



HOW TO PROPERLY SET UP YOUR BLUEBIRD NESTBOX

FINISH: This nest box will last for many years just as it is, untreated. If, however, you wish to treat it, there are a number of alternatives: If you paint, use two coats of an exterior latex in a light color. **DO NOT** paint or treat the interior of the box as this will be harmful to the birds. The light color is to prevent overheating of the box in the summer. If you prefer an oil or stain finish, again use a light shade and only treat the exterior.

LOCATION: Ideal location for a nest box will satisfy the following conditions:

1. Locate in a mowed or short grass area such as large lawn, cemetery, pasture (away from barns), or golf course.
2. Face box away from the prevailing winds.
3. Locate at least 100' away from heavy woods or brush which will attract wrens.
4. Locate approximately 75' from a larger tree or bush that the young can fly to when they first fledge.
5. Keep away from areas that have a high concentration of House Sparrows. (Barns, barnyards, urban feeding areas, etc.)
6. Protect box from predators.

Remember these are the ideal conditions for locating a box; often all ideal conditions don't exist. In this case pay particular attention to items 1, 2, 5 & 6.

PREDATORS: Major predators here in NYS are the cat and the raccoon. The Bressler nest box, with its extra long roof, if mounted properly on a steel post, 5' above the ground, will be an effective guard against these predators.

MOUNTING: **DO NOT** mount your box on trees, wooden posts or buildings. These locations make it very easy for predators to get to the box and destroy the young. There are several methods that work well for mounting:

1. Old galvanized pipe – a 7' to 10' length of old pipe in $\frac{3}{4}$ " to $1\frac{1}{2}$ " diameter makes a great mounting base. Mount the box by using a pipe clamp the same size as the pipe and screwing it to the back of the box with 2 #8 – $\frac{1}{2}$ " screws.

2. Green iron garden stakes – Available from garden stores in 6’ or 7’ lengths. Bolt the box through the holes in the stake at the five foot level. Place a 5’ length of thin wall vinyl sewer pipe over the stake to prevent raccoons from climbing post.
3. Electrical conduit – A thin walled pipe that comes in ten foot lengths. Cut in two, it will make mounts for two boxes. Drive a three foot length of concrete rebar 18” into the ground and slip the conduit over it. Attach box with a pipe clamp.

OTHER COMPETITORS FOR NESTING SPACE: Other birds who use nesting cavities love our boxes! The most common of these is the Tree Swallow, a protected and very beneficial bird that eats scads of insects. Cope with them by pairing nest boxes. Mount two boxes 6’ to 8’ apart, one for bluebirds, one for swallows. If wrens nest in your boxes, it means that they are too close to heavy brush or heavy woods. Boxes should be 100’ away and smaller houses mounted on the woods edge for the wrens. Titmice and Chickadees may also nest in your boxes; they are also protected species, enjoy them!! If you have HOUSE SPARROWS attempting to nest in your box, you need to seriously discourage them! They ARE NOT a protected species but rather a pest that will kill the bluebird young or destroy the nest. Keep cleaning out the nest, install a Monofilament Sparrow Deterrent or trap them to get rid of them.

Bluebirds like a fairly large territory. Place boxes at least 350’ apart or even further if possible.

RECOMMENDED READING*

THE BLUEBIRD BOOK – STOKES – Available in your school or public library.

- “Getting Started with Bluebirds”
- “Sparrow Monofilament Deterrent”
- “How to Make and Enjoy Your Own Bluebird Trail”
- “Bluebird Plantings”
- “House Sparrow Control”
- “Bluebird Trouble Shooting Chart”
- “Monitoring Bluebird Nestboxes”

Further information on Bluebirds may be obtained by accessing the New York State Bluebird Society’s website at: www.nysbs.org or by email at Info@nysbs.org