



Bats and Their Environment

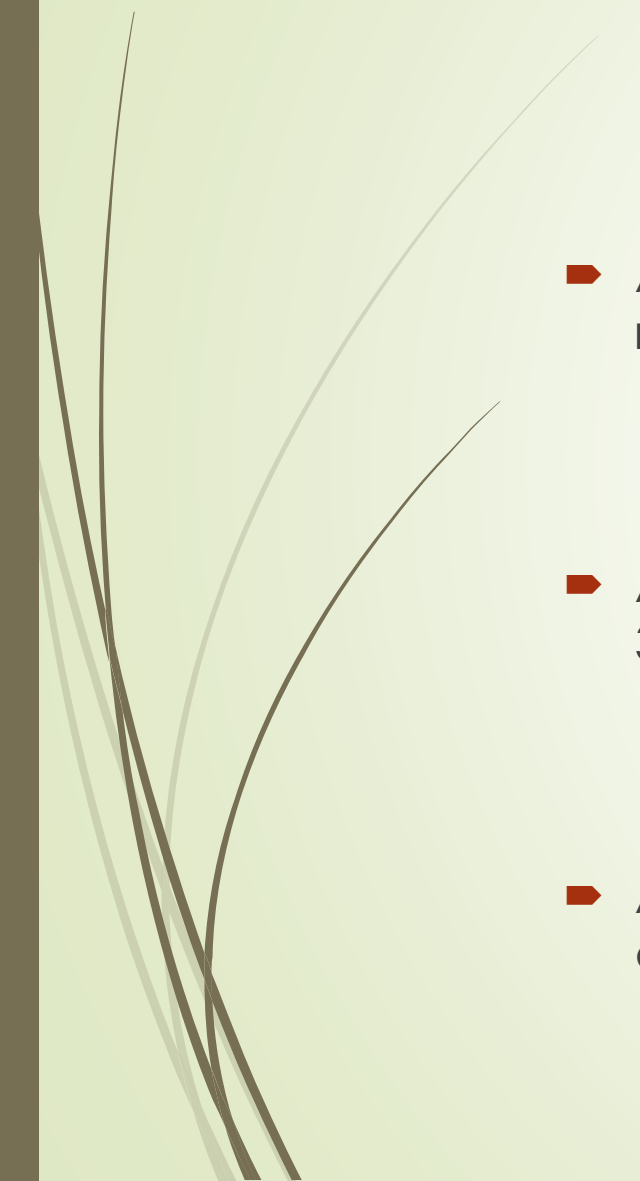
Richard F. Wood, Master Gardener Trainee
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Want to Hang Around ?





Bats are helpful!

- ▶ As the only major predators of night flying insects, bats play an important role in controlling many insect pests.
 - ▶ A single bat can consume as many as 500 insects in just one hour, or nearly 3,000 insects every night.
 - ▶ A colony of just 100 little brown bats, may consume more than a quarter of a million mosquitoes and other small insects each night.
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- In Virginia we have several species of bats
 - Perhaps the most common in Hanover are the
 - Little Brown Bat
 - Big Brown Bat, and
 - The Evening Bat

Little Brown Bat



Big Brown Bat



The Evening Bat



Bat House Placement



Houses will be occupied more frequently when installed in areas where bats already exist

More likely to locate near water and food

¼ mile of standing water

water provides habitat for prey namely insects

Bat House Placement

More likely to occupy houses at least 12 feet above the ground

Like 20-30 feet of clear flight space around the bat house

Minimum human disturbance

Doesn't seem to matter if on pole or against building, but need large landing zone

Bat House Placement

Bat houses need to be exposed to sunlight at least 7 hours per day

Cover exterior of the house with dark water-based, exterior-grade paint or stain which helps trap radiant energy

Avoid placing houses on tree trunks:

Exposes the house to shade

Increase vulnerability to climbing predators, such as raccoons and housecats

References:

Penn State Extension: A Homeowner's Guide to Northeastern Bats and Bat Problems

University of Nebraska – Lincoln Extension, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources; Publication G1575

Virginia Department of Game & Inland Fisheries Conserve, Connect, Protect:

<https://www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/nuisance/bats/>



