

Wildlife Gardening: Nest boxes

Why are nest boxes important?

Putting up a nest box is a simple way of encouraging wildlife into your garden. Natural nest sites, such as hollow trees or cavities of old buildings are fast disappearing, so by putting up a nest box, you can provide nesting birds with a suitable home. It is estimated that over 2 million chicks are reared in nest boxes each year, so please help by putting a nest box in your garden, school or workplace.

Where should I put it?

- Sheltered from wind, rain and strong sunlight.
- 1.5 to 5m above ground for safety from predators.
- Put boxes up outside of the breeding season between August and February.
- Reduce damage to the tree by using a wire or a strap to secure the box.
- Avoid 'busy' areas of the garden such as near feeders.
- Do not line the box with nesting material.
- Positioning the box at a slight tilt can help rainwater run off the roof.



When should I clean it out?

Disease and parasites can easily spread from old nest material to the new occupants, therefore bird boxes should be checked and cleaned out, but please follow the guidelines below ;

- Only clean boxes out in the autumn when there are no birds nesting (Aug - Nov).
- Remove nesting material and clean with boiling water - do not use detergents.
- If you find unhatched eggs, you can only legally remove them between October and January, and they must then be destroyed (Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981).
- Check that the box is still secure, and is positioned correctly.

If you would like to **find out more** about how to encourage wildlife into your garden, please see the Wildlife Gardening pages of our website at <http://www.hiwwt.org.uk/wildlife-gardening>.

If you have a question about wildlife you may find in your garden please contact **WildLine**, the Trust's free **wildlife information service** on 01489 774406 or Email: wildline@hiwwt.org.uk

