

Build a Bat Box

Top 7 reasons why you should build a bat box:

1. BATS EAT BUGS - without predators, insects would soon overwhelm the earth. Bats consume enormous quantities. One little brown bat can consume 1200 bugs in an hour, often 2 in a single second. A nursing mother (like your bat box will attract) will eat more than her own body weight nightly – up to 4500 insects, including pests like mosquitoes!
2. BANANAS, PEACHES, AVOCADOS, FIGS, DATES, MANGOES, CASHEWS - Bats pollinate all of these fruits, which means they help these plants reproduce and grow more fruit. No bats = No Fruit!
3. OTHER ANIMALS DEPEND ON BATS – Bats are the “Farmers of the Rainforest” which means they are the key pollinators and seed dispersers of lots of rainforest plants on which many animals depend. Without bats, these plants could not exist. Without these plants, other animals in the rainforest could not exist. The Baobab tree is another good example. Bats are the only ones that can fly up underneath the tree’s blossoms and reach the pollen. This tree is so highly dependent on by other animals; it is called “The Tree of Life”.
4. BATS ARE ENDANGERED – Bats are exceptionally vulnerable to extinction, in part because they’re the slowest reproducing mammals on earth for their size. Most only have one young per year.
5. BATS HAVE BEEN ON EARTH FOR 50 MILLION YEARS!
6. BATS ARE MAMMALS, TOO, JUST LIKE US!
7. VAMPIRE BATS ONLY LIVE IN LATIN AMERICA – Even in Latin America, they only prey on livestock, while they’re sleeping and the livestock don’t even realize they were bitten. They don’t even get sick or die because the bat drinks such a small amount of their blood. Your bat box will probably attract: little brown bats, big bats, and eastern pipistrelle. These bats eat only INSECTS and FRUIT not blood!

Bat Reality:

- There are almost 1000 species of bats. This is about 25% of all mammal species.
- Bats are not blind and don’t get tangled in people’s hair, although these are popular misconceptions.
- Many bats are able to find food and avoid obstacles at night without using their vision. They do this by using echolocation, however not all bats are able to echolocate.

What do bats do for us?

- Insect-eating bats are very important to us as a natural source of pest control.
- Fruit-eating bats re-grow the forest by pollinating flowers and dispersing seeds.
- A single bat can eat about 600 mosquitoes in one hour!
- Bats also feed on many insects which we consider agricultural pests.

What can we do to help bats?

- Many bats need our help! More than 50% of American bat species are in severe decline or already listed as endangered.
- By constructing a bat house near your own home, you can help increase their chances for survival by giving them a place to live.

How to build a bat house

- You will need 6 feet of 1 x 12-inch board and ten feet of 1 x 10-inch board. (DO NOT use any board that has been chemically treated.)
- Spacing between the partitions should remain the same. This design has varied crevice sizes most often used by bats in the United States
- All inner surfaces of the bat house must be rough or horizontally grooved so that the bats can get a firm foothold.
- Use rough lumber and turn the rough sides inward. Cut small horizontal grooves at 1/2-inch intervals on the smooth sides of all partitions.
- Apply a bead of silicone caulk along all exterior joints to prevent heat loss. This holds in the bat's body heat, increasing the probability of occupancy.
- Place the house 10-15 feet above the ground. Bat houses placed on the side of the building or on a pole seem to be the most attractive to bats. Try to avoid placing the bat house in a tree because of the threat of predators.
- The bat house should face the east or the southeast to catch the morning sun.
- If the bat house is placed near a natural water source this may increase your chance of attracting bats.
- Be patient! It may take some time for the bats to move into their new home. Do not open the house to check for bats. Guano, or bat droppings will be visible once the bats have taken residence.

For more information about bats or to purchase a ready-made bat house contact:

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