Now Let's Build That Bat House

Bat House Materials

(4) 6 – foot privacy non-pressure treated fence boards (cedar preferred but costly)

1/2" deck screws

3 – 1/2" deck screws

1/4" dowel rod (usually comes in 6' sections)- Optional

Interior metal grating material or plastic mesh (routing is possible)

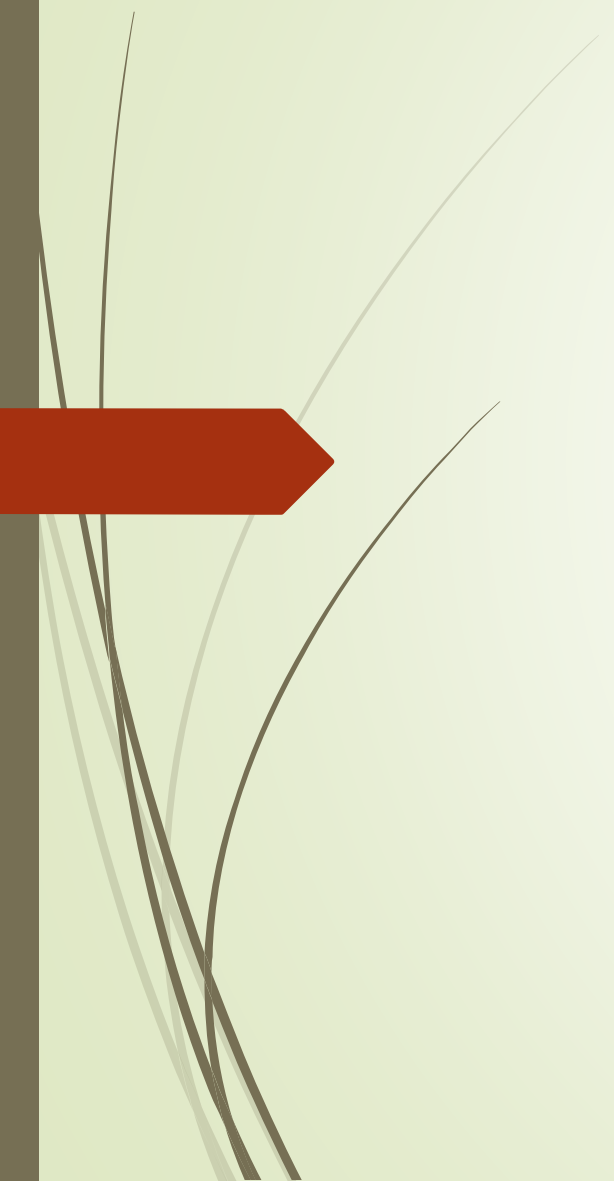
1 tube acrylic black caulking

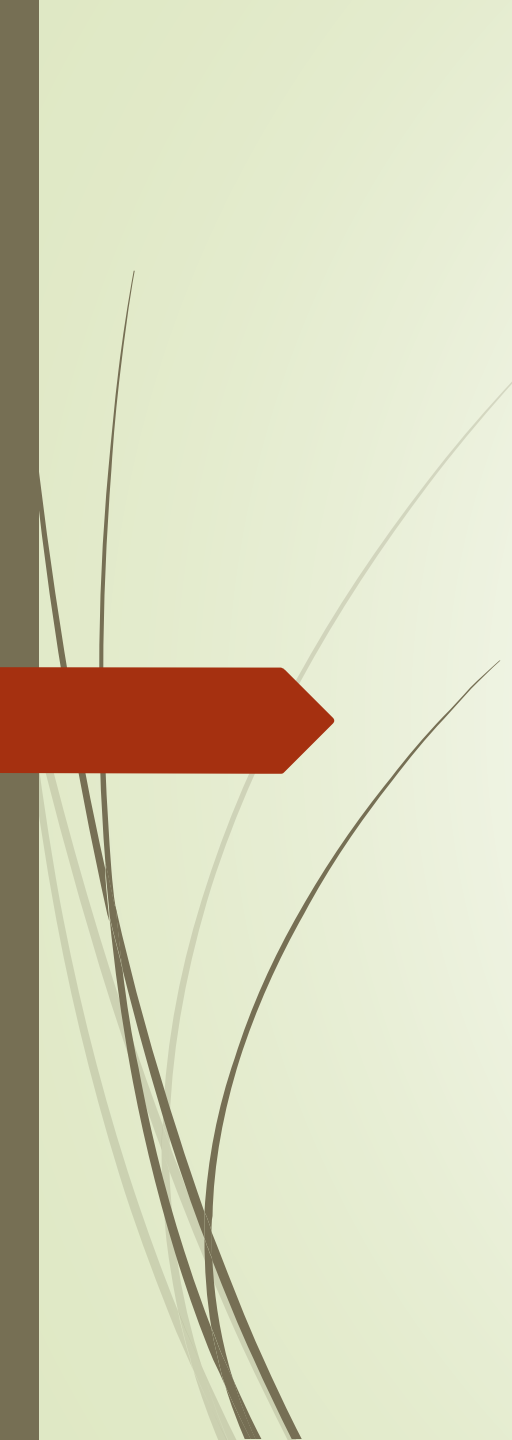
1 pint exterior latex black paint

Total Cost approximately \$25.00

