Sussex Wildlife Trust Gardening for Wildlife Factsheet

This is an introduction to providing suitable nesting and roosting places for birds in your garden. If you would like more detailed information, please contact the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

**Bird boxes**
There are a great variety of nest boxes, which are suitable for different species of birds. These two designs will be used by many of our common garden birds.

**Box one** is a simple closed box to attract tits, sparrows and nuthatches.

**Hole size**
The diameter of the hole will depend on which species you want to attract.
27mm – Blue, coal and marsh tits
28mm – Tree sparrow
29mm – House sparrow
30mm – Great tits
32mm – Nuthatch, pied flycatcher, redstart
Box two 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.

Where to put the box
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.

You should not encourage birds such as tits unless there are plenty of trees and shrubs nearby. Without these to supply insects the young will starve.

Try not to disturb the nestbox. You will see much more if you watch quietly.

Cleaning the box out
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 where gloves when removing old nesting material.

Copyright Sussex Wildlife Trust May 2000