

Single-slot bat house

Make your garden into a wildlife haven with Derek Jones' design for a simple bat box

This bat box makes use of materials that are easily obtained from a well-stocked timber yard or builders' merchants. Most of the components are cut from a sheet of 25 x 228mm prepared softwood timber, with a finished dimension of 19 x 216mm. The front is made up from ship lap cladding, of the sort often used to face the exterior of buildings. The design provides a ventilation slot to prevent any animals roosting inside from overheating in hot weather.

Remember to cut grooves into the panels to help the bats grip the surfaces when they land and roost.

Do not use wood preservatives because the chemicals can harm or kill bats.

SPECIES TO EXPECT

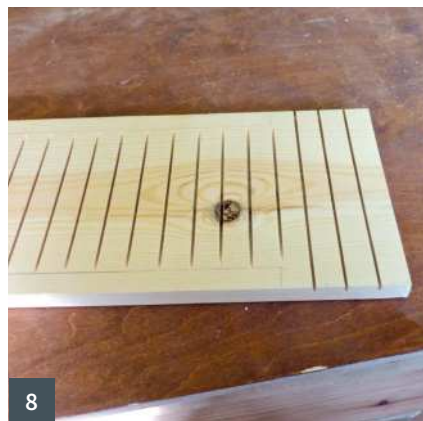
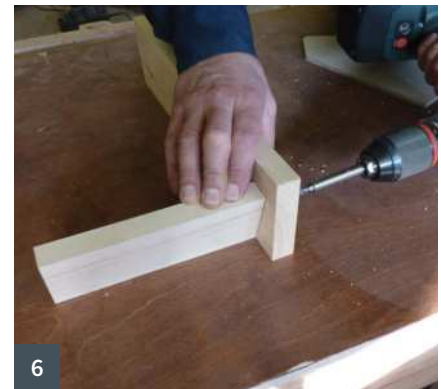
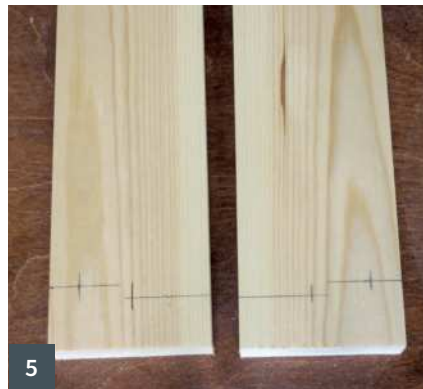
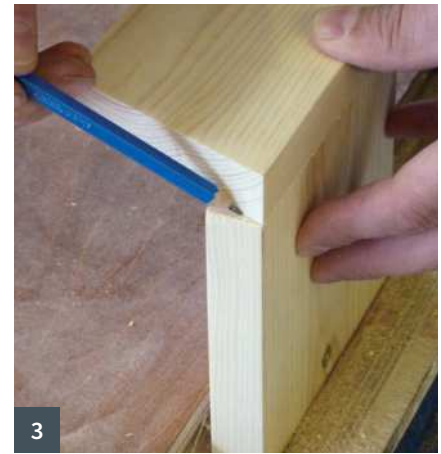


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This bat house might offer shelter to:

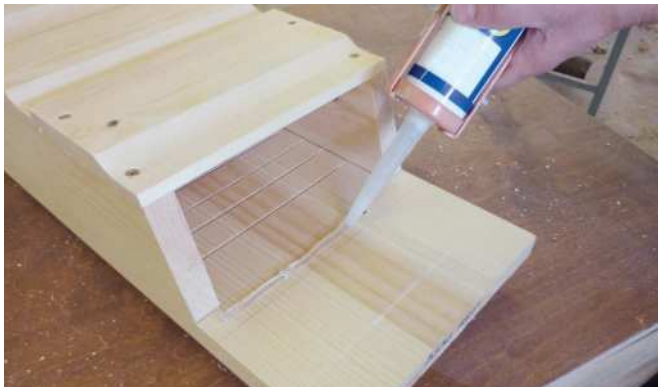
UK species: common pipistrelle (above), Natterer's bat, brown long-eared bat, Leisler's bat, noctule, Daubenton's bat, Bechstein's bat, barbastelle.

US species: eastern pipistrelle, little brown bat, big brown bat, evening bat, Mexican free-tailed bat, Pallas's mastiff bat, long-eared bat, south-eastern bat, pallid bat.