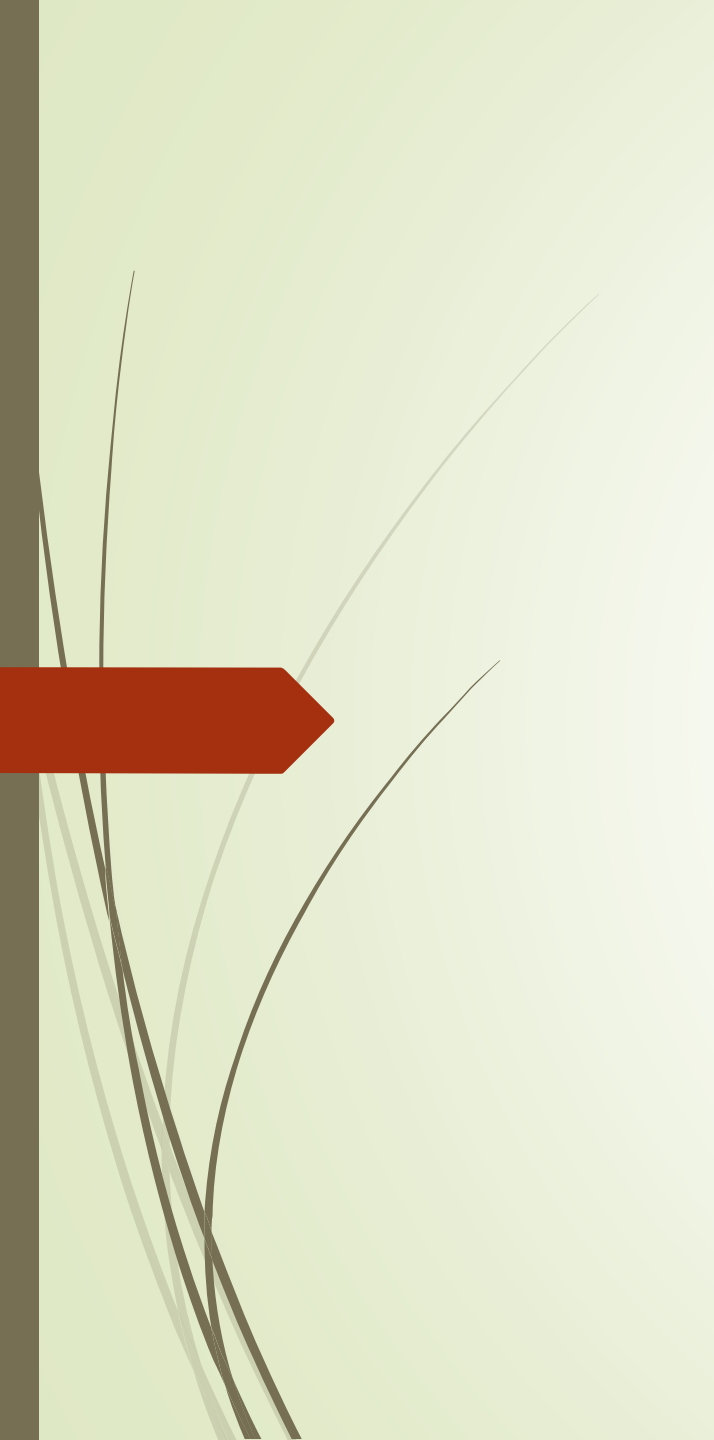
Cut to Form Bat House

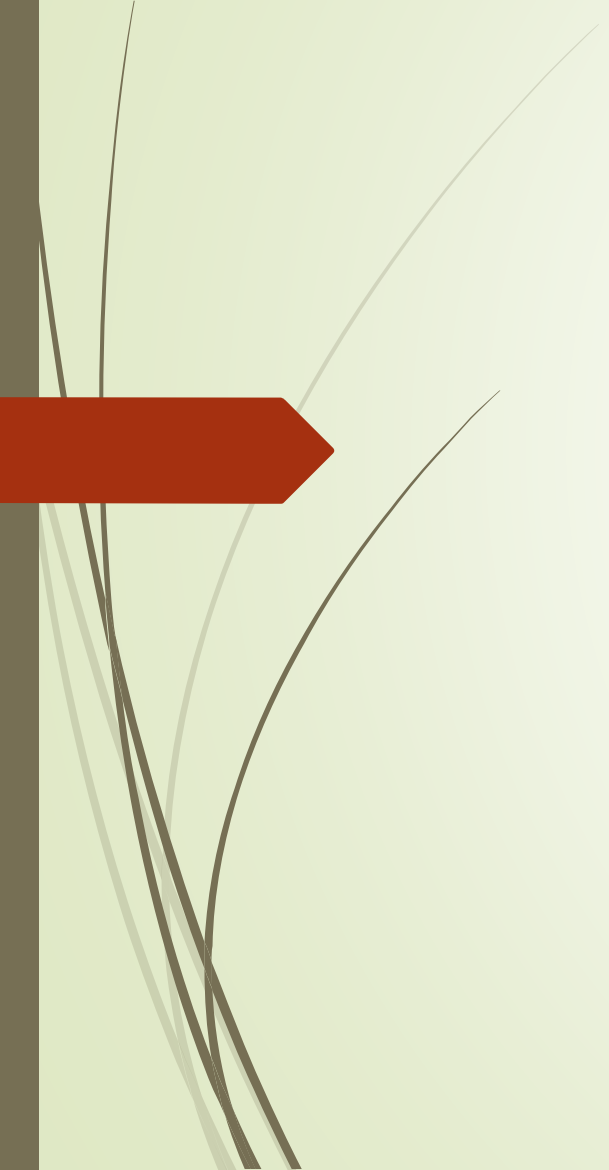
- 1- 18" for roof of house
- 2 - 22" sides of house
- 3 - 26" back of house
- 3 - 22" front of house
- 1 - 29" Connector Board











