

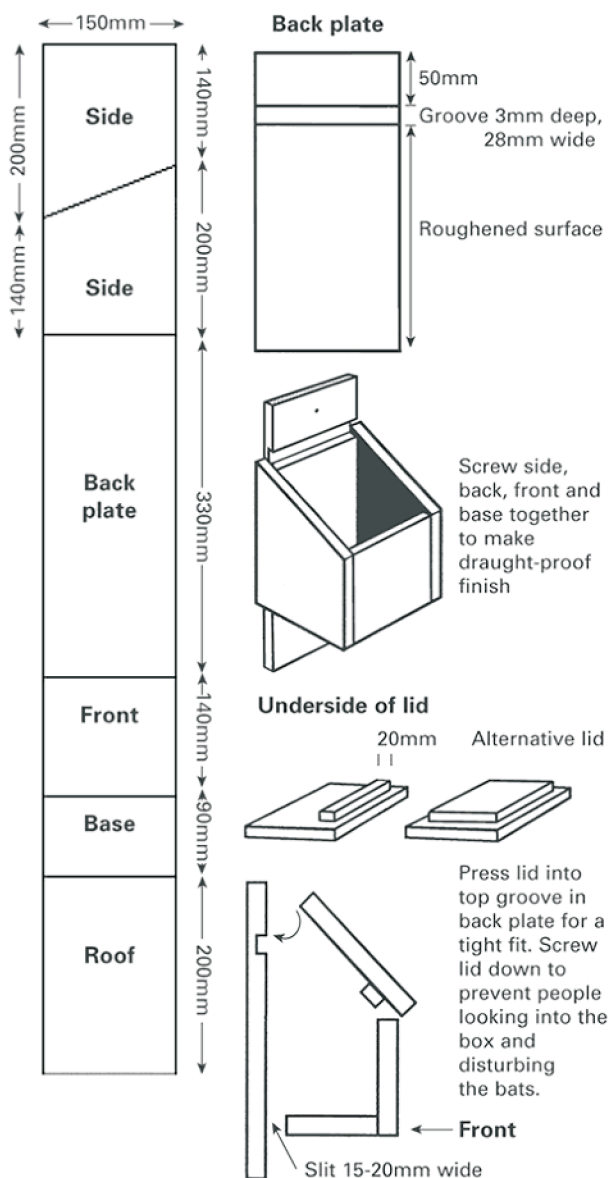
Building the Bat box

Building a bat box is easy with care. It is best to use solid, durable timber. Bats may take some time to find and use the box, but will often then use it for years.

Seasoned British hardwoods, such as sweet chestnut or oak, are good but can be expensive. Pine is cheaper but less durable. Please try to buy Forest Stewardship Council labelled timber this comes from sustainably managed forests particularly if you use foreign hardwoods. Salvage timber is likely to be unusable because of previous chemical treatments it may have been subject to.

Rough wood is better as this helps bats to get a good grip as they clamber around, inspecting the bat box. If the wood is smooth, rough it up by using the teeth of a saw.

For each bat box you will need a plank of wood 150 mm wide and 25 mm thick. To complete construction, just follow the diagram.



Important information

There are some important things to remember when making and siting bat boxes.

- Only use untreated wood tanalised wood is not suitable. Do not use any wood preservatives or paints. Bats are sensitive to smells and some chemicals are harmful to bats.
- Fixing your bat box with nails may damage the tree so ask the tree owner to attach the box with wire around the trunk or branch. Use a piece of hose or section of car tyre over the wire to prevent damage to the tree. Remember that trees grow, so any fixings should be checked every year.
- Place your bat boxes as high up as you can so they are safe from cats. It is best to put them on trees but you can use the sides of buildings. Three boxes per tree are ideal, facing north, south-east and south-west. Boxes facing in different directions may be used at different times of the year and in varying conditions. Make sure there are no branches around the box bats like an uncluttered flightpath to and from the box.
- It is useful to site boxes in places where bats are known to feed but have no nearby roosts. Good sites are near rivers, ponds, woodland glades and sheltered hedgerows. The sides of woodland rides are good places, as are trees that are a little isolated. These trees are easy to spot in urban areas such as parks, schools and hospital grounds.
- Dont forget to contact your local bat group to let them know what you are doing. They will be able to offer help and advice.
- Never disturb your bat boxes it is illegal to disturb bats and it is also cruel. The best way to see if the boxes are being used is to look for small, dry, crumbly droppings below the box or for the bats themselves leaving the boxes as night falls. If you find bats in the box, only a licensed bat warden is allowed to inspect it in the future.
- Dont worry if you think your bat boxes are not being used immediately. Bats leave little trace and are rarely seen as they move about a lot so they may well be using the box. If you find treecreepers, blue, coal or great tits nesting in your bat box, check the size of your entrance slit it is probably too big.

IMPORTANT: if you find a sick or ailing bat, you should not approach or handle the animal but seek advice from the Bat Conservation Trust.