

- Suggested story concept

- Researched and wrote story and instructions

# Home, Tweet Home

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**G**et nesting season off to a good start by building a sheltering box or shelf for your backyard birds. Boxes provide safe sites for cavity-nesting species as their natural nesting places – holes in old trees – disappear, and give you and your children an up-close look at life on the wing.

## Nest Box and Shelf

The box is designed for chickadees, downy woodpeckers and nuthatches, the shelf for pheobes and robins.

### YOU NEED:

*For box and shelf:*

3-ft length of 1x10\* pine, for each

Saw and hammer

Drill, No. Six countersink bit (optional), 1/4-in and 9/64-in bits, and bits for screwing

Fine-grit sandpaper, wood filler, spar varnish and paintbrush (all optional)

Pencil, ruler and set square

*For box only:*

Scrap of 1/4-in mesh hardware cloth, 3 3/4 x 4 in

16 No. Six 1 1/2-in wood screws

4 No. Six 1-in wood screws

Three 1-in common nails

1 1/4-in hole saw or spade bit

Staple gun

*For shelf only:*

15 No. Six 1 1/2-in wood screws

Plane or tablesaw

\*Nominal size; actual size is 3/4 x 9 1/2 in.



### TO MAKE:

#### NOTES:

- Refer to appropriate cutting and assembly diagrams as you work.
- Use pencil, ruler and set square to measure and mark cutting lines on pine; cut out all pieces with saw.
- Predrill and countersink all screw holes. If desired, finish all surfaces of shelf and outside of box as follows: Fill screw holes and let dry. Sand. Apply 1 or 2 coats of varnish, letting dry after each. ▶

