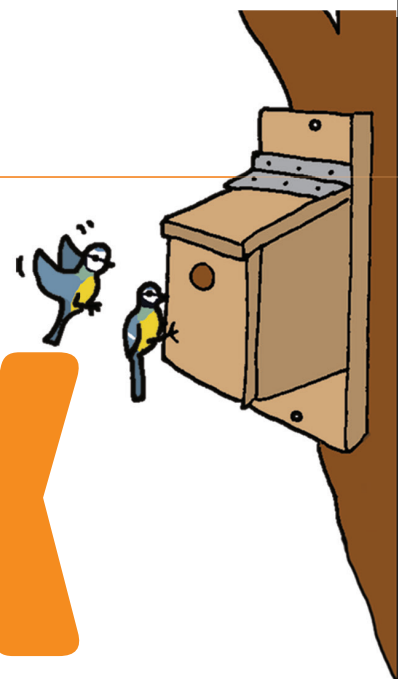


Build your own bird box

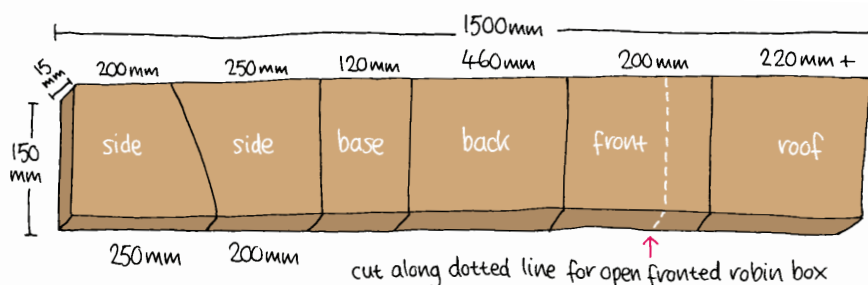


Give feathered friends a safe place to roost and nest.

What you need

- A grown-up assistant
- A pencil, ruler and scissors
- Rough-cut timber or spare pieces of wood
- Saw
- Drill
- Hammer and 20mm nails
- A piece of old rubber or a hinge
- A step ladder

Cutting pattern



Front hole

- Blue tits: 25mm
- Great tits: 28mm
- Sparrows: 38mm
- Starlings: 45mm



Open front

For robins, wagtails and wrens.



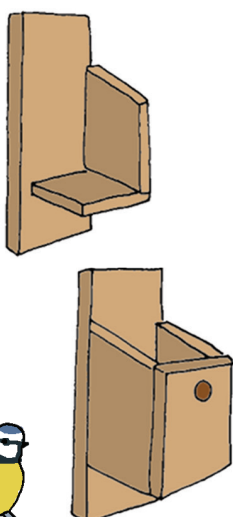
WARNING!
Always ask a grown-up before using sharp tools, and be sure to use them properly.



1 Mark out your piece of wood, based on the pattern above. Use a ruler to measure and get straight lines. Ask a grown-up for help with sawing the board.



2 Ask an adult to drill a suitably sized hole in the front (see size guide above). If you opt for an open-fronted design, you will need to make the front panel shorter.



3 It's time to start constructing. Using a hammer and nails, carefully assemble the bird box. Add a side panel to the back first, and then fit the floor. Finally attach the other side panel.



4 Attach the roof using a rubber strip or hinge, so that it opens upwards. Now ask a grown-up to help you mount the box at a good height above the ground.

A great tit feeds its chick.

Find more great activities over at wildlifewatch.org.uk/things-to-do



READY MEALS

Insects such as earwigs may move into your bird box, but don't evict them – they are a good food source for birds.



How does it work?

Put together, the back gardens of the UK have a total area larger than most UK counties. That's a lot of space – and we can all do our bit to support birds. A wooden bird box gives many species a place to nest, keep warm and avoid predators.

The pattern provided gives a rough guide for one type of nest box but birds aren't too fussy about the exact shape of their houses. You can

modify the design if it won't fit on any spare bits of wood you have available.

Boxes with different openings attract different types of birds, so keep a close eye out for which birds live in your neighbourhood. Most birds will nest in boxes between two and five metres above the ground but robins prefer to be between one and two metres high. Keep this in mind

when hanging your nest box. Put it somewhere protected from the weather and strong sunlight, and as safe from predators as possible.

A supply of food and water nearby will help attract visitors to your box. Take it down after September, when the birds have stopped using it, and give it a thorough clean. Then hang it back up again for next year's residents.

ILLUSTRATIONS: CORINNE WEICH; PHOTOGRAPHS: NATUREPL.COM - GETTY IMAGES; REX SHUTTERSTOCK