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Activity

## Create a sparrow street

Give House Sparrows somewhere to raise their chicks with a nest box or two.



House sparrows are in trouble – the UK population has halved for reasons that we don't fully understand. However, there are things you can do to help. Putting up a nest box on your house walls is a great way to start. You can buy a classic nest box or, if you have the time, here's how to make a DIY sparrow nest box.

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## How to create a home for sparrows

### Instructions

### What you'll need

Estimated time: **3-4 hours**

Season: **Autumn, Winter**

Skill level: **Advanced**

## Instructions

### Where to put your sparrow nest box

Ideally, it will be under the eaves of your house or high on a wall. Make sure you have the homeowner's permission before putting up a nest box.

The box will need to be at least 3m (10 feet) from the ground, facing north or east to avoid it getting too hot or wet. Avoid placing it in direct sunlight and don't put it over a doorway or well-used path.

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## 2 The right wood for your House Sparrow nest box

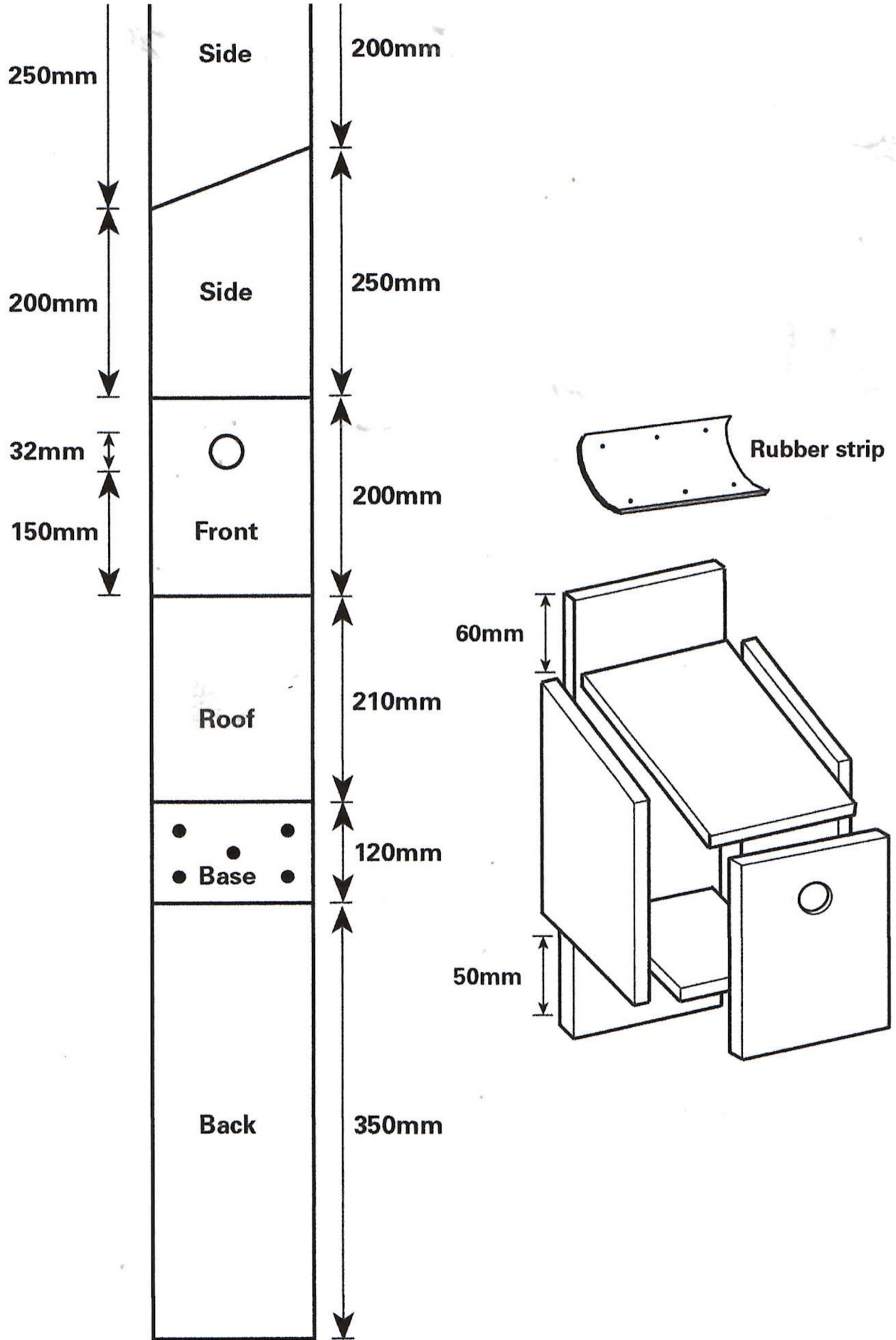
The thickness is important to insulate the box from cold and heat and to stop the box warping). You can use exterior-quality plywood (for a light box) or, for something more sturdy, hardwoods (such as oak and beech) or soft wood (such as pine, but this will deteriorate more quickly). Buy timber approved by the Forest Stewardship Council – look for the FSC logo.

## 3 DIY sparrow nest box plans Measure and cut your wood according to the diagram

Note: the dimensions shown are for 15mm thick wood. If your wood is different to that, the dimensions of the Base should be 150mm by 150mm minus 2 x thickness of the wood, eg if the wood is 18mm thick, the base should be 150mm x 114mm.

If you don't have the special drill bit for making the 3.2cm round hole, you can use a jigsaw to cut a square or wedge-shaped hole at the top of the front, as in the diagram.

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## 5 Attach the roof

By using screws, you'll be able to get into the box at a later stage to clean it out. Use a waterproof strip to make a hinge between the top edge of the roof and the backing board. Try a piece of bicycle tyre inner tube, damp-proof membrane or roofing felt.

## 6 Put your box up

Drill guide holes in the backing plate at the top and bottom of the box. Taking care, fix the box to a wall using a ladder, screws, Rawlplugs and a spirit level. Be sure to check the box is the right way up.



## 7 What to look out for once your House Sparrow nest box is up

Sparrows will start house hunting in spring. There is never a guarantee they'll move in, but if you're lucky you should see the males proudly chirping from nearby, or even from the roof of the box. Sparrows are sensitive to disturbance at the nest and are protected by law. So watch and enjoy from a distance. You may be lucky to see them raising several broods in there across the season.

This is a **Nature On Your Doorstep** activity which can also be completed as part of Wild Challenge. Want to take on the challenge and go for Gold? Each action you take for nature brings you a step closer. **Here's how.**

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