

A HOUSE FOR THE EASTERN BLUEBIRD

Nothing signals spring like the return of birds to our backyards. Several birds in this area prefer a house and this is the perfect time of year to get a birdhouse started so it can be ready by March. Since bluebirds are one of my favorites, let us start out by building a bluebird house together. The house should be made from untreated and unpainted lumber. Cedar is a long lasting lumber which can be purchased at most local hardware stores and garden centers. The cedar is rough on one side and works well when placed on the inside of the house. The birds will need a rough surface to help exit the house. Use a 1 inch by 6 inch by 5 foot board along with eleven screws and 4 galvanized finishing nails. These materials will make a bird house such as the one installed recently at the Nassau County Extension satellite office in Yulee. We already have had a few interested visitors and we hope some will decide to stay.

The parts should be cut as follows:

- a. Roof: 9 ½ inches x 5 ½ inches sloped from back to front to allow rain to run off. Allow a ¼ inch opening between the side and roof for air circulation.
- b. Sides: 2 pieces - 10 inches x 5 ½ inches cut at an angle from back to front. One side is fastened with nails. Two nails near the top act as hinges and two nails near the bottom act as a lock for the door. This allows access for cleaning the house interior.
- c. Front: 9 ¼ inches x 5 ½ inches with a 1 ½ inch diameter entrance hole cut 5 inches above the floor. Cut several small grooves across the inside front below the entrance hole to assist the small birds.
- d. Bottom: 4 inches x 5 ½ inches with four holes drilled or the corners cut for drainage.
- e. Back: 14 inches x 5 ½ inches with holes drilled through the top and bottom for mounting on a post.

The house should be mounted to a post 4-8 ft. above ground level. A wooden post may be used, but PVC, steel or electrical conduit post will be more difficult for cats or other critters to climb and steal eggs or harm baby birds.

For more information on other nesting bird houses check out the University of Florida publication titled, "Helping Cavity-nesters in Florida": <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/UW/UW05800.pdf>

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