

## Prepare for the bird breeding season

This month, concentrate on getting ready for the summer bird breeding season.

1. Start by spring cleaning any bird feeders or existing nest boxes that you have up to prevent spread of disease. Empty out any old nests and other material, then use a mild detergent to disinfect the box. This will help prevent disease and infection in birds that choose to nest here. Make sure this is done as early as possible.
2. If you don't have any up already, consider putting bird and bat boxes up in your garden. You can buy good quality boxes from many suppliers, or if you are feeling crafty, you can make your own using the dimensions shown here. Make sure you use untreated wood.
3. Site boxes 3-5m above the ground, on houses, sheds or trees, out of direct sunlight and away from the prevailing wind.
4. When feeding the birds, avoid peanuts from now on as they can cause illness and even fatalities in chicks.



**Plant berrying and fruiting deciduous trees – a mixture of native and non-natives works well e.g. Elder, Guelder Rose, Rowan, Hawthorn.**

### Meadow management

Order seed for a wildflower meadow. This could be a small bed or a whole field depending on what suits you! You can order ready-made seed mixes, including grasses and wildflowers such as Oxeye Daisies online from websites such as Emorsgate Seeds.

### Plants in flower in January

Snowdrop



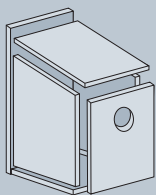
Snowdrop



**Take a pledge to use only ethical products in the garden and avoid products that cause damage to habitats and species e.g. avoid slug pellets and use peat-free compost!**

## Build a nestbox

If you'd like to help the birds in your garden, why not make a nestbox? Use a plank of wood about 150mm wide and cut it to the sizes shown on the diagram. Hinge the lid with a strip of leather or rubber, so you can clean out the box in autumn.



	200mm	250mm	120mm	460mm	200mm	220mm+
150mm	Side	Side	Base/floor	Back	Front ○	Roof/lid

Entrance hole is 25mm for blue tits, 28mm for great tits, 32mm for house sparrows

Cut at 45° angle

