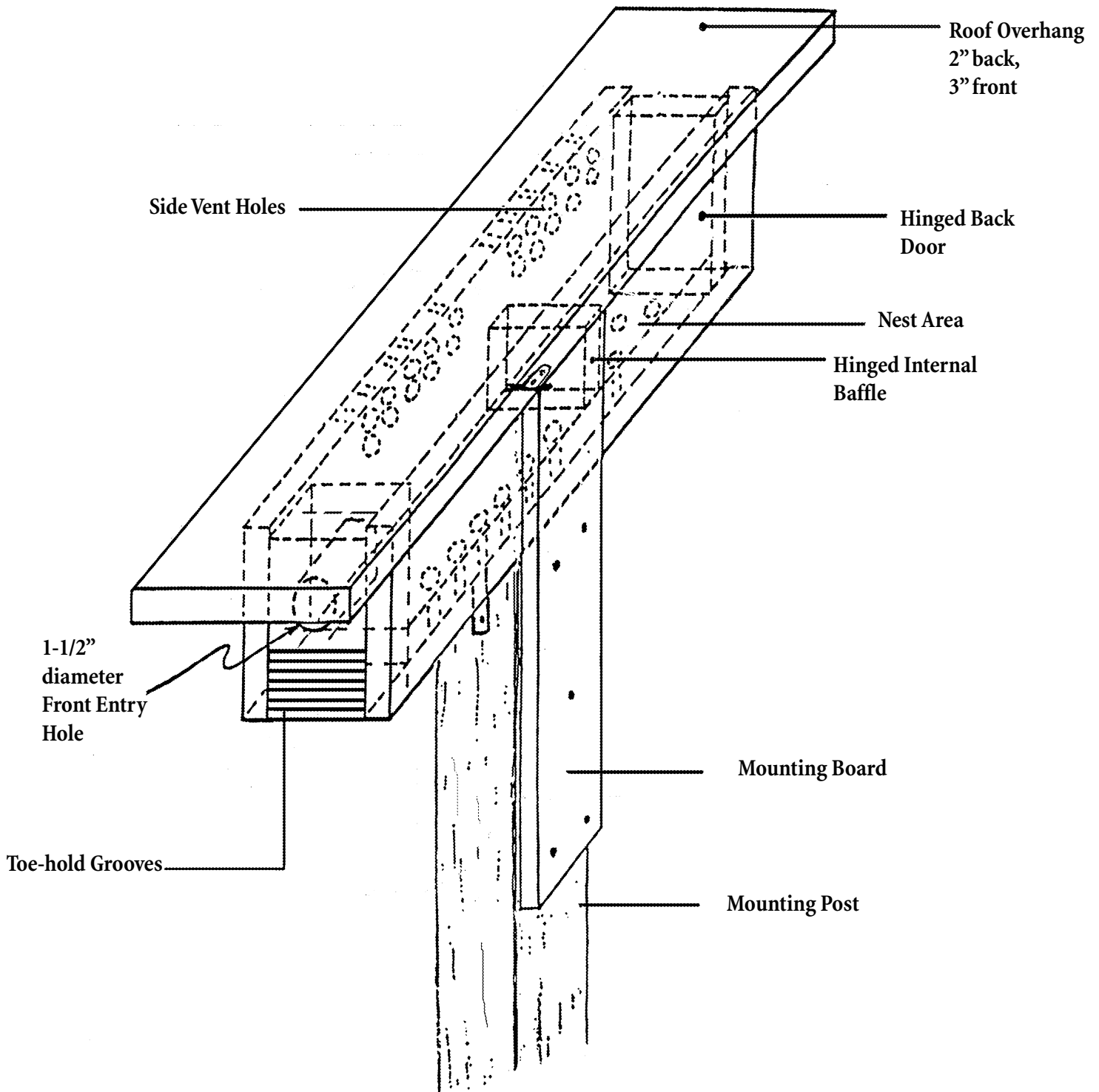


Tree Branch Bluebird House

designed by Frank A. Zuern



Tree Branch Bluebird House as described in *For the Love of Birds* by Kay Charter, published by



