

# Nestboxes



*Purple martin house at CC of Florida. Each purple martin can eat up to 2,000 mosquitoes per day.*

*If your golf course does not have tree snags, putting up nestboxes is an alternative to helping balance the loss of natural habitat.*

Development and loss of tree snags has resulted in a reduction of nesting sites for many bird species. Some cavity nesters, like the woodpecker, prefer to excavate their own holes, and most others depend on the cavities abandoned by those woodpeckers. If your golf course does not have tree snags, putting up nestboxes is an alternative to helping balance the loss of natural habitat.

Your first step should be to find out what birds you want to attract. Study your golf course and the birds that are already present. Identify areas of your site that match the preferred habitat of the birds you are trying to attract.

This is where a detailed map of your property would come in handy. Next, make sure you choose the correct nestbox. Whether you buy your boxes or make them, each species has different box requirements. Check the chart below for some of the most common cavity nesters found in Florida and their specific box requirements.

Some golf courses use birdboxes as 150-yard markers. Be sure to place them close to the rough and out of play as much as possible.

Nest boxes on golf courses can help educate

and entertain, but much more importantly than that, they can help increase bird populations.

#### NESTBOX TIPS:

- \*Put boxes up in the summer to fall to allow them to "season" before the spring mating season
- \*Place in a location familiar to you and in areas which allow easy access (for monitoring and cleaning)
- \*Place openings to Southeast and angled down slightly to offer protection from rain and predators
- \*Boxes that are brown, tan or gray (natural) are the most frequently used
- \*Do not treat the inside at all, leave natural
- \*Boxes should be hinged to allow for easy monitoring and cleaning
- \*Boxes should have drainage in the bottom
- \*Boxes should have holes in top for ventilation and a light source
- \*The roof should overhang 2-3 inches to also help protect from rain and predators
- \*During nesting season, check boxes weekly and remove any unwanted guests
- \*Remove nests once the young have left (clean box)
- \*Be patient! Sometimes it can take a year or two before birds will find the boxes
- \*Bluebird boxes are sometimes taken over by

swallows. To solve this problem, place 2 boxes, 12 ft. apart, one for the swallows and one for the bluebirds. Swallows don't mind bluebirds, but will not let other birds near nests.

\*If your homeowners have a lot of cats, encourage them to put bells on their collars.

**PURPLE MARTIN HOUSE:**

Indians took dried gourds and hung them around their homes to keep the insects under control. Since purple martins have been known to eat 2000 mosquitos a day, having them around is not a bad idea! They are also extremely faithful to their nest sites and return each year.

Gourds are still a popular purple martin home today. To make a purple martin house out of gourds:

- \*Dry the gourds thoroughly
- \*Cut a 2-1/2 inch entrance hole in the middle of the side
- \*Scrape out gourd seeds
- \*Drill 1/2 inch holes in bottom for drainage and 1/4 inch hole in top for hanging

\*Mount on pole 14 ft. high in an open field, 15 ft. from trees, building etc.. and near open water

\*Replace used gourds each year

The Audubon Society of New York has plans for various birdboxes and nesting platforms. For more information, call (518) 767-9051.

**MONITORING NESTBOXES**

Why should you monitor nestboxes? Monitoring allows you to become familiar with the birds as well as help you determine the correct way to deal with predators, parasites or competitors. During the nesting season, check the boxes weekly or bi-weekly and make notes of birds, eggs, the number of young, etc.

The USGA and the Audubon of New York want to develop a nationwide account of wildlife on golf courses. Nestbox monitoring and annual bird counts are two ways of accomplishing this goal. As a member of the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System, your golf course will be sent information on nestbox monitoring and annual bird counts.

You may be saying, "I just don't have



*A simple but effective nestbox for bluebirds or wrens.*

**Chart 3: NestBox Specifications**

Species	Ent. above floor (in.)	Ent. diam. (in.)	Floor width (in.)	Cavity depth (in.)	Height above ground (ft.)	Habitat	Nesting/Breeding
Barred Owl Barn Owl	10-16	6	12x12	18-25	10-30	Forest types, hardwoods & swamps	Jan-March Sept.-June
Bluebird	6-10	1-1/2	5x5	8-10	5-6	Dry pinelands (snags)	March-June
Carolina Wren	1-6	1-1/2	5x5	8-10	5-6	Woodlands-dense understory vegetation	Feb.-August
Chickadee	6-8	1-1/8 1-1/4	4x4	8-10	5-15	Woodlands - suburbs	April-May
Crested Flycatcher	6-8	2	6x6	8-10	8-20	Woodlands	April-June
Downy Woodpecker	6-8	1-1/4	4x4	8-10	6-20	Woodlands	April-May
Flicker	14	2-1/2	7x7	16-18	6-20	Open woods & suburbs	March-May
Purple Martin	1-2	2-14 2-1/2	6x6	6	10-20	Close to water	March-July
Red Bellied & Red Headed Woodpeckers	9-12	2	6x6	12-15	8-20	Backyards-forest types Open forest, suburban woodlands	April-June May-August
Screech Owl	10-20	3	8x8	16-24	10-30	Woodlands-suburbs	March-June
Tufted Titmouse	6-8	1-1/4	4x4	8-10	5-15	Woodlands- suburbs	April-June
Wood Duck	18-20	3x4	10x10	24	water 5-25 land 10-25	Wooded wetlands	March-July





