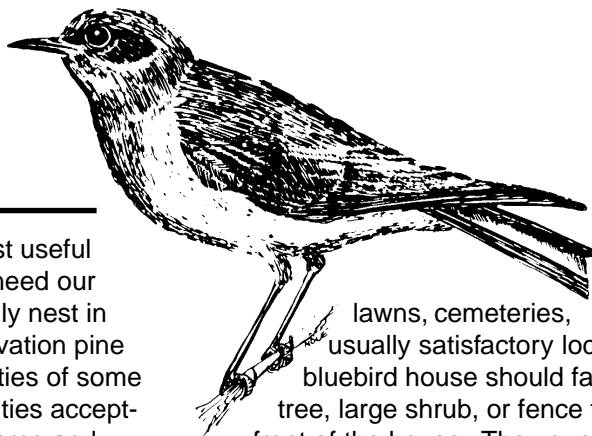


BLUEBIRD HOUSE

Plans and Instructions



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Natural
Resources
Conservation
Service
Davis, CA 95616

Bluebirds are one of our best loved and most useful birds. They are rapidly disappearing and need our help now before it is too late. Bluebirds normally nest in more open areas of oak woodland or lower elevation pine forests in California. They will nest only in cavities of some sort, either natural or constructed. Natural cavities acceptable to bluebirds have become increasingly scarce and those that do exist are usually occupied by house sparrows or starlings. Bluebirds are unable to compete with them for nesting sites.

Bluebirds lay 4 to 6 eggs which are plain light bluish white in color.

The food of the bluebird consists of about 80 percent insects and other small invertebrates, and 20 percent plants. Common animal foods are beetles and their larvae, caterpillars, grasshoppers, and spiders. Common fruits are blackberries, raspberries, elderberries, mistletoe berries, and fruits of palm. They may be attracted to stationary feeders by currants, raisins, and other choice fruits. Toyon is a native plant they feed on.

Suitable nesting boxes when properly located are usually eagerly accepted by any bluebirds in the area. The bluebird house illustrated on the other side of this sheet has been carefully designed to meet bluebird requirements, to last for years, and to provide for easy mounting and easy access for observation and cleaning. It cannot be entered by starlings and, if properly located, sparrow interference will be minimized. Use 1-inch thick boards, when available, use redwood or cedar lumber. Use screws for wood.

NOTE: Hinged side is 1/4" shorter than other side to allow side to swing open.

PAINTING

It is not necessary to paint the bluebird house. If the house is painted, use white or light color. Dark colors should not be used since they may cause the house to overheat on hot days with disastrous effects on the eggs or young birds. Do not paint the inside.

LOCATION

Selecting a suitable location for the bluebird house is of utmost importance. Unfortunately, bluebirds rarely nest in cities, large towns, or close-in suburban areas. Thus, success should only be expected where competition from English sparrows and European starlings is low.

Bluebird houses should be erected in reasonably open areas since the birds will not nest in the woods and rarely in the deep shade. Best of all is an open area with scattered trees and a considerable distance from buildings.

Pastures, fields, open waste lands, large lawns, cemeteries, and golf courses are usually satisfactory locations. Ideally, the bluebird house should face an open area with a tree, large shrub, or fence from 25 to 100 feet in front of the house. The young birds then have a good chance of reaching this on their first flight and thus have a better chance of surviving the first critical hours out of the nest. The house should face south or southeast.

Do not place bluebird houses in or near any area where widespread use is made of insecticides or herbicides. Many of these substances will destroy the birds' food supply or even kill the birds themselves.

When locating more than one house, space houses 100 yards apart and have a screen of shrubs or trees between the houses if possible.

MOUNTING

By using the small holes shown in the top and bottom extensions of the back board, the house may be nailed or screwed to the top or side of a wooden post, or it may be bolted or wired to the top or side of a metal post. A smooth metal post such as a galvanized pipe is preferred to a wooden post since it offers better protection against predators such as cats, raccoons, and snakes. A 3/4-inch galvanized pipe threaded at one end can be neatly and firmly attached to the bottom of the house by means of a pipe flange which may be obtained at any hardware store. A bluebird house on a wooden post may be protected from predators by means of a sheet metal collar or conical guard 18 or more inches wide attached just below the house. Where predators are not a problem, bluebird houses may be mounted conveniently on posts of existing fences or on the trunks of isolated trees (never among the branches). If posts of pasture fences are used, the houses should be on the side away from the animals or placed high enough so the animals will not use them as back scratchers.

