

# Bluebird Nesting Box Project Plan

The nesting box pictured here has been designed specifically for bluebirds and allows for easy access for observation and cleaning. These bluebird box plans and specs were created in conjunction with the North American Bluebird Society and are printed with their permission.



## MATERIALS LIST

- 23/32" Plytanium™ Sanded Project Panels 24" x 24" precut
- 1 3/4" galvanized nails or screws—approx. 20
- 1 3/4" galvanized screw or nail for pivot point—2
- Double-headed nail for holding door closed—1

## BOX CONSTRUCTION BASICS

- Never put a perch on a bluebird box.
- Drain holes should be provided in the floor to allow drainage should water get in the nest.
- Small ventilation holes should be drilled in each side to provide a cross draft. Dropping the side panel down by 1/4" from the roof (see illustration) will also allow sufficient ventilation.
- Roughen up the inside front wall below the entrance hole so the young birds can "get a grip" when they try to exit the box.

**PAINTING** This nesting box should be painted with opaque stain or primer and acrylic latex paint. Use light colors only to prevent overheating. Paint only the outside of the box. Do not use treated wood, paints that contain lead, or wood preservatives.

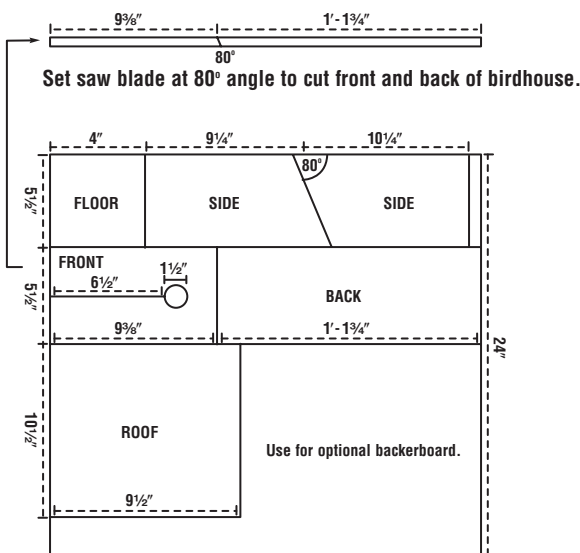
**LOCATION** Bluebird boxes should be placed in open areas that contain short grass with a few scattered trees and shrubs. Golf courses, cemeteries, pastures and open meadows provide ideal habitats for bluebirds. House Sparrows can be discouraged from using a bluebird box if it is placed at least 1/2 mile from areas where sparrows congregate (urban areas and farm yards).

**MOUNTING** By using the small holes shown in the top and bottom extensions of the backboard, the box 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 climbing predators. Boxes can be further protected by placing baffles below the box or by covering the pole with carnauba wax. Bluebird nesting boxes should be mounted at a height of from 3' to 5', higher where there is danger of vandalism. They should be set out by late winter. If possible, face away from prevailing wind and towards a single tree or shrub.

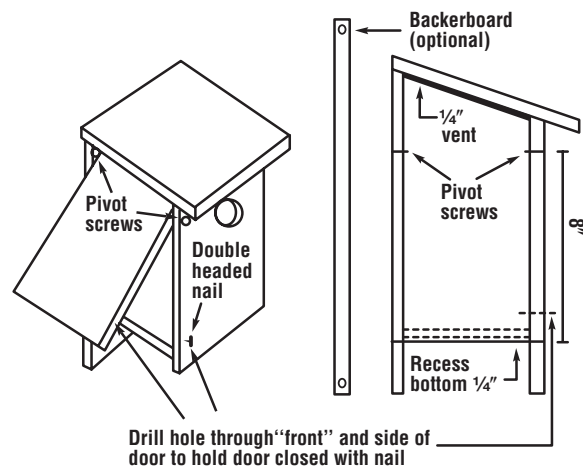
**MAINTENANCE** All boxes should be inspected, cleaned and repaired in the late fall or early winter. Bluebirds begin their nesting cycle in March.

## MONITORING TIPS

- Check your bluebird houses once a week during the nesting season. After the young are 12 to 14 days old, do not open the box because they may fledge prematurely.
- Remove all House Sparrow nests.
- Become familiar with bluebird nests. They are usually constructed from grass or pine needles. The female lays 4 to 5 blue eggs and incubates them for about 14 days. The young remain in the nest for 18 to 21 days.
- Clean out the nest as soon as the young fledge.
- Keep records of the activity on your bluebird trail.
- Don't be discouraged if your boxes are not used the first year. It may take them a few seasons to find your box.
- In areas where Tree Swallows are abundant, boxes can be paired. By placing 2 boxes 5-25 ft. apart, both species can be accommodated.



NOTE: A 1 1/2" hole should be used for Eastern and Western Bluebirds and a 1 3/16" hole should be used when the ranges for Eastern or Western Bluebirds overlap with Mountain Bluebirds. For specifications on a bluebird nesting box for Mountain Bluebirds, visit the North American Bluebird Society website.



For more information on bluebirds, to obtain The Getting Started with Bluebird fact sheet or to set up a bluebird trail, visit the North American Bluebird Society (NABS) at [www.nabluebirdsociety.org](http://www.nabluebirdsociety.org).