

Bluebird Information Sheet

Bluebirds enjoy:

- Semi-grassland area
- Scattered trees
- Old trees with dead branches
- Short ground-cover for easy pretty visibility (mowed lawns)
- To be AWAY from sparrows

Placement of Houses:

- Two houses better than one, placed 20-25 feet away from one another
- A third house should be at least 300 feet away
- 90-120 feet from houses/buildings
- Face open to northeast, if possible
- Have a tree in line of sight for fledging - within 150-200 feet
- Near a patch of woods may keep them all winter (They winter in MN!)

Bluebirds feed on:

- Caterpillars, beetles, crickets, grasshoppers, spiders. Insects caught on the ground are the main food source for most of the year.
- In fall and winter, they eat large amounts of fruit: mulberries, service berries, viburnum berries (Blue Muffin is best), mistletoe, sumac, blueberries, black cherry, tupelo, currants, wild holly, dogwood berries, hackberries, honeysuckle, bay, pokeweed, and juniper berries
- Mealworms - living, not dried, can be purchased. Feeding these to bluebirds can be a lot of work due to needing to keep the meal worms moist and alive. However, bluebirds eat these like candy!

Bluebird feeders:

- Bluebirds will mostly use feeders during harsh conditions
- A variety of feeders are available, depending on the type of food used
- Feeders should be placed any where they can easily be watched to enjoy

You may not get a Bluebird immediately, but that's ok! Just give it time.

Nesting

- Season starts mid-Mar to mid Apr, depending on weather
- Usually nest 2 - 3 times/year
- Male comes first
- Start with small pieces of grass (if you see straw, feathers, candy wrappers, most likely a sparrow has occupied the house).
- Sparrows are predators, and you are allowed to set a trap by "catching" it in the house using a clear plastic bag. The law allows you to dispose of the sparrow.
- Tree swallows or wrens may also occupy these birds. You must let them go. Tree swallows will not nest near another tree swallow. Hence, have two houses
- Since tree swallows only nest once/season, a bluebird may take over the house after the swallow leaves

Baby Bluebirds:

- Eggs are like robin eggs, usually light blue, but smaller (may be white)
- Birds typically lay one egg per day, usually in the morning. If you see an egg early in the morning, delay checking again until early afternoon so you won't disturb the female laying the eggs
- May nest three times per year
- First nesting - expect 5 eggs, Second - expect 4 eggs, and Third - expect 3 eggs
- May be more or less
- Babies hatch in 12-14 days
- After they hatch, don't check after the 12th day as babies may jump, but not fly/fledge
- Usually fledge within 16 - 20 days
- Parents feed babies 2-3 weeks after they fledge & then build another nest in 2 - 3 weeks
- 1st set of babies may feed 2nd!

Join the Bluebird Society

- North American Bluebird Society
- Non-profit 501(c)3
- www.nabluebirdsociety.org
- Discounts & supplies

Watching Your House:

- Experts suggest numbering your houses, keeping a ledger to track each nest/house, at least once per week, & document separately for each nesting by house#. If house doesn't get anything, consider moving that house
- Nests should be removed after babies fly (make sure you keep the drain hole at the bottom of your house)
- Tools for Trail: Use a 2"-3" wide pudgy knife, a pair of gloves for cleaning house, screw driver to check connector