

Teak Bat House

Mounting the Bat House

A hook has been provided on the back of the bat house for hanging. You will need to install a hanging screw to hang the bat house on the side of a building. For a wood building, we recommend installing a 1 to 2-inch long stainless steel pan or hex head screw to hang the bat house. Leave just enough room between the wall and the head of the screw to hang the bat house. If you are mounting the bat house on a surface other than wood, check with a local hardware store for the type of screw needed for your situation.

Mounting Location

Bats prefer to roost high off the ground and near a permanent source of water, such as a pond, swamp, or stream (although bats do forage for insects several miles away from water). The Teak Bat House will work best mounted 12 to 15 feet above the ground, under an eave, on a flat building surface made of wood, stone or brick and protected from strong winds and bright lights.

Access to the bat house should be clear of obstructions, so it is important to avoid placing the

house near utility poles, wires or lights.

Temperature is also an important factor in determining where to mount the bat house. During spring, summer, and fall when bats are not hibernating, they prefer warm temperatures in the house (large brown and pallid bats prefer 80 to 90 degrees F. Smaller mouse-eared bats prefer 90 to 110 degrees F).

Position the bat house facing east or southeast, so after a cool night, the house will receive the first rays of morning sun to warm it up again. (If your climate is chilly, you have a better chance of attracting bachelor bats because they prefer cooler temperatures.)

Bat House Temperature

Bat Conservation International recommends that the bat house receive at least 10 or more hours of sun in regions where high temperatures in July averaging 80 degrees F or less. For regions where July's daily highs average less than 100 degrees F, at least six hours of direct daily sun is recommended for the bat house. Full, all-day sun is best in all but the hottest climates.

To create favorable conditions for maternity colonies in summer, internal bat house temperatures should stay between 80 and 100° degrees F as long as possible.

If you wish to adjust the temperature of the Teak Bat House by darkening or lightening the color of the wood, we recommend using three coats of an exterior grade, water-based wood stain only. We do not recommend using paint, as it may fill in the grooves and rough areas that bats need to cling to when landing.

Areas to Avoid Mounting

The Teak Bat House has an open bottom, so guano and urine will end up on the ground underneath. Keep this in mind and avoid mounting the bat house directly above windows, doors, decks, or hallways. You may place a shallow dish under the house to collect bat guano for use as a fertilizer in flower beds and gardens.

Do not use a deep bucket or container (unless you cover it with a 1/4-inch or smaller mesh). This will protect any baby bats that may fall from the bat house from becoming trapped inside.

Why Keep a 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 can catch 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 a safe shelter for these valuable, threatened creatures.

The Teak Bat House is made entirely of sustainably harvested teak with stainless steel hardware. It's designed for roosting bats that swoop up into the house and hook their claws onto the pre-cut grooves. They will stay warm and hidden until dusk when they emerge to feed on insects. The single chamber crevice is 3/4 inches deep to attract the widest range of bat species. The pitched roof is good for keeping rain out.

When Will the Bats Arrive?

The bat house can be installed any time of year; however, bats will not appear right away. It may be weeks, a month, or even a year before bats will find the bat house. Bats are more likely to use the house in summer if it's installed before they return in early spring.

If there is no activity after a year, you may wish to face the house more to the southeast, or find a new location. If there is still no sign of 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. If the bat house remains unoccupied after two years con-

sider relocating it to another area. There is still much to learn about the exact housing preferences of bats. Any observations you can share with Bat Conservation International Inc. is appreciated and can be contacted at: Bat Conservation International, P.O. Box 162603, Austin, TX 78716



Will Bats Use the House Year-Round?

Bats live year-round only in warm, southern coastal areas. In colder regions, bats migrate south or find hibernating sites for winter.

Are Bats Dangerous?

No. Bats are not mean, dirty, or likely to attack people or animals. Even sick bats rarely bite, except in self-defense. As with all wild animals, use caution and common sense if you see a bat that appears injured or sick. Bat Conservation International Inc. 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.”

Bat House Maintenance

To keep bats coming back to the house, it is important to maintain it. Clean out wasp and other insect nests after the insects and bats have departed. For best results, keep an eye on the bat house for unwanted predators, overheating, and wood deterioration. Any repairs or cleaning should be done only when bats are not present.

Source of Information:

Much of the information provided in this bulletin is from Bat Conservation International's (BCI) article, "Criteria for Successful Bat Houses," available online at www.batcon.org. Much more extensive information is available in BCI's Bat House Builder's Handbook, also available at BCI's online catalog at www.batcatalog.com.