

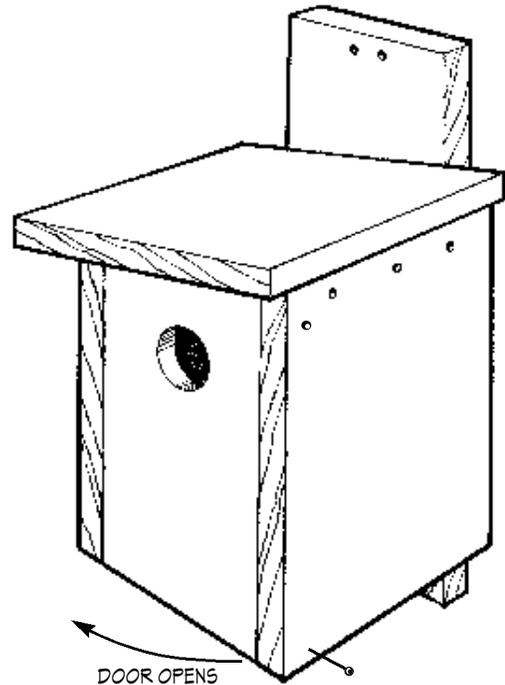
The Better Bluebird Box

by Alita and Montelle Wilson

BIRDWATCHER'S
DIGEST

There are almost as many bluebird box designs as there are bluebird fans in North America. Using this design, we have had very good luck with bluebirds. The primary difference with our design is the side-slanting roof that prevents rain from cascading down the front of the box, which in very cold weather, we have noticed, can form ice in front of the nest hole.

We have placed our boxes all over the United States—Utah, Missouri, Georgia, Kentucky—and even in parts of Canada. In fact, we like to carry a spare box around in our car so that we can put up boxes wherever we see bluebirds. We enjoy helping these special birds in any way we can.



Illustrations by Sally Onopa

Notes:

1. All nail holes should be predrilled, or you can use an electric nail gun.
2. Mount the box to face southeast to catch the rising sun. Pole-mounting the box five feet off the ground with a baffle beneath will keep predators from the box.
3. Clean the box in early spring before the nesting season. The front panel opens from the bottom for easy cleaning. To open, remove the aluminum nail on the side of the box, near the bottom.
4. Slant the roof as illustrated to prevent run-off water in winter from freezing over holes. More roof overhang above the entry hole prevents rain, snow, and sun from reaching nestlings. Add two inches to the roof length over the hole.
5. Stain the box with a light-colored solid body stain on the outside only. It may also be painted a light color (to reflect heat), or sealed with a clear, waterproof sealer.

For excellent bluebird-landlord advice, see *Enjoying Bluebirds More*, by Julie Zickefoose.

