

HOME *TWEET* HOME

Here are two simple Bird House designs that you can easily build in a single weekend !

Getting the birds to flock to your home is a lot easier when you provide them with elegant, low-cost housing that appeals to their needs. Here are two houses you can build (by yourself or with the help of your teenagers) that will attract Wrens and Blue Jays to your yard. While you're at it, why not build some extras to give as gifts to your friends, family and neighbors? They're sure to be a big hit with everyone, "fine-feathered" and otherwise!

WREN HOUSE

Wrens are small songbirds that are noted for providing pleasant, sweet-sounding music. Because of their willingness to adapt to both rural and city life, they're also easy to attract.

Constructing this Wren House is simple and basic. In fact, you can make four of these attractive little houses from a single, 8-foot 1" x 6" piece of lumber. Here's how:

- Step 1:** Start by cutting two ends (A) from each two-foot long 1" x 6".
- Step 2:** Use your Bandsaw to resaw the remainder of each two-foot long board in half, then plane each board to a 5/16" thickness.
- Step 3:** Cut all parts (B, C, & D) to size as shown in the drawing.
- Step 4:** Tilt your saw table to 45-degrees and bevel the Roof (B), Sides (C) and Bottom (D) as shown in the drawings.
- Step 5:** Drill the entrance hole no larger than 1" in diameter to keep out all undesirable birds, then drill a 1/4" hole to accept the dowel perch.
- Step 6:** Use small galvanized or aluminum nails and waterproof wood glue to assemble the Ends, Roof and Sides. **NOTE:** When working with thin woods, it's always a good idea to drill small pilot holes for all nails prior to assembly to prevent wood splitting.
- Step 7:** Using a 3/32" diameter drill bit, bore pilot holes for the screw eyes in the top of the Roof. Install the screw eyes.
- Step 8:** Tap the Perch (E) into place. It should fit snugly without glue, but if it doesn't, a little glue will help hold it in position.
- Step 9:** Slide the bottom into position. Do not glue or nail the bottom. This allows its easy removal for clean-out.
- Step 10:** Apply the finish of your choice (see the *Tips For Bird Houses* box). Once the finish has dried, hang the house from your favorite tree. Wren houses should be hung 6' to 10' above ground.

Bill of Materials

(finished dimensions in inches)

A Ends (2)	3/4 x 4-1/2 x 4-1/2
B Roof (2)	5/16 x 5-1/2 x 7
C Sides (2)	5/16 x 3-1/2 x 5-1/2
D Bottom	5/16 x 2 x 5-1/2
E Perch	1/4 dia. x 1-1/2
	3/8" Screw Eyes (2)

BLUE JAY HOUSE

Blue Jays are often loud, always protective of their turf and beautiful birds to have around. This house provides ample space for Blue Jays to raise a family and a convenient hinged top for clean-out once they've moved on. You can make two of these attractive little houses from a single, 6-foot 1" x 6" piece of lumber. Here's how:

Step 1: Start by cutting a Front (A), Back (B), Bottom (C) and Roof (D) from each 3-foot long piece of 1" x 6" wood.

Step 2: Use your Bandsaw to resaw the remaining piece of stock in half to make the two Sides (E). Since this piece is too small to safely run through a thickness planer, use your Shopsmith Belt Sander to bring these pieces to their 5/16" thickness and smooth their resawn surfaces.

Step 3: Cut the two sides (E) to their 8-5/8" length...then set your Miter Gauge to 70-degrees to form the angled top edges, as shown in the drawing.

Step 4: Return your Miter Gauge setting to 90-degrees, tilt your saw table to 20-degrees and bevel the tops of the Front (A), Back (B) and the ends of the Roof (D), as shown in the drawing.

Step 5: Drill a 1-1/2" entrance hole in the Front (A), then drill a 1/4" hole to accept the dowel perch (F) and another 1/4" diameter mounting hole in the Back (B).

Step 6: Use small galvanized or aluminum nails and waterproof wood glue to assemble the House. Since the Sides, Front and Back are nailed directly to the 3/4" thick Back and Bottom, pilot nail holes will not be necessary with this House.

Step 7: Mount the Roof (D) to the Back (B) with 1" x 1" brass hinges.

Step 8: Tap the Perch (E) into place. It should fit snugly without glue, but if it doesn't, a little glue will help hold it in position.

Step 9: Apply the finish of your choice (see the *Tips For Bird Houses* box). Once the finish has dried, screw the House to your favorite tree. Blue Jay houses should be hung 5' to 10' above ground.

Bill of Materials

(finished dimensions in inches)

A Front	3/4 x 4 x 7
B Back	3/4 x 4 x 8-5/8
C Bottom	3/4 x 4 x 3-1/2
D Roof	3/4 x 5-1/2 x 6-1/4
E Sides (2)	5/16 x 5 x 8-5/8
1" x 1" Brass Hinges (2)	

Tips for Bird Houses

Here are a few valuable tips of interest to Bird House builders:

Use woods that are suitable for outdoors. Redwood, cedar, cypress and exterior grade plywoods are all good choices. **DO NOT** use pressure treated woods as they may be harmful to wildlife.

Use only rust-resistant hardware made of galvanized steel, aluminum, brass or stainless steel for best results.

Build all Bird Houses so they can be cleaned out at least once a year to control lice. Hinged tops or sliding bottoms are just two construction techniques that allow for easy clean-out.

Finish Bird Houses with exterior grade stains or paints. When painting, choose light colors to minimize heat absorption on hot Summer days.

Never place a Bird House where squirrels, cats or other bird enemies may pose a threat.

Keep Houses away from noisy human or automotive traffic areas.

Drill all entrance holes from the front side of panels until the bit tip barely comes through the wood. Then, stop drilling and drill the remainder from the back side to prevent splintering that could injure birds.

If your House will be placed where it is not protected from heavy rainfalls by eaves, etc., it's a good idea to drill a few 1/8" diameter drainage holes in the bottom.

Hatchlings often benefit from footholds inside the house. If your house has smooth sides, it may be difficult for them to reach the opening. These footholds can be provided by gluing small 1/4" square scraps of wood or dowels to the inside surfaces...or by using a saw blade or chisel to cut a series of horizontal grooves across surfaces to roughen them.

See "Ask Smitty" questions in this issue for example birdhouse entrance hole sizes.