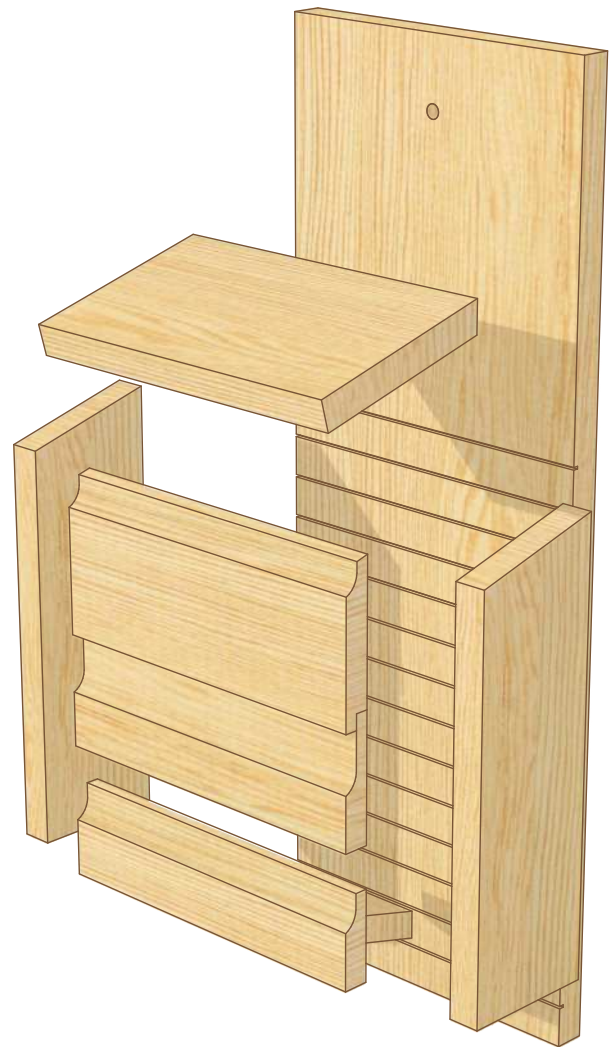


- 1 Having cut your ship lap to size, remove the lip on two of the pieces and leave one piece untouched for now.
- 2 Having cut your side pieces with a 15° angle on one end, use this to mark the same angle on the edge of one of the ship lap pieces at the thin edge. Using a plane, create this angle along the top (thin) edge. This will become the top section of the front of the box.
- 3 Take the piece you have cut for the lid and follow the same process to create a 15° bevel along one long edge. Then do exactly the same to the two long edges for the bottom piece.
- 4 On one side, hold the bottom in place so that the angled edge is flush with the front edge of the side. Make some marks where you think the screws need to be to hold the bottom in place. Lay the sides back to back then front to front to replicate these lines on the other side.
- 5 Repeat this process to establish precisely where you need to drill

- the holes for the screws. The bottom of this box is sloped to help bat droppings fall out, and the gap is large enough for it to be used as an entrance hole.
- 6 Take one side and hold it firmly face down on the bench with the bottom in place. Now screw together.
 - 7 With the sides and bottom screwed together, hold them on the face of the back board and draw round the inside, top and bottom.
 - 8 If you make this box from smooth-faced timber or ply, you will need to create some form of grip for the bats to cling onto when they are inside. Here, I have cut some grooves using a cross-cut saw to within about 50mm from the top of the box.
 - 9 Mark two lines across the back where the lid will go and then drill holes at an angle for the screws. A quick and easy way to do this is to hold the side with the correct angle close to where you are drilling and line it up by eye.



PHOTOGRAPH BY ANTHONY BALLEW/GMC PUBLICATIONS



- 10** Drill holes in the back and fix to the sides. Take the first piece of ship lap (with the angle on the top edge) and fix it in place with two screws at the top. Slide the second piece underneath the lip and hold it in place while you put the second screws in. The last piece of ship lap is fixed with the bottom edge flush with the bottom of the sides.
- 11** To help make this box as warm and dry as possible, use a line of silicone sealant around the edges where the lid will fit.
- 12** Finally, screw the lid on. Once the box is assembled, you may wish to run a second bead of silicone along the top edge on the outside. If you have even the slightest gap now it will only increase as the timber begins to acclimatise to being out in all weathers.
- 13** The finished box should look like this.