Wood duck nestboxes such as the ones at Jupiter Island GC, work best in pairs.

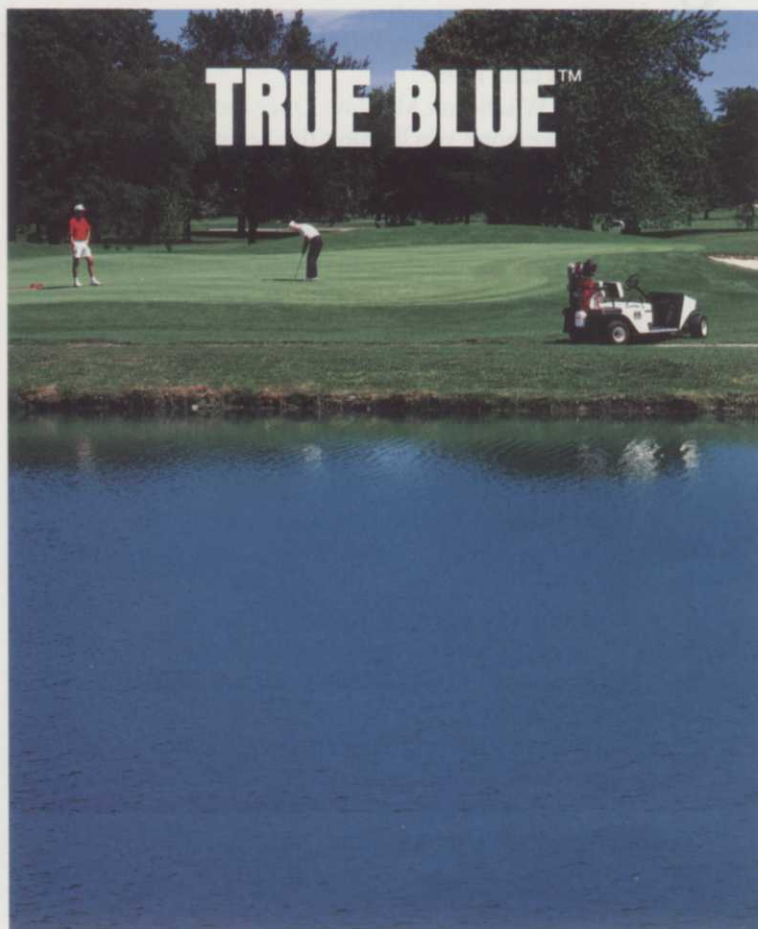
time to monitor those boxes every week," and that's okay. Here are some ideas focused around not doing all the work yourself or taking time away from a busy staff.

1) Ask golfers to participate by noting any activity they may see on a conveniently placed journal in the clubhouse or proshop.

2) Invite local bird groups or schools to help during the nesting season.

3) Start an "Adopt A Box" program, where your members or golfers can adopt one box for a year. They can donate, and/or maintain and monitor one box for a year.

4) Have your staff or crew members check the boxes on their daily trips around the course. (give them each 1 or 2 to check daily)



## The better, more natural looking lake and pond dye

Why settle for artificial looking dye when TRUE BLUE™ will give your lake or pond a natural, living color appearance. The secret's in our tried and true blue formula that makes the other brand look unnatural by comparison.

Try it and see for yourself why TRUE BLUE is fast becoming the preferred lake and pond dye. The one that's a natural. For more information and a technical bulletin, call or write today.



No Blue

TRUE BLUE



**PRECISION LABORATORIES, INC.**

Distributed by:  
Gold Kist, Inc.  
P.O. BOX 2210  
Atlanta, GA 30301  
800-241-4966

Harrell's, Inc.  
P.O. Box 607  
Lakeland, FL 33802  
800-282-8007

TRUEBLUE is a trademark of Precision Laboratories, Inc.