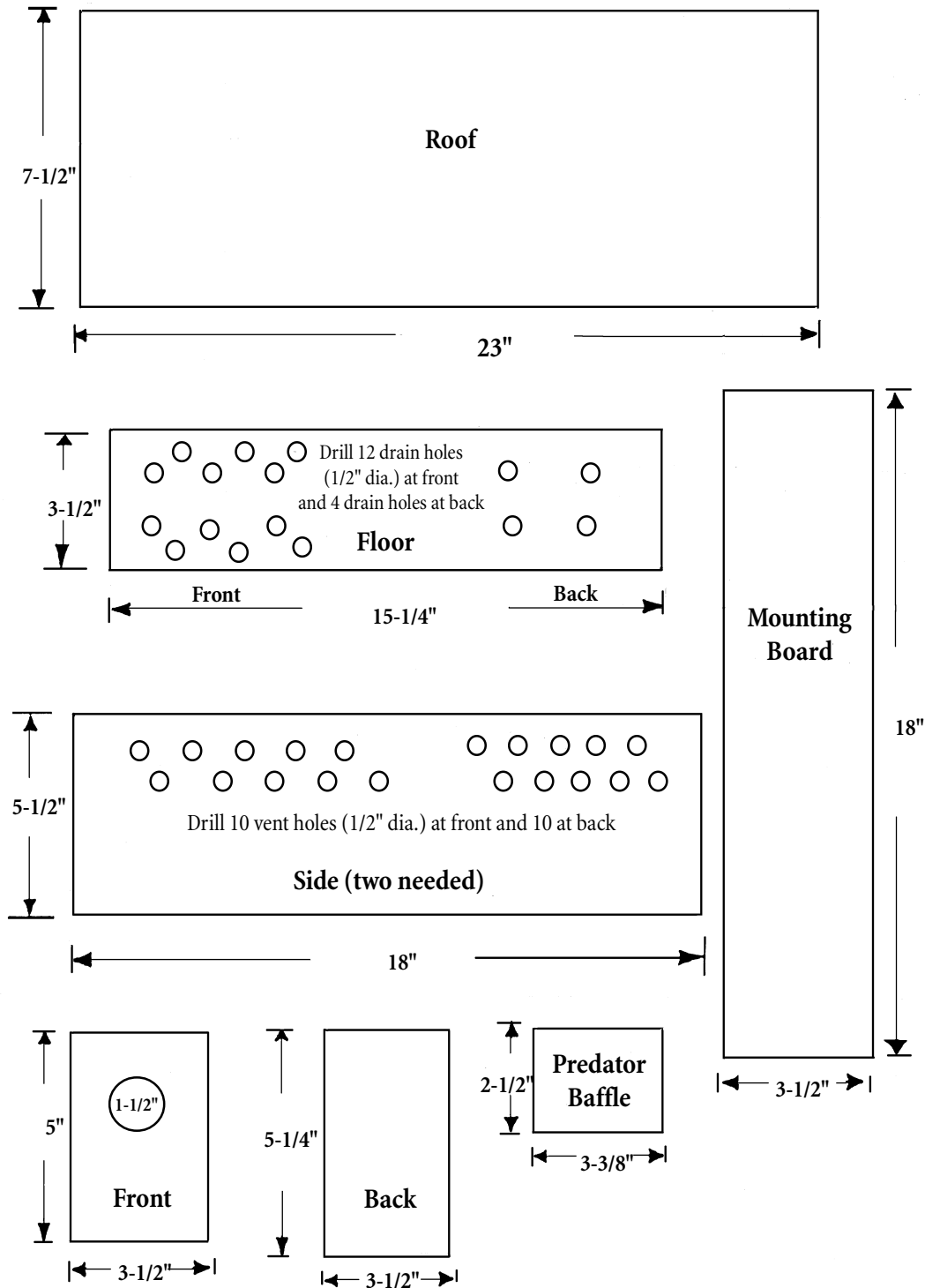
CROFTON CREEK PRESS

2303 GREGG ROAD SW

SOUTH BOARDMAN, MI 49680

PHONE: 231-369-2325 • FAX: 231-369-4382

Cutting Plan for Tree Branch Bluebird Box



Materials List:

