

NEWS RELEASE  
December 27, 2002

## THE BIRDS AND THE BUGS

### BACKYARD HORTICULTURE

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Some birds eat bugs and some bugs eat plants. That makes this a suitable horticulture topic. One example of an insect-eating bird is the bluebird. This species normally nests in open areas of oak and pine woodlands and is present in Mariposa County. The Western Bluebird is found at the lower elevations of the county, and the Mountain Bluebird at elevations above about 5000 ft. Over the years, their preferred habitat has been reduced, but by setting out a properly built birdhouse, nesting success can be improved.

According to the USDA leaflet on bluebird houses, open areas with scattered trees and a considerable distance from buildings is the best location. The birdhouse should face an open area with a tree, large shrub, or fence 25 to 100 feet in front of the house. It should also face south or southeast.

If you have a good location, the bluebird house should be mounted at a height of five to seven feet from the ground and set out by February 15. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch galvanized pipe is better than a wooden post since it offers better protection against predators such as cats, raccoons and snakes. The house should be made of one-inch thick redwood or cedar, with screws holding together the various parts. If the entry hole is made the recommended 1- $\frac{1}{2}$  inch diameter, starlings cannot enter it, and if properly located, sparrow interference will be minimized. It is not necessary to paint the outside of the birdhouse, and the inside should definitely not be painted.

Parts List:

Boards (1inch thick)

- 1- 8" X 7 ½ " – top
- 1- 18 " X 6 ½ " – back
- 1- 10 " X 5 " – front
- 1- 5 " X 4 ¾" – bottom
- 1 – 21 ¼ " X 5 ½ " – sides
- 2- ½" X 1" metal hinges
- 1 ¼ " hook latch

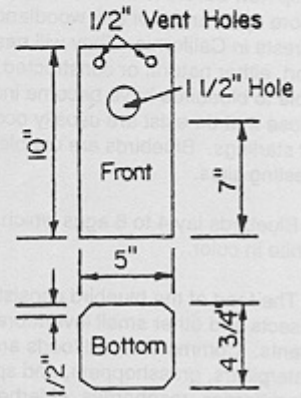
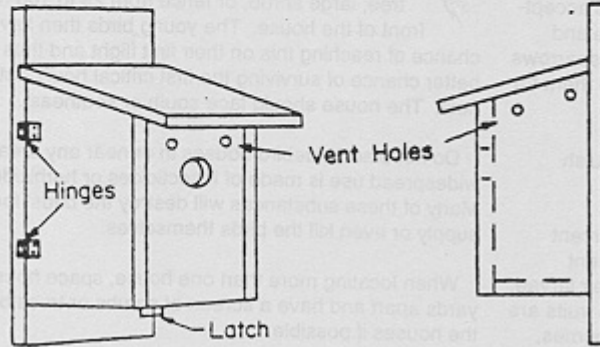
Wood screws

For a copy of the plans and description, call the UCCE office in Mariposa, 966-2417, and ask for USDA leaflet CA-500 – Bluebird House Plans.

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# BLUEBIRD HOUSE

## Plans



Hinge - 1/2" x 1"  
 Nails - #4 Box (Coated)  
 Latch - 1 1/4" Hook

