

# DIY bat box

GW486

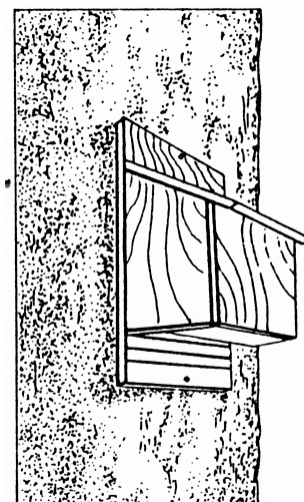
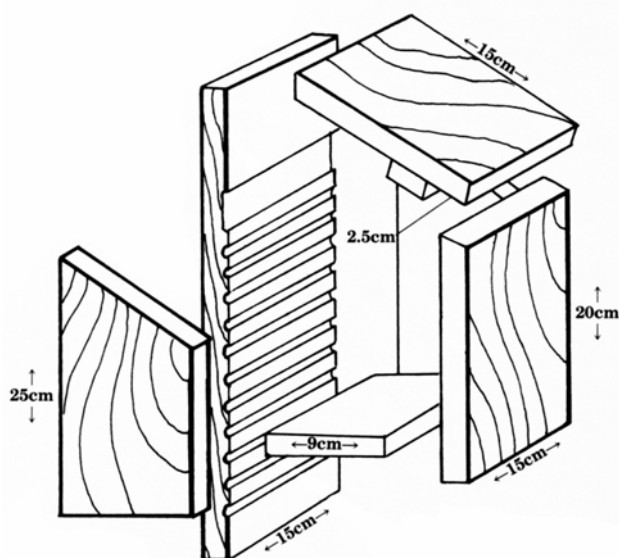
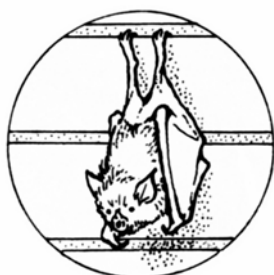
Rafters, hollow trees, caves and tunnels are favoured roosts for bats, but a bat box is a practical alternative and will help to encourage bats into your garden.

## Why build a bat box?

All common British species of bats are insect eaters, so they will help to control garden pests. It's difficult to encourage them unless they're already in your neighbourhood. However, if they already visit your garden it's worth putting up bat boxes for them to roost in, as they need a wide choice of places to shelter at different times of the year.

## Building a bat box

1. Cut pieces of 2cm thick wood to shape as shown in the diagram.
2. Drill fixing holes at the top and bottom of the back wall.
3. Make horizontal cuts, using a saw, a few millimetres deep in the back wall, for the bats to hang from.
4. Fashion a larger groove about 25mm wide and 12mm deep at the top of the back wall to support the roof.
5. Nail or screw the back wall, sides and base together, making sure there is a gap of 15-20mm between the base and the back wall. This is used as an entrance.



6. Nail a batten to the underside of the lid approximately 25mm from the bottom edge and wedge the lid into the larger groove at the top of the back wall.
7. Nail the box in position using the holes in the back wall.

## Some tips

The diagram above shows the ideal bat box. If you decide to make one to your own design, bear the following points in mind:

- ❖ The entrance slit should be around 15-20mm wide and run the width of the box.
- ❖ The back wall of the box should be roughened sufficiently to allow bats to cling on.
- ❖ It should have a removable lid to make cleaning easier.
- ❖ A box 15cm long will hold colonies of 50 or more bats.
- ❖ Do not use treated wood.

- ❖ In summer, bats prefer south-facing boxes; hibernating bats prefer north-facing boxes.
- ❖ The box should be sited at least 1.5m and preferably 5m above the ground, on a tree trunk or house wall.

## Bat law

If you find bats nesting in your loft or under loose tiles or fascia boards - leave them. All British bats are protected by law and some species, like the grey long-eared bat, are very rare. If you need to treat loft timber for woodworm or rot or do any work that would disturb them, or if you would like them to be removed, contact your local Wildlife Trust or the Wildlife Trusts Office 01636 677711 [www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org) or the Bat Conservation Trust 020 7627 2629 [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)