



Harry's birdhouse

This is a great activity to teach your child about how trees provide protection for birds to build their homes in. Transitioning this into building a birdhouse is a great way to get your child thinking about the challenges facing birds when they construct their own places to live.



What you will need:

- Tools – hammer, drill, tape measure, screwdriver, handsaw, hole saw, sandpaper, nails, screws
- Wood – oak or beech is best
- Mounting post
- Wood glue
- Paint (Non-toxic to animals)
- Roofing felt or a lead sheet
- Ladder

What to do:

1. To begin with you need to think about what type of bird you are building the birdhouse for, so you know what size you need to make it. Show your child a few different birds and let them pick which one. (Birds such as Finches only need an opening of 3.2cm whereas a Crow or Jackdaw will need an opening of 15cm.)
2. If you are making a birdhouse for a smaller bird such as Finches, you can make all the required walls from a single plank that is 15cm wide and around 2cm thick.
3. You will need;
 - 1 rear wall at 38cm,
 - 2 side walls of 22x26cm long,



- 1 roof of 18cm long (or slightly longer to allow water to run off),
- 1 front of 23cm with a circle entry hole of 3.2cm,
- 1 base at 12cm long.

Help your child measure each section of the birdhouse using a tape measure and ask them draw out the sizes with your help.

4. Once you have all the right sizes you need you need to saw the wood to size. Depending on the age of your child they can help with this safely.
5. Sand down the sawn edges with sandpaper; support your child in helping with this, being careful of their fingers.
6. Drill out the entry opening around 18cm from the bottom of the front plank with a 3.2cm hole saw. (Tip: to stop the wood splintering, place the plank on top of scrap wood and as you drill through the plank drill slightly into the waste wood.)
7. Mount the side panels of the birdhouse against the rear wall using water resistant wood glue and nails/screws. Pre-drill holes first to prevent the wood from splitting and pre-drill the mounting holes for the birdhouse.
8. Assemble the front panel to the side panels again using water resistant wood glue and nails/screws.
9. You then need to attach the roof of your birdhouse. You need to saw/shave/file the rear panel of the roof at a slope of 20° , this ensures the roof will fit better to the rear wall.
10. Finish the roof of the nesting box – cover this with roofing felt or lead sheet.
11. Lastly you need to finish the base. Drill a number of 1cm holes underneath the birdhouse to allow for drainage, and then attach this to your birdhouse.
12. Ask your child to decorate the birdhouse with non-toxic paint.
13. Using a ladder secure the birdhouse in the tree, it is best to place this on the north side of the tree to shelter it slightly better from rain. This should also be a minimum of 1.5 meters above the ground to protect the birds from cats. Ask your child how high they think the birdhouse should go in the tree.
14. Once you have secured your birdhouse you need to make sure you help your child clean it every autumn.