

# Create a cosy starling home



## What you will need:

- a plank of wood  
180 mm x 1600 mm x 15-18 mm thick
- pencil and tape measure
- saw
- nails
- strip of waterproof rubber
- ladder
- drill
- ideally a special drill bit for making  
45 mm holes
- screws

## Step by step guide

**1 Find a suitable place for your nestbox.** It will need to be under the eaves of your house or on a mature tree. Make sure you have permission before erecting any box on a property.

It should be at least 3 m (10 feet) from the ground, facing somewhere between north and east to avoid it getting too hot or wet. Avoid placing it in direct sunlight, and don't put it over a doorway or well used path.

**2 If you don't have time or the DIY skills, why not buy a box or two! (Starlings like having neighbours).** Make sure you get one that's the right size. It should be, at least 150 mm wide, 150 mm deep and with a front 250 mm high. The round entrance hole should be 45 mm in diameter, and the hole should be at least 170 mm from the floor of the box. If the hole is too low, it is less likely to be used and more at risk from predators

**3 Make sure you have the right wood.** The thickness is important to insulate the box from cold and heat, and to stop the box warping. You can use

exterior-quality plywood (for a light box) or hardwoods (such as oak and beech) or soft wood (such as pine, but this will deteriorate more quickly). Buy timber approved by the Forest Stewardship Council - look for the FSC label.

**4 Measure and cut your wood.** Mark your plank of timber with your pencil. Then saw your plank according to the diagram. Remember to drill the holes in the bottom for ventilation.

If you don't have the special drill bit for making the 45 mm round hole, you can use a jigsaw to cut a square or wedge shaped hole at the top of the front, as in the diagram.

**5 Nail all the pieces, except the roof, together.** The sides, back and front 'wrap around' the base.

**6 Attach the roof.** It's best to use screws rather than nails so you can get into the box at a later stage to clean it out. Use a waterproof strip to make a hinge along the top edge, such as a piece of bicycle tyre inner tube or roofing felt.

**6 Put your box up.** Drill guide holes at the top and bottom of the box's backing plate. This is where you'll screw the box to its final home. If fixing to a wall, use screws and rawl plugs. If fixing to a tree, use adjustable ties so you don't harm the tree, like thick fencing wire threaded through a strip of hosepipe, with the bare ends twisted together at the back. As the tree grows you can adjust the wire. If you don't have wire and pipe, you can use timberfix bolts screwed into the tree.

While it is tempting to take a peek into your newly-built nestbox, birds don't like disturbance and are protected by law when they're raising a family. So just sit back and enjoy from a distance.