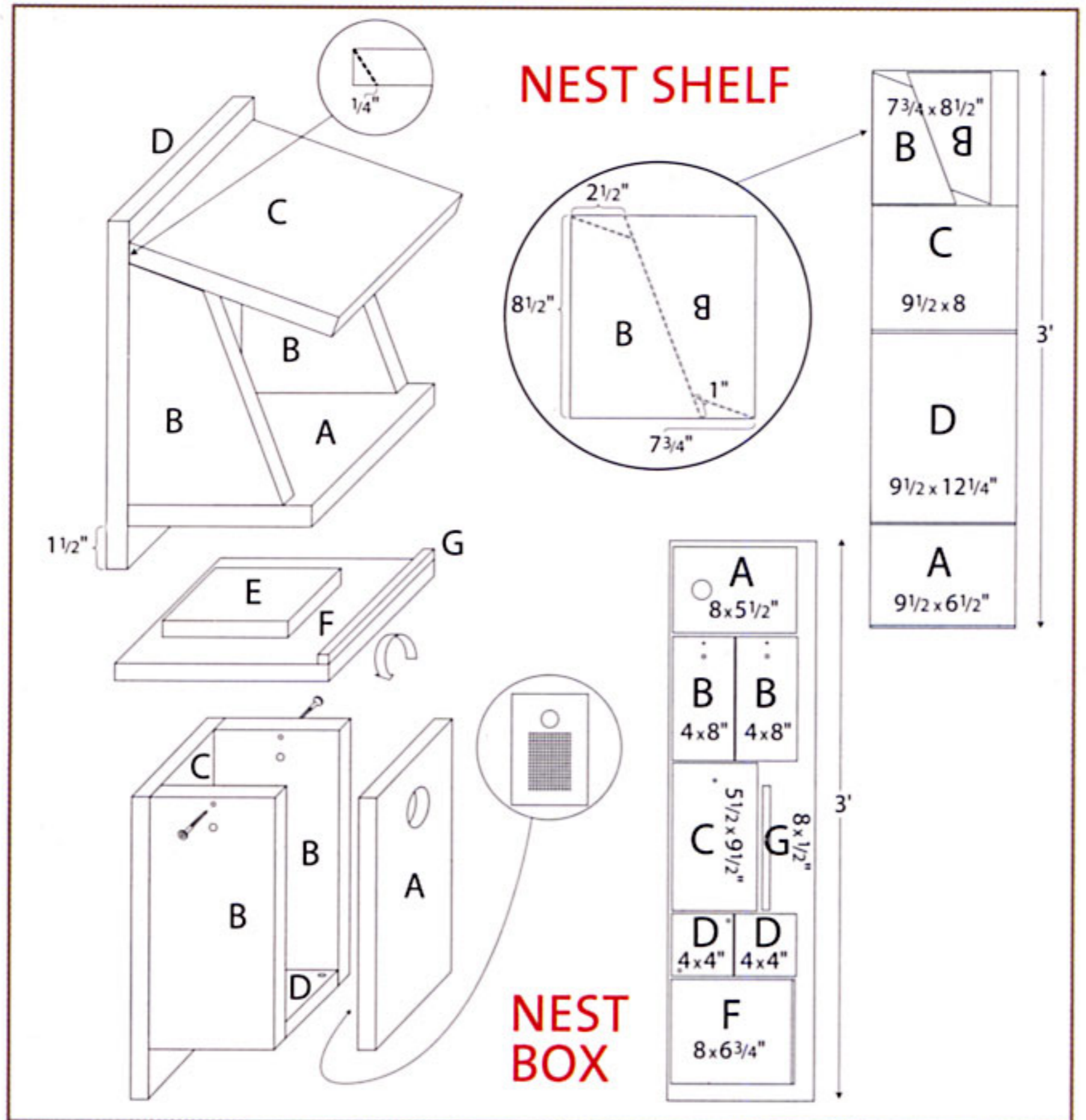


## Nest Box

- 1 Measure and mark pine as shown in cutting diagram; cut out.
- 2 **On each B:** With centre of  $\frac{9}{64}$ -in bit  $\frac{3}{8}$  in from top edge, drill centred screw hole. With centre of  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in bit  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in from top edge, drill centred vent hole.
- 3 **On A:** With centre of hole saw 2 in from top edge, drill centred entry hole. Approx  $\frac{7}{8}$  in from bottom and side edges, staple mesh to inside.
- 4 **On D:** With  $\frac{1}{4}$ -in bit, drill drainage hole at 2 diagonally opposite corners.
- 5 Using two  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in screws to fasten each edge: With top edges flush, fasten C to back edge of each B. With bottom of D flush with bottom edges of each B, fasten Bs to D. With top edges flush, fasten A to Bs and D, to form box.
- 6 Using 1-in screw at each corner, centre E on underside of F,  $\frac{3}{4}$  in from 1 long (back) edge; fasten. With one  $\frac{1}{2}$ -in tall (front) edge of G flush with front edge of F, nail G to underside of F, to complete lid. Invert lid and fit into box. Using 2 remaining  $1\frac{1}{2}$ -in screws, loosely screw through each B into edge of E (screws are removed for box clean-out each fall).

## Nest Shelf

- 1 Measure and mark pine as shown in cutting diagram; cut out. With plane, bevel 1 long (back) edge of C as shown in assembly diagram.
- 2 Using 2 screws to fasten each edge: With 1 long (back) edge of A flush with back edges of B, fasten A to Bs. With underside of A  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in from 1 short (bottom) edge of D, fasten D to A and Bs. Using 3 screws to fasten back edge and 1 screw to fasten each side edge, fasten C to D and Bs. ●



## Designer's Tips

- If desired, replace pine with rough barnboard and leave unfinished (don't use pressure-treated lumber, which can be toxic to young birds).
- If you prefer a painted box or shelf, choose nontoxic paint in muted green, grey or brown.
- Don't add a perch or platform – these make it easier for predators to get at the nest.
- Securely mount box or shelf at least 6 ft aboveground and facing away from the prevailing wind, on a post, tree trunk or wall (ensure it's accessible for fall clean-out). And choose a spot that's sheltered from direct sunshine for some of the day (mount the shelf under the eaves on an exterior wall, for example).
- The entry-hole size is all-important and determines which birds will nest in your box. For information on hole sizes for specific bird species, good mounting sites, predator proofing and more, visit *Hinterland Who's Who* at [www.hww.ca/hww2.asp?id=228](http://www.hww.ca/hww2.asp?id=228).
- Get your kids involved with Project NestWatch, a national online program that relies on volunteers to collect data on nesting activity – an indicator of the health of bird populations and our shared habitat. Find out more at [www.bsc-eoc.org/national/nestwatch.html](http://www.bsc-eoc.org/national/nestwatch.html).
- Building a birdhouse tops the Nature Canada list 12 Ways to Make Your Backyard Bird-Friendly. Find the other 11 at [www.naturecanada.ca/bird\\_cons\\_involved\\_backyard.asp](http://www.naturecanada.ca/bird_cons_involved_backyard.asp).