



ascendi



Biodiversity



on the road



What exactly are passerines?

There are many groups of Birds, from penguins to birds of prey, ducks, storks and seagulls.

Passerines, commonly known as songbirds, form one of these groups. Goldfinches, robins, nightingales and magpies accompany us throughout the day, as we walk on the forest or look through the window while sitting on a train.

Cultural meaning

When we think of songbirds, relaxing melodies and beautiful colours usually come to mind. We imagine these small animals jumping from branch to branch or flying at quickly above our heads.

Most of us associate these moments with a feeling of peace, joy and communion with Nature.

Moreover, some songbirds are particularly cherished and valued for their proximity to humans, which has earned them a spiritual meaning. This connection is part of our culture and society.

Importance to ecosystems

In addition to their spiritual meaning, songbirds are a very important part of Ecosystems.

Songbirds include numerous species (more than half of all Bird species) with extremely varied diets, namely granivores (i.e. birds that feed on seeds and grains), frugivores (fruits), insectivores (grubs and insects) and birds that feed on a group of these and/or other foods.

This means that certain species play one or several important roles, namely by spreading seeds or participating in pollination and pest control. Therefore, many plant species depend on songbirds for their health and reproduction, in addition to relying on these animals to spread to new, farther locations. And let's not forget that birds may stop us from getting unpleasant mosquito bites!



White-throated dipper



To summarise, Passerines play a key role as pollinators and help spread seeds and protect crops. Since they are very sensitive to habitat changes and relatively easy to monitor, certain species can be used as bioindicators (living beings that help assess the state of the environment and environmental changes).

The white-throated dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*) is a well-known bioindicator, as it only lives near clean watercourses and is sensitive to changes in water temperature and river flow, thus being used as a “watcher” of river ecosystems.

How you can help

If you're interested in growing an organic vegetable garden or simply wish to help our friends survive the coldest winters, we suggest that you build bird houses and feeders.

These projects will not only bring beauty and richness to your garden or balcony, but allow you to enjoy your spare time and involve your children in Nature preservation.

There are bird houses and feeders to suit all tastes, depending on the species you wish to attract and the materials you have at hand.



What are bird houses and what are they used for?

A bird house is an artificial nest, usually made of wood, that imitates the natural cavities used by certain bird species to build their nests. These nests can be placed on trees, poles and even buildings, providing birds with adequate "homes".

In case of wooden boxes, the use of untreated, unvarnished wood is recommended.

Natural wood is more attractive to small birds

Owing to the large variety of songbirds, we will show you three types of nests anyone can easily build at home.




You can place your finished nest on a tree, pole or wall, at a height of 2-4 metres from the ground, preferably in a spot that offers protection against the wind, rain and intense sunlight.



Nest box with round entrance hole

Target species: tits, sparrows, nuthatches

Materials*

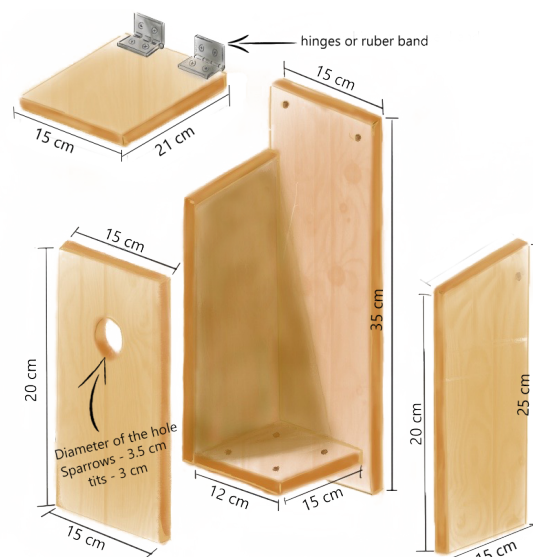
-  Wooden board (133 x 15 x 1.5 cm)
-  18 nails, screws or heavy-duty staples to assemble the box
-  Hinges, rubber band or similar reused material, to open and close the lid

The diameter of the entrance hole varies with the target species:

-  Sparrows – 3.5 cm
-  Great tit - 3 cm
-  Other tits – 2,7 cm

* Materials are suggested only as an example.

Use your creativity to reuse any other materials to build a similar structure.



Small open nest box

Target species: redstart, robin, white wagtail

Materials*



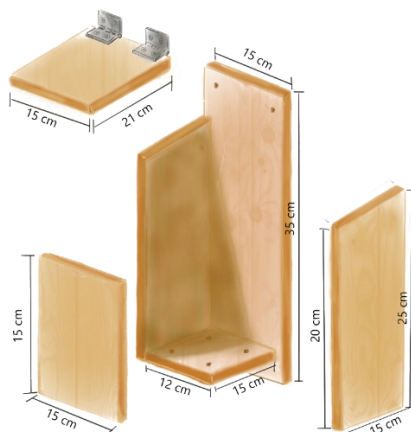
Wooden board (125 x 15 x 1.5 cm)



18 nails, screws or heavy-duty staples to assemble the box



Hinges, rubber band or similar reused material, to open and close the lid



Pot nest with opening

Target species: redstart, robin, white wagtail

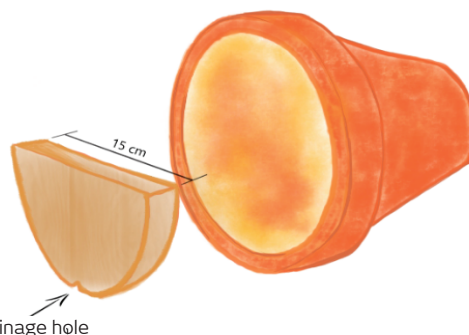
Materials *



One clay pot with diameter of ≈ 15 cm



1 metal screw and washer to hang the nest, glue, sealant, wooden semicircle (same diameter as the pot and thickness of about 1.5 cm)



* Materials are suggested only as an example.

Use your creativity to reuse any other materials to build a similar structure.

The importance of feeders

By building bird feeders, we can help birds at times of scarcity, such as cold winters. This simple gesture will provide songbirds with the food they need to survive.

We'll show you how to build a simple feeder that will help keep these colourful birds near your home.

"Bottle" feeder

This type of feeder is suitable for granivores (birds that feed on seeds and grains).

Materials*



1 plastic bottle



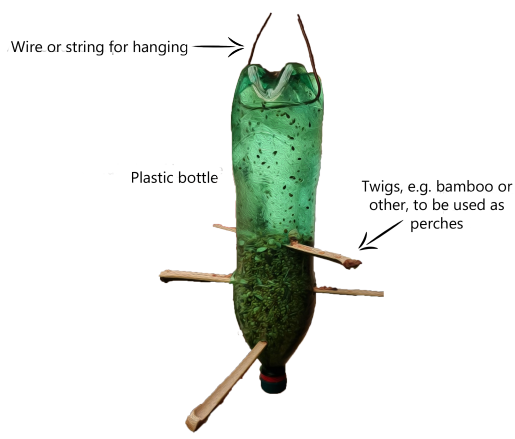
3 to 4 small twigs, to be used as perches



Thin piece of string, rope or wire to attach the feeder

Instructions: Make small holes in the bottle to allow birds to reach the seeds. Insert small twigs, to be used by the birds as perches while they feed. In the example below, perches were made of bamboo canes, which were cut lengthwise to hold the seeds, for easier access.

Bird feeders are versatile: you can hang them in your garden balcony or even outside a window.



* Materials are suggested only as an example.

Use your creativity to reuse any other materials to build a similar structure.



Nature thanks you!