New Alternate Bluebird House

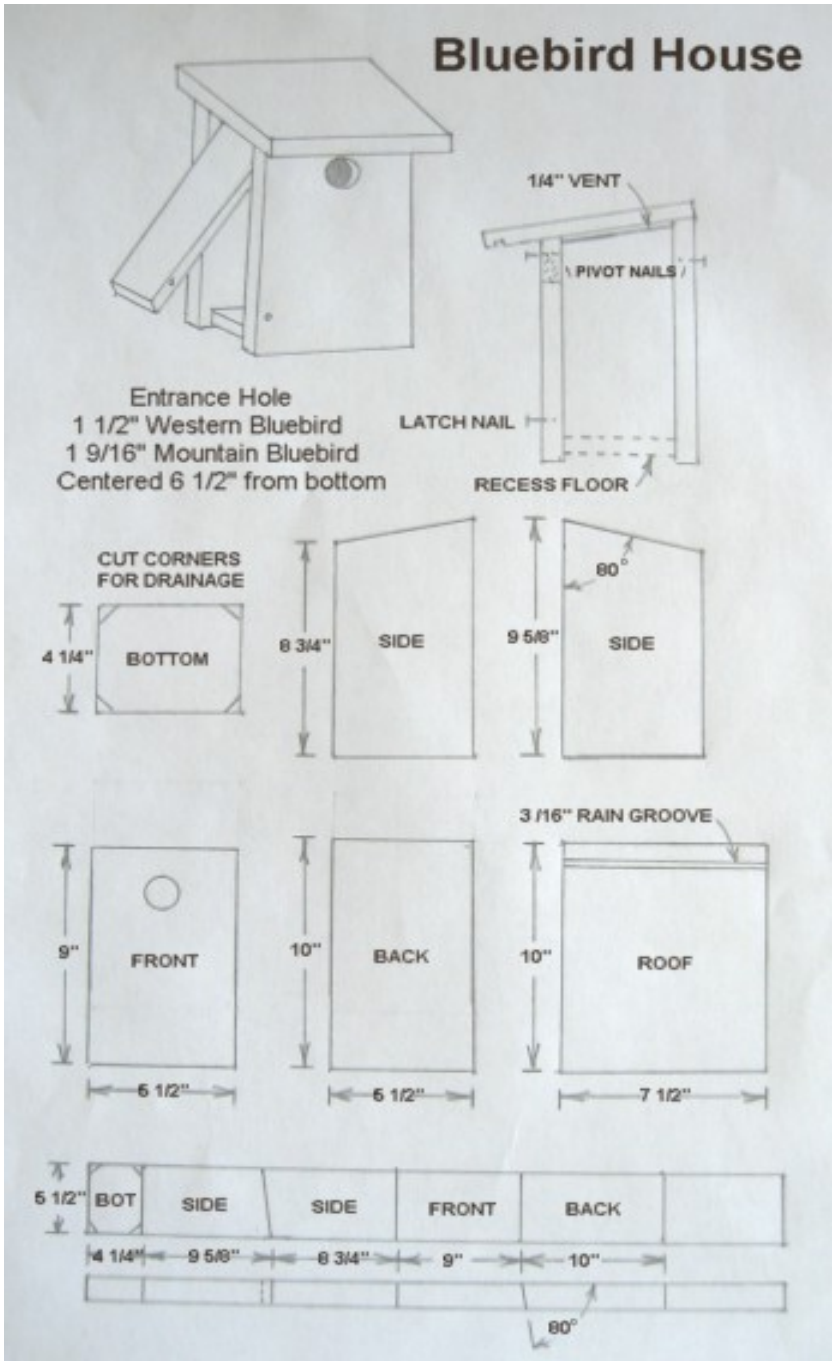
Materials Needed:

1 - six foot cedar fence board (actual dimensions) 5/8″ x 5 1/2″ x 6′

1 - piece of 10″ cedar fence board (actual dimensions) 5/8″ x 7 1/4″ x 10″

14 - 1 1/4″ <u>exterior</u> (galvanized) screws or use 4d x 1 1/2″ galvanized nails

2 - 4d x 1 1/2″ nails for pivot nails on side door



Construction:

You can use the same construction model found in my "Definitive Guide to Building Your Own Birdhouses" chapter 5 (your basic birdhouse plan) for this new house. The only difference, and I believe it is a big one, is the slanted, overhanging roof.

As you can see from the diagram above, there is a 10 degree slope on the roof, and the side panels leave a 1/4 inch gap at the top for ventilation instead of drilling holes for ventilation. The roof also overhangs the back of the house and the rain groove (the width of a saw blade) on the front of the roof helps to keep water out. The floor has the corners cut out to help with drainage and I drill another five, 1/2 inch holes in the floor to aid drainage. I believe these changes will give you a much more waterproof birdhouse which can make a big difference during a wet spring.

Take note that the birdhouse back measures 10 inches and the front measures 9 inches. This drop of one inch from front to back should give you the 80 degree angle cut you see in the edge view on the cutting diagram. This angle should match the angle you get when cutting the side pieces. If you want to, you can use a side piece as a template to get the exact angle for the front and back piece cuts. Note also that the side pieces are shorter than the full dimensions of the front and back pieces to allow for the 1/4 inch ventilation gap at the top. One important change I have made since making this diagram is that I now hinge the opening side at the bottom rather than the top. To make this work you will want to recess the floor about an inch and place the pivot nails 1/4 inch from the bottom of the front and back panels so the hinged side clears the floor of the house when it is opened. This makes it much easier to monitor the nest without disturbing the birds by peering in from the top.

I am also installing porthole protectors on all of my birdhouses. The best protector is simply a scrap piece of redwood or cedar fence board, 2 1/2 to 3 inches square, with the same size entrance hole as your birdhouse, drilled through the center and screwed on the front piece over the entrance hole. These protectors not only keep the entrance from being enlarged by squirrels or other species of birds, they help to keep predators like cats, raccoons and other birds from reaching into the birdhouse. The easiest way to do this is to drill the hole first, and then cut the protector to the size you want it. You can see this protector below on the photo of this birdhouse.

If you haven't been to my blog yet, you don't know what you're missing! Check it out here:

www.TheBirdersReport.com