



Photo courtesy of Larry Halverson



HELP AN OWL. BUILD A NEST BOX

Although nest boxes are not an adequate substitute for large live or dead trees with natural cavities, they can provide temporary nesting for smaller owls and give them a place to safely raise their young. Be sure to learn as much as you can about owls before you install your owl nest box.

INSTRUCTIONS

Measurements

The layout and measurements of this nest box are suitable for the following owls.

Entrance Diameter (inches)	Suitable For
3	Western screech owl and flicker
2.5	Northern saw-whet and pygmy owl

Wood requirements

One piece of lumber (untreated solid wood or plywood)—1" x 10" x 8'

Key points

- Floor should be at least 7¾" x 7¾".
- The hole should be at least 10" above the floor.
- Score the inside of the front panel to allow the young birds to climb up.

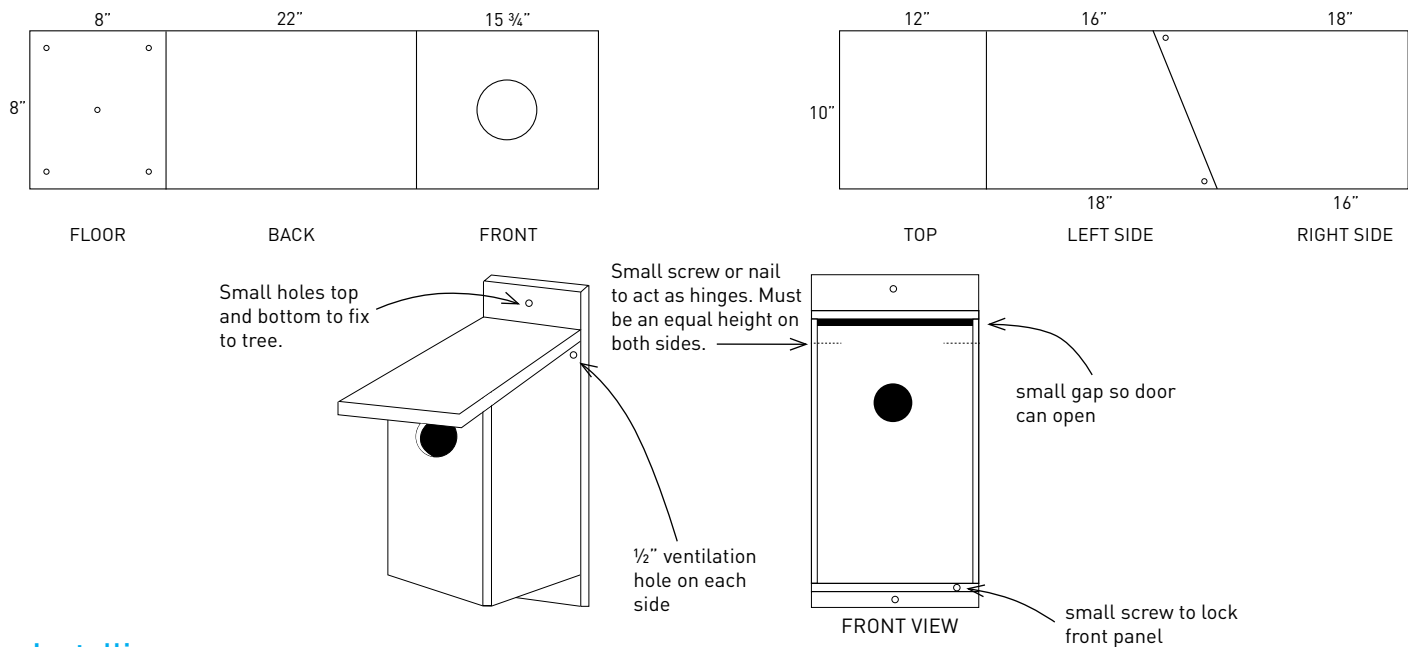


Left to right: Kennedy MacInnis, Vanessa Everson, and Joshua MacInnis.

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Steps

1. Cut the wood as per the measurements below.
2. Cut the entrance hole in the front panel (should be at least 10" above the floor).
3. Score the inside of the panel with horizontal cuts (1/4" deep and 1" apart) from base to the hole.
4. On the side panels drill two 1/2" ventilation holes, 1" from the top.
5. On the bottom panel drill five 1/2" drainage holes (at the corners and one in the centre).
6. For the top, cut a small angle off the back edge to allow it to fit properly.
7. Screw all panels together, except the front, using 1 1/2" galvanized or coated screws. Make sure that the longer edges of the side panels are attached to the back panel to allow for the sloping roof.
8. Add the front panel remembering to leave a small gap at the top. Use two nails, or pivot screws (at exactly the same height) to act as hinges. Use a small screw at the base that can easily be unscrewed to allow for annual cleaning. (See front view.)
9. Seal the top with caulking compound.



Installing

- Attach the box to a large tree near streams or rivers for screech-owls and in forested areas for other owls and woodpeckers.
- Place the box 3 to 5 metres above the ground. **Warning: The box is heavy so use caution when on the ladder. Get professional help if required.**
- Face the nest box opening to the south or southwest.
- Clean the box every year, placing a 1" layer of clean shavings or leaves in the bottom (not sawdust).

Monitoring

- Listen for owls calls at night (northern pygmy owls will also call during the day). They are most often heard from February through to April.
- Typically owls lay two to three eggs between March and May, and the young call between June and July.
- Fledgling period ranges from one to one-and-a-half months.

To find out more about the Western Screech-Owl and what the FWCP is doing in the West Kootenay area visit fwcp.ca.

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