

Canadian
Living



create, update, remake

From the editors of Canadian Living

DIY PROJECTS FOR YOU, YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR HOME



Boxy Birdhouses

These pretty birdhouses will help you attract your favourite local songbirds.



YOU NEED (FOR EACH):

- 1 piece, 1x8" cedar, 4 feet long
- Exterior wood solid-hide stain
- $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch diameter stainless-steel rod
- Wooden clothespins
- 2 heavy-duty screw hooks
- $\frac{1}{16}$ -inch diameter stainless-steel cable (length will be determined by location)
- Two $\frac{1}{8}$ -inch wire rope clips
- Measuring tape, pencil and carpenter's square
- Compound mitre saw or table saw
- Drill with $\frac{1}{4}$ - and $\frac{1}{32}$ -inch bits, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch Forstner bit
- Paintbrush and tray
- Exterior-grade carpenter's glue
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ -inch finishing nails
- Hammer, nail set, corner clamps and small clamp
- Wood filler
- 220-grit sandpaper
- $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wood screws
- Hacksaw and wire cutters
- File or rasp (to smooth edges of steel rod)
- Exterior-grade clear epoxy

**Nominal size; actual size will be smaller*

Note:

Refer to assembly diagrams (page 270) as you work.

TO MAKE:

1 Using compound mitre saw or table saw, cut 6 pieces from 1x8 cedar as follows: Two 7½-inch squares for top and bottom, two 7½- x 6-inch pieces for front and back, and two 6-inch squares for sides.

2 Drill entry hole in front (see Diagram 2, page 270) using Forstner bit. Drill ventilation holes in sides (see Diagram 3, page 270) and drainage holes in bottom using ⅜-inch bit. Drill holes for stainless-steel rod in sides (see Diagram 3, page 270) using ⅜-inch bit.

3 Paint exterior and edges of all pieces with 2 coats of exterior stain. Let dry overnight. Do not paint interior.

4 Glue then nail top to front, bottom to front, and both side pieces to top and bottom of box (see Diagram 1, page 270). Ensure all pieces are flush.

5 Countersink all nails. Fill holes with wood filler and let dry.

6 Dry-fit back panel in position. Mark hole in each corner of back panel and transfer marks to edges of side panels. Remove back panel and set aside.

7 Carefully predrill the 4 marked holes in back panel. Predrill ½ inch into edges of 2 side panels using ¼-inch bit.

8 Sand box, including edges and access hole.

9 Attach back panel to box with wood screws.

10 Using hacksaw, cut stainless-steel rod to 12 inches and smooth cut ends with file. Thread rod through holes in sides of box. Using toothpick, carefully apply epoxy around rod at points where it meets hole. Let dry thoroughly.

Tip:

Clean birdhouse after each nesting season by removing back panel and shaking out debris.



11 Using a pencil, mark 1.3 cm ($\frac{1}{2}$ inch) in on each end of rod. Apply epoxy to insides of clothespins, 1 at a time, and clamp to rod as shown. Let dry thoroughly. (Epoxy dries quickly and cannot be easily removed. Once you have clamped peg to rod, do not adjust location.)

12 Screw hooks into desired locations. Measure stainless-steel cable to fit between hooks, adding 51 cm (20 inches) to length; cut cable. Loop 1 end of cable around wire rope clip [A]; secure according to manufacturer's instructions. Thread other end of cable through metal spring loop on each clothespin. Loop remaining end of cable around wire rope clip; secure according to manufacturer's instructions.

13 Have a friend support the weight of the box while you hang birdhouse.

Tip:
For a colourful finish, glue wallpaper over outside surfaces of birdhouse.



Build It Right:

A little research can help you design the house that's right for the birds in your area. Here are a few easy modifications for three specific species.

- Purple martins: Group houses together. These birds like to live in colonies.
- Screech owls: Make a generous entrance hole (about 7.5 cm/3 inches in diameter).
- House wrens: These tiny fellows require a scant 3 cm (1½-inch) opening.

Good Materials, Safe Homes:

The main goal is to make a house that's durable, weather-resistant and safe. Start with the right materials: Natural cedar weathers well and is untainted by preservatives; the exterior may be painted white to reflect heat, but never paint the interior.

To keep the inside dry, allow the roof to overhang the walls. Recess the floor and add drainage holes to prevent rainwater from seeping under the nest. Also, be sure to drill holes for ventilation – birds need to breathe!

Incorporate a removable roof or wall, too, to make it easy to access the box to clean out old nests before the next breeding season.

To discourage predators, extend the roof beyond the face to make it difficult for raccoons and other marauding animals to climb on top and reach into the entrance hole.

Where to Place Your Birdhouse:

The best location depends on the type of bird you want to attract; bluebirds, for example, like wide open spaces, while barn owls prefer their abodes on lofty tree limbs. Wherever it's situated, your birdhouse should be installed before the breeding season begins, typically from late March to early May, depending on the species. And be patient – it might take time for birds to find their new home.

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The Canadian Living Test Kitchen

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Canadian Living

tested till perfect

IF "I COULD MAKE THAT" IS YOUR MOTTO, THIS BOOK IS FOR YOU.

Our collection of craft projects will challenge and inspire any do-it-yourselfer. Inside, you'll find our favourite DIY ideas - projects you can make for your family and friends, for yourself, or for your home and garden. You'll learn to create new heirlooms and discover how to breathe new life into a great yard-sale or antique-shop score. You'll also find plenty of seasonal craft and decor ideas, and a whole chapter of kids' crafts, plus great ideas for gifts from the kitchen, featuring Tested-Till-Perfect recipes from The Canadian Living Test Kitchen.

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