

Winter Roost Box Plans

You can help your backyard birds keep warm overnight with a specially designed roost box. Any backyard favorites that typically nest in boxes—bluebirds, chickadees, titmice, nuthatches and small woodpeckers—may seek refuge in it. Roosting boxes differ from nest boxes in several important ways. A good roost box is designed to prevent the birds' body heat from escaping, so, unlike a nest box, it lacks ventilation holes. Also, its entrance hole is near the bottom of the box so the rising warmth doesn't escape.

Materials:

- One rough-cut board (cedar, pine, or fir), 12 feet by 1 foot by 1 inch
- One 3 1/2-foot hardwood dowel, 3/8-inch diameter
- Wood glue
- Wood screws
- One brass hinge
- One small hook and eye screw

Tools:

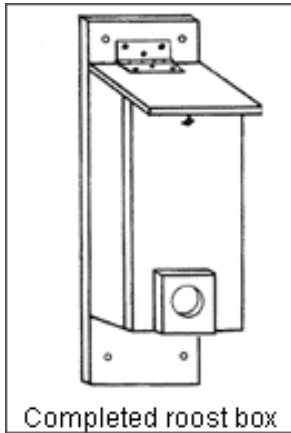
- Table or circular saw (with tilt blade)
- Drill with 3/8-inch bit
- 1 1/2-inch, 2-inch, or 3-inch (depends on entrance hole size) hole saw or drill bit
- Ruler
- Square

Roost box assembly

Obtain one 1-inch-thick, rough-cut board, 12 inches wide and 12 feet long. Cedar is best, but pine or fir also work well—they just won't last as long.

Measure and then cut out each piece as shown in the diagram at left. When you cut the front and top pieces, make a 15 degree bevel edge by tilting the blade of your circular or table saw to that angle. Label each piece in pencil.

On the inside surface of the front piece, use the saw to make several 1/4-inch-deep grooves about 3/8 inch apart, perpendicular to the long axis of the box, as shown on the diagram. (These are to aid woodpeckers clinging.) Next drill an entrance hole

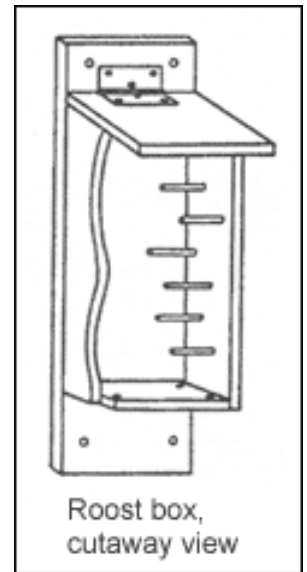


(size depending on the birds you want to attract or exclude) that has its bottom edge 1 1/2 inches from the bottom of the front piece. Finally glue the predator guard onto the outside surface of the front so the holes line up. This will prevent squirrels and raccoons from reaching inside the box.

On the back piece, draw a line 10 inches from the upper edge. Draw another line 6 inches from the lower edge. Between these two pencil lines, score the back with 1/4-inch grooves, as you did for the front piece.

Saw 1 inch off the short side of each of the two side pieces, as shown in the main diagram. Drill six 3/8-inch pilot

holes, 1/4 inch deep, on the inside of each side piece. **DO NOT DRILL THROUGH THE BOARD.** These holes will hold dowels for perches. Stagger the holes so that the perches are not directly over or under each other as shown in the cutaway diagram at right.



Cut the dowel into 3-inch sections. Glue six perches into each side.

Drill four drainage holes into the bottom, as shown in the diagram.

Screw the two sides to the back. Insert the bottom (slightly recessed) and screw it into place. Screw the front into place, making sure the beveled edge is at the top, facing forward.

Line up the top with the beveled edge flush against the back. Mount the hinge as shown in the diagram of the completed box at right.

Attach the hook under the front edge of the lid and the eye at the top of the front piece.

Drill any holes needed for mounting, as shown.

If you leave your box untreated it will weather naturally and be more attractive to birds. But never paint or oil the inside of the box.