

ROBIN NEST BOX



The familiar Robin is highly adaptable when it comes to nest sites, using a wide range of opportunities. Nearly all of the sites used will involve some hole, hollow or recess and the species will readily take to a suitable nest box of the 'open-fronted' design. Robins are incredibly wary around the nest and will avoid entering the nest site if they suspect that they are being watched – both during feeding and when building the nest itself. Nest boxes are often re-used in successive years.

CONSTRUCTION

The use of FSC-approved timber, at least 15 mm in thickness, will give this nest box longevity. The cutting plan, overleaf, has been shown to be successful by BTO nest recorders working on the species. Use the 'medium height' option of 100 mm for the front panel, as this has been shown to work best for Robin. Make sure that the roof is long enough to overlap the open-front and its large entrance. Use screws and glue to make the joins.

Don't forget to drill drainage holes into the base and pre-drill holes in the back plate to allow attachment to a tree or building. The size of the entrance should enable you to access the nest without the need for a hinged lid, allowing you to clean out the box at the end of the season – nest boxes should be cleaned out between 1 September and 31 January. Easy access also supports the all-important monitoring visits that provide very valuable information to the BTO Nest Records Scheme.

Use a water-based preservative on the outside of the box and leave the inside bare. There is no need to add any lining to the box, the Robin will shape a nest from a cup of leaves, grass and moss, lined with finer grasses, plant fibres and hair. Attach the box to a tree or a building, using aluminium nails for a tree in order to minimise risk to anyone in the future who cuts into the tree with a chainsaw.

PLACEMENT

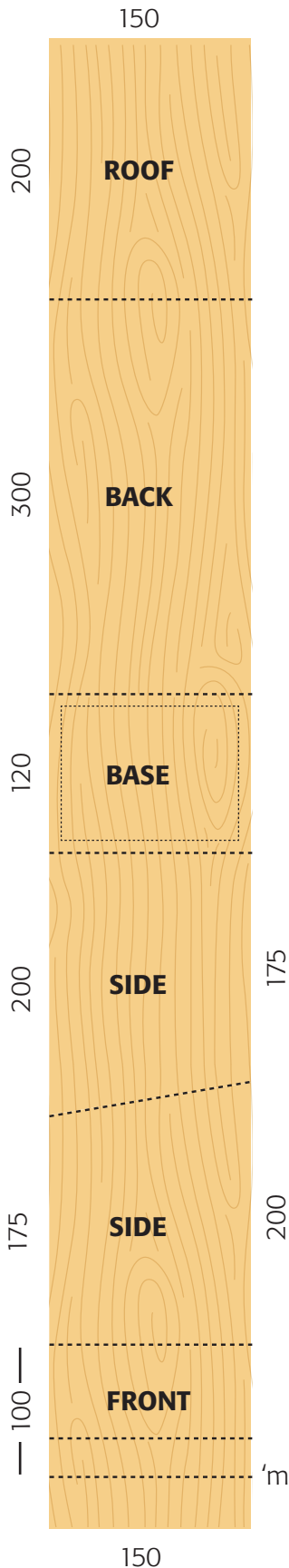
Robin nest boxes are best placed so that the entrance hole is facing north-east and is sheltered from the prevailing wind and rain. Avoid obvious sun traps, such as south-facing walls. The box should be placed within the cover of a climber or overhanging vegetation. Robins typically nest quite low, usually below 6–7 feet off the ground. You are responsible for your own safety, so assess the risks and take care when building the box, fixing it into position and when monitoring.

MONITORING

Some 400 or so Robin nests are monitored annually by BTO volunteers, including many that are placed in open-fronted nest boxes of this design. We are, however, still keen to secure more information from a wider range of sites, particularly those in gardens and urban parks. Robins are very wary around the nest and individuals will avoid visiting if they think that they are being watched. Some individuals may make false visits to other sites in an attempt to deflect attention from the nest itself. As with other nesting birds, avoid making visits to a nest that is still being built or at which egg-laying has only just started. With less invested in the nesting attempt at this stage, a nesting bird may be more prone to disturbance.

ROBIN NEST BOX – CUTTING PLAN

Plank size c. 150 x 1095 mm
All measurements are in mm



WEATHERPROOFING

Weatherproof the roof with water-based preservative and ensure it overlaps the front of the box to stop rain reaching the entrance hole.

ROOF JOINT

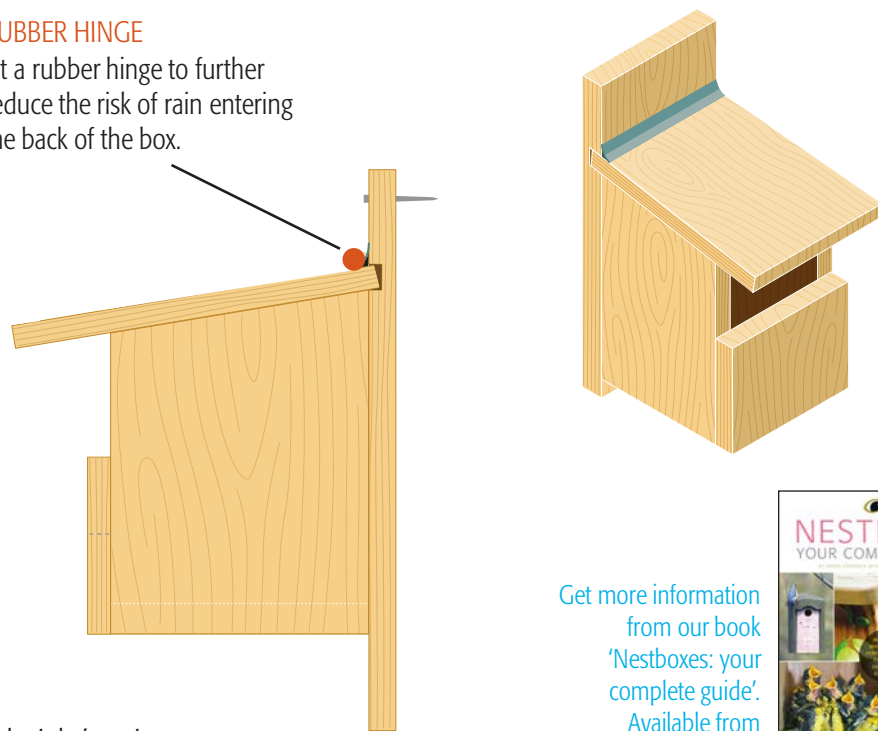
To minimise the risk of rain entering the back of the box it is worth cutting a groove into the back plate to accommodate the back edge of the roof.

FLOOR PANEL

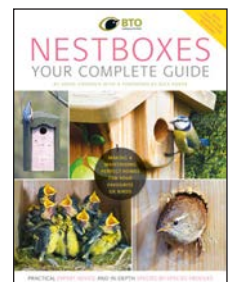
Trim the floor panel to fit inside all four walls of the box.

RUBBER HINGE

Fit a rubber hinge to further reduce the risk of rain entering the back of the box.



Get more information from our book 'Nestboxes: your complete guide'. Available from www.bto.org



Robin *Erithacus rubecula*

Clutch size: 4–5 eggs

Incubation: 13–14 days

Chicks fledge at: 13–14 days

Broods: 2 (3) per year

Seasonality of nests with eggs (E) and young (y), derived from Nest Record Scheme data.

	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
E												
Y												