

# Bat House

Bats play an important role in nature by keeping populations of insects in balance. They consume large numbers of mosquitoes, grasshoppers, corn borers, potato beetles, and many other insects. A small mouse bat has been recorded as catching up to 600 flying mosquitoes in one hour! Unfortunately, there are many myths surrounding bats, and many species are being threatened with extinction as they and their homes are destroyed. Your Bat House will provide an alternative shelter for these valuable, threatened creatures.

Your Bat House has been approved by the Bat Conservation International, Inc., a non-profit organization dedicated to bat conservation and research. The house is designed to meet the preferences of roosting bats, with interior boards located closely parallel to one another so the males and females can live separately. Bats swoop up into the house, crawl between the boards, and hook their claws onto the pre-cut grooves. They will stay warm and hidden until dusk when they reappear to feed on insects.

Do not stain or paint your Bat House as it may discourage or even harm bats and their offspring. It is made of the highest quality incense grade cedar and will resist weather and insects for years to come.

## Locating Your Bat House

Bats prefer to roost high off the ground and near a permanent source of water such as a pond or stream. The house should be hung 13-30 feet above the ground in an area protected from strong winds. Access to the house should be clear of obstructions. Avoid placing the house in a forest or near utility poles and wires.

Temperature also affects the location of your house. Bats prefer warm temperatures in the house (large brown and pallid bats, 80°-90° F, smaller mouse-eared bats 90°-110° F). Place your house facing east or southeast so that after a cool night, the house will receive the first rays of the morning sun to warm it up again. (If your climate is cool, you have a better chance of attracting bachelor bats who prefer cooler temperatures.)

## Mounting Your Bat House

Before mounting, turn your Bat House upside-down. Empty the bag of guano into the house and let sit for a day. This helps your house to smell like attractive vacant real estate. There are pre-drilled holes in your bat house to

ease installation. You can thread a heavy gauge wire through the holes in order to tie the house to a pole or tree or you can simply place screws through the holes. Raccoons have been known to disturb bat roosts, so if raccoons are numerous in your area, you may wish to place a metal band around the post or tree to keep them away from the house.

## When Will the Bats Arrive?

Bats will not appear right away. It may be weeks, a month, or even up to a year before bats will find your house. If there is no activity after a year, you may wish to position the house more to the east, or find a new location. If there is still no sign of bat activity, it may be that the bats have plenty of roosts in your area or the house is too far away from a water source. Some houses have remained vacant for as long as 3 years. We still have a lot to learn about the exact housing preferences of bats. Any information you can share with the Bat Conservation International Inc. would be most appreciated.

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## Will Bats Stay in the House Year-Round?

Only in warm southern coastal areas. Bats migrate south or find hibernating sites for the winter.

## Are Bats Dangerous?

No. Bats are not vicious, filthy, or likely to attack people or animals. Even sick bats rarely bite except in self-defense. Do not handle any bats that you find lying on the ground. The Bat Conservation International has this to say about sick and rabid bats:

“Like all mammals, bats can contract rabies, though very few (less than half of one percent) do, and even when rabid, bats rarely become aggressive. Like other animals, they quickly die, and outbreaks in their colonies are extremely rare. The odds of being harmed, even by a rabid individual, are remote if you simply do not attempt to handle bats. Any bat that is easily caught should be assumed to be sick and left alone.”



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