

SOME DO'S AND DON'T'S FOR BLUEBIRD TRAILS

DO'S

1. SECURE LANDOWNER'S PERMISSION WHEN PUTTING UP BOXES.
2. PLACE BOXES 3 1/2 – 4 1/2 FEET ABOVE GROUND LEVEL.
3. WHENEVER POSSIBLE PLACE THE BOX FACING A SMALL TREE OR SHRUB. IF A FENCE POST IS USED, FACE BOX PARALELL TO THE FENCE WHEN POSSIBLE. THIS ESTABLISHES PERCH SITES FOR THE MALE WHEN THE FEMALE IS BROODING. TOTAL DISTANCE FROM THE BOX TO A PERCH SHOULD BE 5' TO 100'. FACE BOX AWAY FROM PREVALING WINDS.
4. PLACE BOXES IN PASTURE OR SHORT GRASS AREAS. REMEMBER BLUEBIRDS FORAGE ON THE GROUND TO SECURE FOOD.
5. USE HOME & YARD AREAS SUCH AS SUMMER HOMES, CABINS, RURAL YARDS WHERE THERE ARE NO CATS. BLUEBIRDS TOLERATE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN.
6. FOR EXPERIMENTAL TRAILS, PLACE 4-5 BOXES TO THE MILE. IF SUCCESSFUL, MORE BOXES CAN BE ADDED LATER ON TO INCREASE THE TRAIL; NEVER PLACE BOXES CLOSER THAN 100 YARDS FROM EACH OTHER. NUMBERING BOXES MAKES RECORD KEEPING SIMPLE.
7. CLEAN BOXES AFTER EACH FLEDGING, IF POSSIBLE, OR AT LEAST EACH FALL TO AVOID MITES AND FLY LARVAE FROM OVER-WINTERING AND ATTACKING NEXT YEAR'S BROODS. SOME FOLKS HAVE SUCCESSFULLY WAITED UNTIL SPRING TO CLEAN BOXES, BUT OFTEN MICE OR OTHER SMALL VARMIT'S WINTER IN THE NEST BOXES.
8. MONITOR BOXES ABOUT ONCE A WEEK DURING THE NESTING SEASON SO YOU CAN KEEP TRACK OF THE NUMBER OF EGGS AND YOUNG.

DON'T'S

1. AVOID PLACING BOXES NEAR THICKETS OF THORN APPLE, CHOKECHERRY, WILD ROSE OR JUNIPER CLUMPS FOUND IN DRYER AREAS AS THIS HABITAT IS USED BY HOUSE WRENS, WHICH WILL DESTROY BLUEBIRD NESTS.
2. AVOID PLACING BOXES NEAR SUMMER FALLOW OR WHEAT CROP AREAS AS THERE IS NO FOOD AVAILABLE AND THERE IS DANGER FROM SPRAYING.
3. AVOID PLACING ON FENCE POSTS WITH BRACES RUNNING TO THE GROUND AS WEASELS AND CHIPMINKS CAN READILY RUN UP TO THE BOX.
4. AVOID PLACING IN AREAS OF HEAVY TIMBER AND DENSE GROUND COVER.
5. AVOID PLACING IN AREAS CLOSE TO STAGNANT PONDS AND SWAMPS BECAUSE TREE SWALLOWS WILL CLAIM THE BOXES.
6. AVOID PLACING BOXES WITHIN A QUARTER MILE OF FARM BUILDINGS OR FEEDLOTS BECAUSE OF CATS AND HOUSE SPARROWS.

((AYLESWORTH & HERSHBERGER; SIALIA, V5, #4;AUTUMN '83))