



BAT HOUSE TIPS

Bats are always on the lookout for places to live, but they are very choosy about their roost sites. Therefore, it is important to meet their requirements when putting up a bat house. While you shouldn't be discouraged if bats don't move in right away, if you follow the recommendations below, the likelihood that bats will use your bat house is greatly increased.

Design: Generally, bats seem to prefer houses that are at least 2' tall, 14" wide, with a 3-6" landing area beneath the entrance. They should have several interior partitions that are set $\frac{3}{4}$ -1" apart with deep horizontal scratches from which bats can hang by their feet. Exterior plywood or cedar (no pressure-treated wood) and galvanized screws should be used in construction.

Mounting: Bat houses should be mounted on poles or on the south-facing side of a wood or masonry building. Bat houses placed on trees are rarely used. The bottom of the bat house should be at least 12' off the ground, with 15-20' being preferred. Multiple bat houses in the same location give bats the option to use several different houses depending on changes in the weather.

Habitat: Most bats like to roost near water so that they have easy access to the insects associated with streams, lakes, and ponds. Bat houses placed within $\frac{1}{4}$ mile of these features are more likely to be found and used by bats.

Sun: Finding a warm place to raise their young is critical to the species likely to use bat houses. In Arkansas, bat houses should be placed where they will receive at least 6 hours of direct sunlight every day and you should consider painting the house with a medium brown paint or stain to help it absorb more heat.

How do I know if bats are using it? The easiest way to find out is to use a strong flashlight to illuminate the interior of the bat house to see if any bats are inside. Other options include watching the bathouse before dusk to see if any bats leave it, or to look for the presence of guano on the ground underneath.

Bat House Research Project: If you have put up a bat house, consider participating in Bat Conservation International's bat house research project and help us improve recommendations for successful bat houses. Information about this program is available at <http://www.batcon.org>.