

## Nestbox Frequently Asked Questions

- 1) Do nestboxes get too hot in Arizona to be used safely?

We have conducted studies to ensure safest mounting methods: overhead shade and north or east exposure to avoid harsh afternoon sun.

- 2) Why should I put a nestbox in my yard?

Urbanization is an ever-rising problem for birds because their habitat is destroyed and cavity-bearing trees and cacti are removed. By putting a nestbox in your yard you provide more options for the birds and decrease competition for good nesting locations.

- 3) Where should I place my nestbox?

North or east side of tree or structure under leaf shade is recommended. Boxes can also be put onto a pole under shade. Kestrel and Owl boxes must have clear flight path into the box. Install your nestbox out of foot traffic area as parents will become agitated if approached.

Please see our main Nestbox page [www.tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox](http://www.tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox) for more species-specific information on installation.

- 4) When should I put up my nestbox?

For most birds, it's best to install the nestbox by the beginning of March. But it's never really too late for next season. Owls will even use the nestbox for roosting outside of the breeding season.

For Screech-owls and Kestrels fall is the ideal time to put up a nestbox as that's when the young disperse away from their parents.

- 5) How high should I put my nestbox?

Small and medium boxes should be put up 6-10 feet up. Largest boxes (owl and kestrel) should be put up 8-15 feet up from the bottom of the nestbox. Please consult species profiles for specific directions: [tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox](http://tucsonaudubon.org/nestbox)

- 6) Should I put anything in my nestboxes?

You don't need to put anything in the small and medium boxes. The species that use those boxes bring in their own nesting material.

Kestrels and owls do not make a nest so a 2-3 inch layer of wood shavings (not dust) should be put on the bottom of the nestbox.

7) Do I have to use screws?

A couple screws will not harm the tree as a scar is formed around them in tree tissue. They provide the sturdiest support. If screws are not an option, bailing wire can be used but must be secured well enough to avoid movement. Always use outdoor grade screws and check the sturdiness annually. Loosen bailing wire to avoid strangling of live branches.

8) Should I paint it?

Not necessary. Pine and cedar hold up well in the elements untreated. Paint may be toxic and dark colors may absorb more heat. If you'd like to use paint, please use a water-based non-toxic kind and only on the outside.

9) Should I have a predator and prey nestboxes in the same yard?

Not recommended, unless yard is large enough to place them at least 60 feet apart.

10) Can I have both an owl and a kestrel box in same yard and both get used?

Due to their territory sizes only one species will likely utilize the nestboxes in a typically sized yard.

11) Should I check inside the nestbox?

If you'd like to contribute nesting observations please consult NestWatch <http://www.nestwatch.org> for best practices on nestbox monitoring.

12) Should I leave old nests in the nestbox?

Clean out old nests during winter to prevent parasite accumulation in the box. Replace wood shavings in kestrel and owl boxes.

**Please email [nestbox@tucsonaudubon.org](mailto:nestbox@tucsonaudubon.org) with any questions!**