

Tree Swallow Birdhouses/Nest Boxes – Care and Painting

Misc Info

The best time to put up a new birdhouse is in the fall or winter so that birds will have plenty of time to locate them before the breeding season. What type of bird you want to attract will determine where you place a birdhouse. it may be used by some birds for night roosting, and it can provide valuable shelter during extremely cold winter nights.

Once breeding season is over, usually by mid-August, it's a good idea to clean out the birdhouse. Remove old nesting material and scrub the house with a solution of one part bleach to nine parts water. Rinse well and leave it open to dry completely. <https://www.massaudubon.org/learn/nature-wildlife/birds/birdhouses>

Fending Off Intruders

Like any house, intruders can be a big problem for baby birds. Squirrels, raccoons, snakes, cats, and house sparrows all can cause harm to eggs and helpless baby birds. Fortunately, there are options to help keep predators at bay.

Many birdhouses now come equipped with predator guards (a reinforcement ring or piece that fits around the opening). Baffles can be placed on poles to keep foes from crawling up.

Maintenance: Once a year, take the box down and clean it out. Remove the old nest. Scrub with a stiff brush and a mild bleach solution to kill mites or other parasites.

Why provide birdhouses? Habitat loss has driven some species away from former nesting areas. The right house can bring birds back home.

Building a tree swallow birdhouse

<http://www.treeswallowprojects.com/buildbox.html>

- Make the top wider and longer for increased protection against bad weather and predators, and be ready to block the ventilation openings on the upper sides during cold windy and rainy spells



Acrylic paint for outside

I would seal the paint with either a brush-on or spray-on varnish because acrylics do not hold up well outdoors over time. I am speaking of decorative paint brands such as Folk Art, Americana, Ceramacoat, etc. The varnishes come in either a matte or

gloss finish. I would suggest you use an "enamel" paint outdoors. The basic rule for enamel (decorative) paint is you can either bake the paint onto your item (if possible), or let it set for 21 days before washing it. You might check out "Patio Paints" which are specifically designed for outdoor use. Find them next to the terra cotta pots at Michael's Craft Store. If not there, in the decorative paint section.