial. The box should be placed at least two metres off the ground and away from overhanging branches to stop cats finding the nest. Avoid placing the box so that it faces strong sun or is exposed to wet south-westerly winds. A sheltered position facing north-east or south-east is best.

It is best to angle the box forward slightly, kept away from the wall or tree by a strip of wood. Boxes can be hung from wires to discourage predators, but you must use four wires to ensure that the box will not spin.

Helping hand at nesting time

Come springtime garden birds start the frantic search for materials to build and insulate the perfect nest. You can give them a hand by putting out suitable nesting materials. Try hanging bundles of straw, fine sticks, shredded woollen jumpers and bunches of grasses close to your feeding station. Your bundles should last through to the summer season of second broods.

Keep it clean

Clean out the box out each autumn to prevent a build up of parasites. It is important to leave it for a few weeks until the young have fledged as they may roost in the box for a while after they have left the nest. Make sure to wear gloves when removing old nesting material



Great tit by Chris Pierce

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