



19th February 2024

National Nestbox Week – Choosing the right bird box with British Garden Centres

Britain is known for its love of birds, and with National Nestbox Week (14th – 21st February) underway, we focus on breeding garden birds during this important time of year. One way to help improve the quality of life for birds is to introduce a bird box to your garden. A bird box is just as important as a feeder or bird bath when looking after garden birds. The British Garden Centres team has created a guide to help you choose the perfect bird box to ensure birds have a safe and comfortable home.

The bird population in Britain is facing a serious shortage of nesting holes as our gardens, parks, and woodlands have been transformed into more neat spaces, leaving fewer natural holes for birds to nest in. The removal of dead trees, the trimming of hedges, and the clearing of fallen branches, which once provided a safe and secure home for birds, are now seen as unsightly and often removed from the landscape.

In addition to this, modern buildings offer fewer nooks and crannies, which birds could use as a place to nest. The design of modern buildings leaves fewer gaps for birds to inhabit. The decline in the ecosystems they inhabit is also contributing. Birds play a vital role in the food chain, and their absence can have far-reaching consequences. Therefore, we must take steps to address this issue by creating more habitats for birds to nest and a nestbox from your local British Garden Centres store is the ideal solution.

How to choose your bird/nestbox

Regarding bird boxes, there are two primary types: those with a hole at the front and open-fronted boxes.

The holed bird boxes tend to be most popular with smaller garden birds such as tits and sparrows. Be sure to look for boxes with a variety of hole sizes to accommodate different species of birds. A small 25-28mm hole is perfect for the tit family and tree sparrows, while a larger 45mm hole is ideal for larger birds like starlings and blackbirds.

Open-fronted boxes are preferred by birds that prefer to nestle in undergrowth, such as robins and song thrushes.

When selecting your bird box, it is important to choose one made from an insulated material like wood, with walls that are at least 15mm thick to prevent warping out in the unpredictable UK weather.



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The internal floor area of your bird box should measure at least 130 square centimetres (20 square inches) to allow the birds to lay their eggs and raise their young comfortably. Additionally, drainage holes located at the bottom can be a useful addition, as can a sloped roof to help water runoff during wet, rainy spells. Your local British Garden Centres team will be able to advise the best choices for our feathered friends in your garden.

Positioning your nestbox

We suggest that you position your nestboxes on tree trunks or posts high up and away from predators like cats. Ideally, you should secure them on a tree with plenty of foliage to provide cover and shelter. For boxes with an open front, you can place them at around head height on walls or fences.

We recommend you avoid hanging your bird box in direct sunlight as the birds may not be able to tolerate the heat. Try facing the nestbox between a northern and easterly direction, as this provides natural protection from the weather elements.

Don't hang multiple bird boxes close together. This can cause aggressive behaviour between neighbouring birds, especially during the nesting season.

Cleaning your nestbox

It's important to clean your bird boxes at the end of every nesting season. This helps to prevent the spread of avian diseases and keep your feathered friends in good health.

October or November is the prime time to clean and refresh your bird box as they are no longer occupied. The inside of your bird box should be easily accessed through the roof or a side hatch so you can dispose of old nesting materials and give the box a thorough clean before rehang. Always wear rubber gloves and use boiling water when cleaning as some diseases can affect humans too and dispose of your cleaning brush immediately.

Amy Stubbs of British Garden Centres said: "We are delighted to help with National Nestbox Week by emphasising the importance of providing nesting spaces for British garden birds. Due to habitat loss from urbanisation and modern building design, there's a shortage of natural nesting sites and our team can offer guidance on selecting bird boxes to bring avian visitors to your home."



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ENDS

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Notes to Editors:

About the business:

British Garden Centres (BGC) is the UK's largest family-owned garden centre group with 62 centres around the country. The group is owned and led by The Stubbs family, who also own and operate Woodthorpe Leisure Park in Lincolnshire.

BGC was launched in 1987 with the opening of Woodthorpe Garden Centre by brothers Charles and Robert Stubbs. Since 2018 it has expanded rapidly with the acquisition of 50 garden centres allowing it to grow from its heartland to the business it is now with 62 garden centres spread from Carmarthen to Ramsgate, Wimborne to East Durham.

The group has a team of 2,700 colleagues working across the garden centres, restaurants, 2 growing nurseries, 4 distribution centres, Woodthorpe Leisure Park, and Woody's Restaurant & Bar.

Social Media

Facebook: British Garden Centres

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Website: www.britishgardencentres.com

Contact

Cassie King - PR Officer

cking@britishgardencentres.com

07875 337290