(suggest 3/4"-thick cedar: rough side out, smooth side in)

- Roof: 7-1/2" x 23"
- 2 sides: 5-1/2" x 18"
- Floor: 3-1/2" x 15-1/4"
- Front: 3-1/2" x 5" x 1-1/2" thick (2 pieces)
- Back: 3-1/2" x 5-1/4"
- Predator baffle: 3-3/8" W x 3" H
- Mounting board: 3-1/2" x 18"

Supplies List:

- 16— 6d galv. nails to fasten sides, front
- 6— 1-1/2" deck screws to fasten top
- 1— 2" T-hinge with screws for baffle
- 1— 3" T-hinge with screws for back door
- 5— 2-1/2" deck screws to fasten mounting board to post
- 2— L-braces for mounting post (optional)

Tree Branch Bluebird House

Assembly Instructions:

- Cut pieces of 3/4" cedar (rough one side, planed smooth on the other) as indicated on the Cutting Plan. Drill 1/2" diameter vent and drain holes: 10 holes along the front /top of sides; 10 holes along the back/top of sides; 12 holes along the front part of floor; and 4 holes under the back nest area of the floor. Sand rough edges.
- Front entry hole should be 1-1/2" in diameter and 1-1/2" deep. To get the 1-1/2" depth cut two pieces of 3/4" cedar and nail together. Drill 1-1/2" diameter entry hole. Centerpoint of entry hole is 3-1/2" from bottom.
- Assemble sides bottom, and front with 6d galvanized nails. Pre-drill all nail holes so wood does not split. Leave 1/2" above front piece for circulation. Sides and ends overlap the bottom. Sand rough edges of nest entry. Leave 1/4" to 1/2" air space between bottom board and front entrance boards.
- Install hinged baffle on inside floor, 4-1/2" to 5" from back of box. Hinge allows the baffle to fold down toward the back for cleanout from the rear.
- Attach top with 1-1/2" galvanized deck screws. Pre-drill holes for screws. Leave 2" overhang at back and 3" overhang at front.
- Attach back with hinge on the underside of the box so the back can swing out for cleaning. There should be a 1/4" space between back and top of box for circulation. Hold in place with a nail inserted loosely from the side; leave top half of nail exposed so you can remove it for cleanout.
- Install on 4" x 4" post with Mounting Board. Pre-drill nail holes. L-brackets can be used for added support.

Hints from Author Kay Charter

- Placing several strands of pine needles or long dried grass (not mower clippings) behind the baffle will encourage the hen to build her nest there.
- Trap English sparrows and destroy their nests. Like starlings, English sparrows are an introduced species, and they compete with bluebirds for nest sites and will kill hens, chicks, and eggs.
- Once a pair has selected your nest box, do not open it or approach it. This unique design will protect your nesting bluebirds (and tree swallows) not only from predators, but from nest parasitism by blow flies. Mr. Zuern, designer of the Tree Branch Bluebird House, has found that the circulating air prevents development of these parasites.
- Mr. Zuern also reports that one of the sides may be hinged for a door in lieu of a back cleanout entry. The author does not support this style as it lessens the structural integrity of the design. However the side opening style may be desired by bluebirders reluctant to run their hand inside the box for cleanout.
- The author recommends cleaning out nest boxes late in summer, *after* all nest activity.
- Nailing a 6" to 8" wide strip of flashing around the supporting post will prevent mice from using boxes during the winter. Another mounting option that discourages predators includes putting the box on a metal fencepost with a 4-foot section of PVC pipe or drainspout slid over the top of the post so that it rests between the ground and the mounting bracket; attach the mounting bracket to the fencepost with U-bolts.