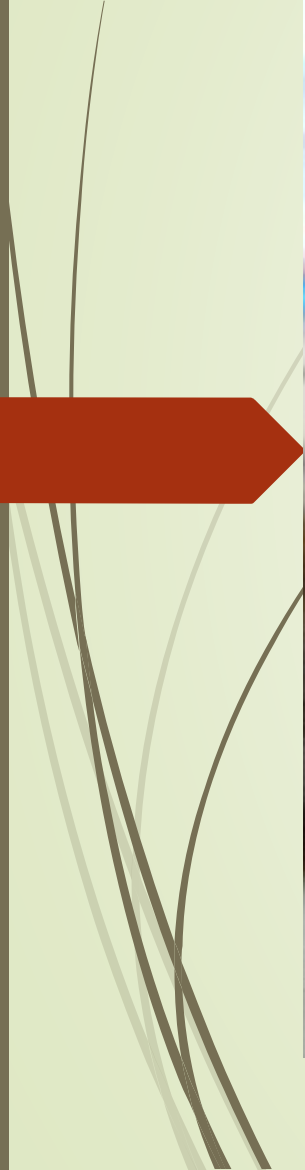








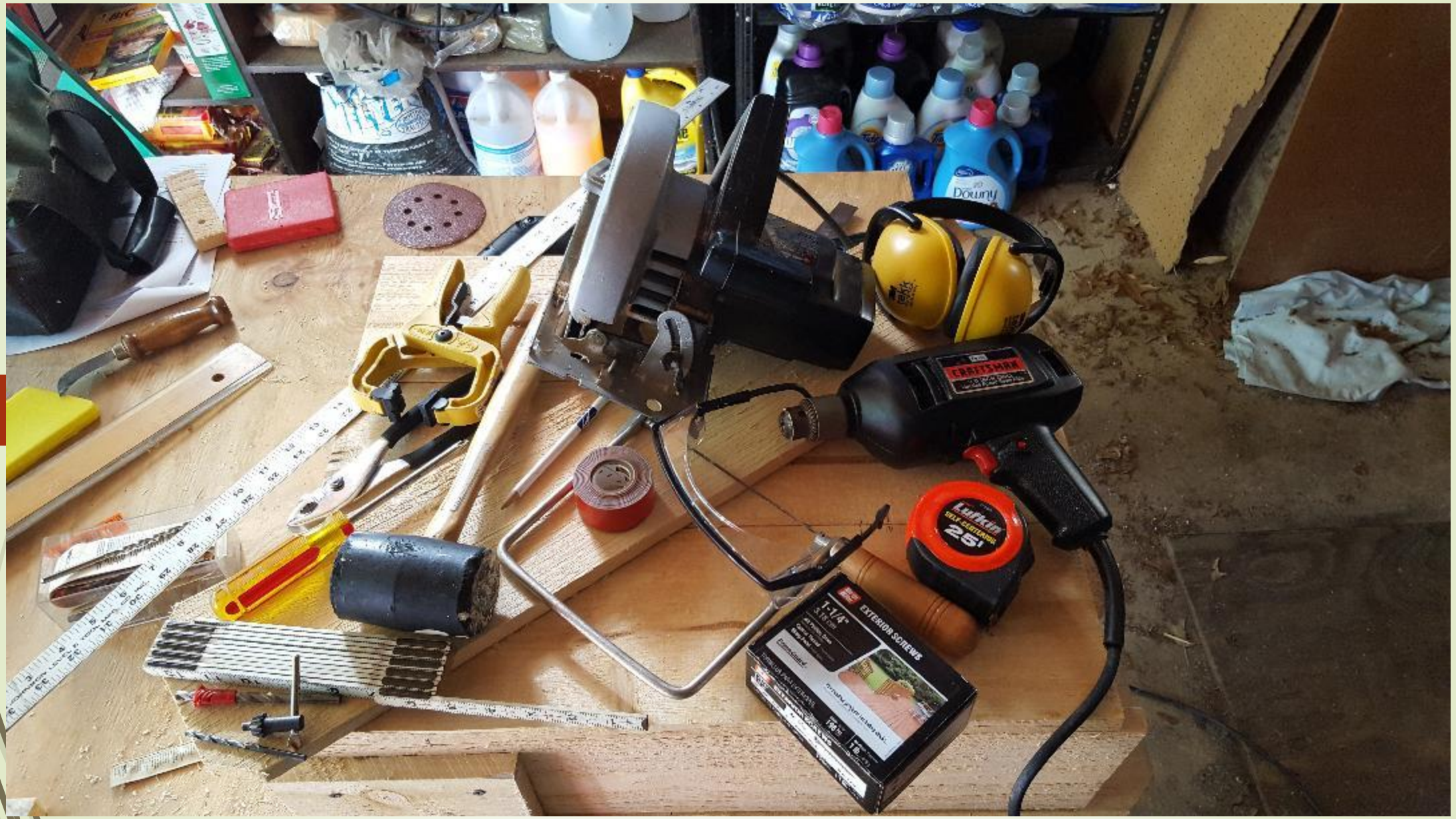












Helpful Hints to Attract Bats to Your New Bat House

Ideal temperature within a bat house is 80-100 degrees

Avoid pressure treated wood

Caulking should not be within the house – apply from the outside of the house

Bats prefer dark spaces – so keep the light out

Don't forget to provide exterior ventilation to your bat house