Bird Houses: Expert Tips

Drs. Foster & Smith Educational Staff

Finding ideal nesting spots can be very challenging for wild birds. There may be a shortage of dead trees or an abundance of nest-seekers. When you place birdhouses and nest boxes in your yard, you invite wild birds to nest, raise their young, and retreat from inclement weather. Here are a few helpful tips you can use when you offer housing for wild birds.

Predator Protection

When you offer wild birds a place to call home, you may also invite unwanted guests and predators to your yard in search of an easy meal. To keep nesting birds safe, pole mount your nest box. Many predators like raccoons, snakes, and cats have a difficult time climbing them. Also, place a predator guard at the entrance to further discourage harmful or destructive behavior.

Nest Box Pairing

Nest box pairing can help you attract a variety of species in the breeding season. Place single boxes in pairs, pole mounted 15-20 feet apart. Species such as tree swallows and bluebirds often nest close to one another.

Know Which Species Nest in Your Area

A great way to tempt local birds to nest in your backyard is to know which bird species thrive in your area. Each species has slightly different housing needs, so it is important to offer housing appropriate for the desired bird species.

Keep the Nest Box Clean

Prepare your birdhouses for new spring residence by washing your nest box interior with a weak bleach solution. Rinse and dry the house thoroughly before placing it in your yard. It's also a good idea to place nesting material near your birdhouse to persuade nesting birds when they return after migration.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*

Keep Water Handy

Try placing your birdbath near one of your backyard bird houses. Birds are naturally drawn to water and will be tempted to drink, bathe, or play in the birdbath after they've eaten.

Open Water is Essential in Winter

Birdbaths are especially crucial in winter, since birds are actually at greater risk of dehydration than starvation in winter. A heated birdbath can be a life-saving source of open water to wintering birds.

*Unauthorized use of any images, thumbnails, illustrations, descriptions, article content, or registered trademarks of **Foster & Smith, Inc.** is strictly prohibited under copyright law. Site content, including photography, descriptions, pricing, promotions, and availability are subject to change without notice. These restrictions are necessary in order to protect not only our copyrighted intellectual property, but also the health of pets, since articles or images that are altered or edited after download could result in misinformation that may harm companion animals, aquatic life, or native species.*