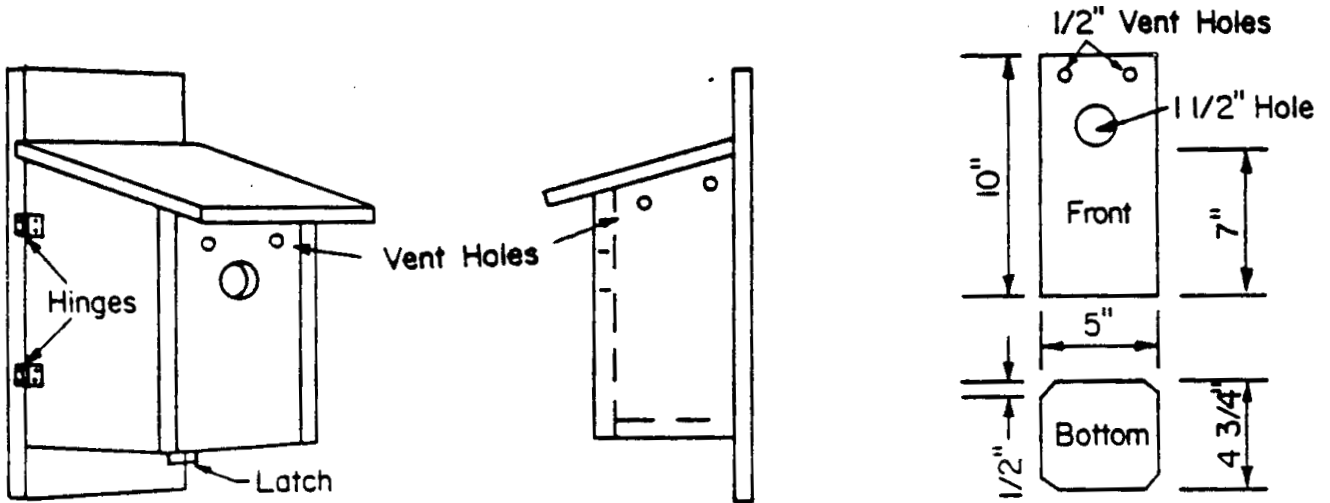
Bluebird houses should be mounted at a height of from 5 to 7 feet, measured from the ground to the floor of the house. They should be set out by February 15.

MAINTENANCE

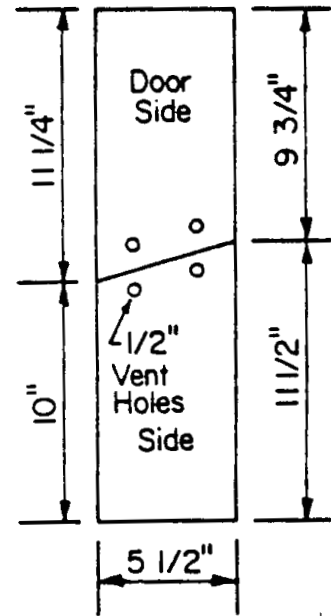
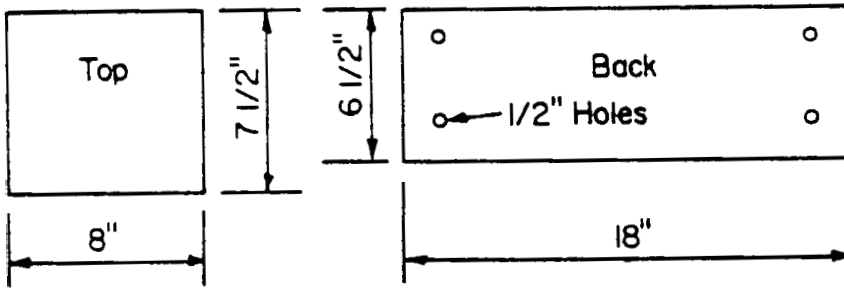
Bluebird nests should be removed from the houses as soon as the young have left since this will increase the chances of second broods being raised in the same houses. The houses should be inspected, cleaned, and repaired, if necessary, in February each year. Make sure the drain holes in the floors are open. If house sparrows take over a house, remove the nest as often as necessary.

BLUEBIRD HOUSE

Plans



Hinge - 1/2" x 1"
 Nails - #4 Box (Coated)
 Latch - 1 1/4" Hook



The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs). Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact the USDA Office of Communications at (202) 720-5881 (voice) or (202) 720 7808 (TDD).

To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C., 20250, or call (202) 690-1538 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.