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Purple Martin Houses - More Than A Desirable Residence

By Roy Thomsitt

No garden would ever be the same without the sounds, colours and movement of the birds that visit

it. The British and Americans appreciate birds in their gardens more than most, and in the UK, the million plus membership of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is testimony to that. Not only do we love having birds in the garden, many encourage them by providing bird feeders and bird houses, or nest boxes as we call them in the UK.

The birds themselves come in all shapes and sizes, so you will find bird houses have evolved to cater for the many different species that might visit the garden in the breeding season. For gardeners who like to see the birds close at hand, bird houses can be an integral part of the garden, even the house itself in some cases.

While bird houses are functional, and intended as a place to breed, they can also make attractive garden decor. Some bird houses are, indeed, very decorative. They can even be whimsical and humorous. There really are some wonderful and unusual designs on the market. More conventional bird houses are also readily available, especially online.

One type of bird house, though, is particularly important, and that is especially designed for purple martins.

Purple Martins - A Breed Apart For Human Intervention

The type of birds you get in the garden will depend on where you live, of course, but you may find specially designed bird houses for your favourite birds, whether they are bluebirds, robins, purple martins, or other favourites.

Purple martins, though, are very special when it comes to people providing their housing needs. They are much loved visitors to parts of North America, where they go to breed every spring and summer. One remarkable thing about these fork tailed swallows is that they actually depend on human intervention for their housing needs. In other words purple martin bird houses are more than a desirable residence for the purple martins; they are an essential to their survival in North America.

Purple Martin Houses – More Than A Desirable Residence

If you are excited about birds visiting and breeding in your garden, and are lucky enough to live in an area where purple martins are summer visitors, then you can have many hours of joy every day knowing that you are also providing an important service. The purple martins will not come down to feed in the garden, but you can watch them fly off to feed on high flying insects, and return to base to feed their hungry young. That is, if you have one or more purple martin bird houses.

Later in the season, you can watch the baby purple martins learn to fly as they depart from the nests you provide. So, having purple martin bird houses is much more than adding garden decor; they are like a living entertainment centre for those lazy summer afternoons in the garden. You can relax, knowing that you are doing the world a big favour by helping to perpetuate the purple martin species.

Purple martin houses come in many forms, but you need to bear in mind that they breed in colonies, so putting up a single bird box for one nest is no help. The other thing to consider is that the purple martin

needs height; they will only breed if well clear of the ground. Despite those limitations, purple martin bird houses come in many designs and have evolved to make the most of what the birds need. Some can be very attractive too, making them a welcome addition to the garden décor.

This purple martin bird house

http://www.gardens-and-decor.com/Bird_Houses.htm

article was written

by Roy Thomsitt, owner author of the Gardens and Decor

<http://www.gardens-and-decor.com>

web site.

Purple Martins Are Back!

By Wild-Bird-Watching

As Adult Purple Martins begin their migration and start arriving in the southern most parts of the eastern U.S. by mid January. Our thoughts turn to becoming Martin landlords.

This migration will continue northward with colonies nesting primarily east of the Rockies through early may. Sub-adults, those in their first breeding year, arrive 3 to 6 weeks after the adults.

If you've ever consider attracting Purple Martins to nest near you, now is the time to learn what you need to know to be a successful Purple Martin landlord.

Unlike most backyard birds, It's not as simple as placing a Martin house up and walking away.

Purple Martin Houses – More Than A Desirable Residence

The location of the house, height, habitat, water, and many other considerations need to be taken into account.

Becoming a landlord to Purple Martins shouldn't be taken lightly. If not taken seriously, you could be causing more harm than good to the Martins you are trying to attract. House sparrows and European Starlings compete for nesting sites with Purple Martins.

A martin landlord must be diligent towards these non–native species. Removing any nesting material or eggs that these two species may bring or lay in the martin house.

This may have to be done twice a day and continue until the martins have established themselves. These non–native species are more aggressive than martins at claiming nesting sites.

When starting a new colony it's important to know that sub–adults are the ones you'll be trying to attract. Existing colonies (those that nested in previous seasons) will generally return to the same houses each year. One more reason to attract these insect eating birds to your home.

New Martin housing should not be raised before the expected arrival of the sub–adult birds. Tracking arrival times, can easily be done by visiting

www.purplemartin.org

. This site does a great job at

providing all the information needed to become a Martin landlord.

Types Of Housing

There are many types of Martin Houses available. The most common types are made from wood, aluminum, and plastic. Heat absorption is a primary consideration when selecting houses for Martins. Dark paint colors hold more heat and should not be used. Ease of lowering the house to perform monitoring checks should also be considered.

Personally I prefer the telescoping poles. These are made to slide into each other keeping the house level at all times. Pulley systems can be more costly, and any type that tilts the house can cause eggs and birds to slide out.

Gourds can also be used. These can be natural or commercially made.

When choosing to purchase a Martin house, buy from those who are familiar with birds. At the very least, learn from the experts first, then shop for the best price. Start small and build up as you establish your colony.

Attracting Martins comes with no guarantee. Even when all conditions are met, you still might not successfully attract them the same year you start. But do not despair, keep your houses up and

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maintained through the fall migration. Sub–adult Martins may take note as they migrate southward. The following season may surprise you. It takes patience to attract martins. Although many have success their first year.

Get Started!

If you've considered becoming a Purple Martin landlord, the time has come to get started.

It's easy to put it off year after year, we all think up excuses only to regret it later as the season ends... what might have been.

The Purple Martins can use our help, and the reward of watching them soar through the air, catching insects on the wing, and feeding their young, well... how does one measure that benefit.

If you love bird watching

<http://www.wild-bird-watching.com>

you'll love

www.wild-bird-watching.com

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Learn the habits of common North American backyard birds.



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