

Do I want a Bat House?

Whether you build or buy a bat house, make sure you meet certain criteria. Meeting these criteria will greatly increase your odds of attracting bats. These recommendations are based on 12 years of bat-house research conducted across the U.S, Canada and the Caribbean by Bat Conservation International.

Observation: First and foremost. Do you see bats on your property? Not sure. Careful observation at dusk when bats begin their nightly flights and there is still enough light left to make them out is the best time of day to confirm their presence on your property. If you cannot confirm this then read no further – you do not want a bat house. If, on the other hand, bats are present at the location you wish to erect a house – read on...

Design: All bat houses should be at least 2 feet tall, have chambers at least 20 inches tall and 14 inches wide, and have a landing area extending below the entrance at least 3 to 6 inches. Taller and wider houses are even better. Most bat houses have one to four roosting chambers – the more the better. Roost partitions should be carefully spaced 3/4 to 1 inch apart. All partitions and landing areas should be roughened. Wood surfaces can be scratched or grooved horizontally, at roughly 1/4- to 1/2-inch intervals, or covered with durable, square plastic mesh (1/8- or 1/4-inch mesh). *Small or poorly made houses commonly sold in gift shops are likely to fail.* At **ForTheBirdsNatureShop.ca** we only sell bat house models that have been certified or meet the minimum requirements as determined by Bat Conservation International.

Habitat: Most nursery colonies of bats choose roosts within 1/4 mile of water, preferably a stream, river or lake. Greatest bat house success has been achieved in areas of diverse habitat, especially where there is a mixture of varied agricultural use and natural vegetation. Bat houses are most likely to succeed in regions where bats are already attempting to live in buildings.

Mounting Instructions: Finding the proper place to mount your bat house will increase your chances of attracting and maintaining a healthy bat colony. Please consider the following:

1. Place your bat house so it faces south or southeast and will receive the full benefit of the morning sun.
2. Position your bat house at least 12 feet above the ground, 15-20 feet is even better.
3. Mount your bat house to a pole or building. Housing placed on trees are seldom used.
4. Consider what is beneath your bat house as guano, bat dung, will drop from the bats frequenting the house.

“You can have any colour bat house you want as long as it’s black!” If you live in the Canada, be sure your house will receive at least 6 to 8 hours of direct sunlight. Baby bats need a very warm house when they are born. Painting your house black will increase the heat absorption and therefore increase your chances of occupancy. Use water-based paint or stain.

Monitoring and Maintenance: The International Bat Conservation recommends monitoring your house at least once a month (preferably more often) to detect potential problems such as predators, overheating, wood deterioration, etc. Any repairs or cleaning should be performed when bats are not present and new caulk, paint or stain may be required after a few years to stop leaks and drafts. After the bats have left for the year is a good time to give your house an extensive inspection.

The more information you know about bats, the greater your likelihood of having a healthy bat colony. For more information visit Bat Conservation International at:

www.batcon.org