

Hanging a Bat House

Who would want a house for bats....and why!?



Did you know that insect-eating bats eat billions of tons of insects each summer? They protect our crops and keep our costs down at the market place. Fruit bats bring us over 450 commercial products and 80 medicines through pollination and seed dispersal. Over 95% of rainforest re-growth comes from seeds that have been spread by

fruit bats. And besides that they are just darn cute! So that is why I purchased a bat house at a home show that Shari and I were presenting at and hung it on my house.

If you'd like more information about bats I found a website called Bat World Sanctuary at http://www.batworld.org/myths_facts/myths_facts.html. This site gave me all sorts of useful information and they have bat house plans as well if you would like to construct your own.

But as far as putting up your own bat house here are the hanging instructions and location guide.

Location, Location, Location

- 1) For best results the house should be placed on the southwest side of the house. And should be placed at the height of 15 feet to 25 feet from the ground.
- 2) The house should face a clearing and not be near any power lines or trees, even though bats aren't blind – myth...they can see as well as we do, they do like to have easy access to insects and a clear landing path.



3) Even though there are no tricks to attracting a bat to their new home, have the house within a ¼ mile of a body of water, like a lake, stream or pond does seem to help. And of course if there are more bats in the neighborhood they seem to be attracted to that as well, so if there are caves or bat hangouts already they will be more likely to move in to their

new home. The photo here is a bats eye view from the house.

4) Don't hang a bat house in a tree, they tend not to roost in a tree, those that do are usually loners and just like to hang out by themselves, get it hang out...I'm killing myself...don't forget to tip your waitresses.

How to hang a bat house.

1) Find the location on your home that fits the criteria above. If the house has side vents, make sure that they are left clear for proper ventilation.



2) Using a safe extension ladder – with ladder mitts to protect the siding.

3) Measure up at least 15- 25 feet from the ground.



4) Secure the bat house to the wall using 2 inch galvanized screws (galvanized won't rust).

How do you know if a bat has started to occupy the house? Well, colonial bats like to move around during the day in the house looking for a roost mate or just looking for the best resting spot, so they can be a little noisy. Also, and I know Shari won't like this; they tend to make a little mess with their bathroom habits, so there will be bat droppings on the ground. Just rinse off the area with a hose.

Since I have placed my house I have gone out every day to check the progress, in fact it is driving me bats that I haven't had a visit, let alone a tenant to move in. But it takes patience, it may take up to 6 months to a year for bats to move in, any longer and you may consider relocating the house.



By the way, for you bird lovers which I am, bats and birds don't compete for food or space.

One more thing, yes these little creatures are cute, shy and gentle, but they are wild animals and should be treated like any animal in the wild. Don't pick one up if you find one on the ground, they may bite in self defense and contrary to popular myth they don't "carry" rabies. However, they are capable of catching the disease just like any other mammal.

And another one more thing....they are one of the slowest reproducing animals on earth. Most only have one offspring per year and the bat population is declining. Half of the bats in the US are listed as rare, threatened or endangered. So please consider these little guys and give them a home, your mosquito's will hate you for it.

Bat....(Matt)



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