

"Build Your Own Bat House"

Why Build A Bat House?

Who in the world would think of building a house for bats? The idea sounds farfetched. Once bats are understood, however, their desirable qualities make them excellent neighbors. For example, a single big brown bat can eat 3,000 to 7,000 mosquitoes each night.

Bats are among the most useful and fascinating animals yet many of them have become endangered. One reason for their population decline is loss of habitat. Providing bat houses may help strengthen their populations by acting as substitute habitats.

Bat House Features

There are several important elements to consider when building elements to consider when building a bat house. Daytime temperatures in the bat house must be very hot — about 80° to 90° F. One way to achieve this is to cover the bat house on top and extending down the sides with two or more layers of tar paper. The dark color of the tar paper absorbs the heat from the sun and helps protect bats from the rain. Another alternative would be to paint the bat house black.

The most critical dimension in the a bat house construction is the three-fourth-inch width of the entry space. Inner surfaces of the house must be roughened with a chisel or saw cuts to permit the bats to climb on them with ease. Rough outer surfaces are also preferred.

Locations For Bat Houses

Bat houses should be securely fastened to a tree trunk or the side of a building roughly 12 to 15 feet above the ground. Preferably they should be on the east side of the house or tree where they will receive the morning sun but will be shaded during the afternoon. Bats also seem to prefer sites that are protected from the wind.



The best habitat for bat houses is relatively near rivers, lakes bogs, or marshes where insect populations are high. Ideally they should be located within a half mile from these habitats. Bat houses should be placed by early April, but it may take a year or two for bats to find the house. Once used, it does not need to be cleaned. The most likely occupants of bat houses in Wisconsin are the big brown bat and the little brown bat.

Supplies You Will Need

- One 1" x 8" x 8'0" board, untreated
- Two Hinges
- Nails
- Tarpaper or black paint
- Chisel or saw to roughen wood



How to Cut Your Board

