



SUBURBAN BAT HOUSE PLANS



I make my living by evicting colonies of bats (very gently of course) from houses in suburban areas. I find that most of my customers truly like bats and many are fascinated with them..

On almost every job I hear- *"We like bats, I mean, we realize that they eat mosquitoes and that they are an important part of the environment but we just don't want them in our house!"* Then I

am asked the Bat House Question - *"We'd like to keep the bats in the area to eat the mosquitoes. What if we put up a bat house? Would that make them stay?"*

Materials List

The materials needed to build a Suburban Bat House are very cheap, common and easy to find. Any decent hardware/lumber store should have everything you need. To build a Suburban Bat House you will need the following Materials:

1 - Gable Vent. The size of the gable vent will vary from house to house. The most common sized gable vent in Massachusetts and RI is the 16 inch by 20 inch gable vent. This is the size that I will be using for this plan. All measurements listed on this page will only work with this size gable vent. If your vent is a different size you can simply measure the vent and adjust accordingly. Please don't get discouraged if your gable vent is a different size than is listed here. Keep in mind that the whole idea is to box-off all sides of the gable vent so that it fits over your existing gable vent. You can still use the pictures to see how it is put together and installed.

Wood

There are only 4 pieces of wood needed to build the Suburban Bat House. One piece for the top, one piece for the bottom and one piece for each side.

1 - Six-foot piece of 5-1/2 inch pine.

1 - Six-foot piece of 9- inch pine. (you'll only use a 21-inch piece but 6 foot is usually the smallest piece you can buy)
Hardware

24-30 - 1 1/2" inch wood screws. You can also use galvanized drywall screws.

1 - Piece of 1/4" galvanized screening. You will need a piece large enough to cover your existing gable vent. The gable vent on this page measures 16 inches by 20 inches. Most stores sell small rolls of this material. A 3' by 5' roll will be more than enough to cover most vents. Look in the gardening aisle of most home and garden stores.

Total Cost of Materials **should be between \$30 and \$40** depending on the size of your gable vent and your geographic location.

Tool List

To construct your Suburban Bat House you will need the following tools:



Cordless Drill - Any drill over 9-volt will work.



1/8 inch drill bit - To drill holes for screws.



Magnetic Bit Holder - with Phillips head



Table-saw or Circular-saw - Four cuts are needed in this project. A table-saw is the optimal choice but a circular-saw in the hands of an experienced person will work also.



Hand Shears - To cut Screening to size.

Once you have everything you need we can begin with the project.

Step 1 - Match the Gable Vent



To start we begin with a gable vent. The gable vent that you use to build the bat house **MUST** be the exact same size as the existing gable vent on the house or it will **NOT** fit over the existing gable vent. Take measurements and then hold the vent up to the existing vent to make sure it is the same size. The most common sized gable vent in Massachusetts is the 16" by 20". That is the size that I will be using for this plan. All measurements listed on this page will only work with this size gable vent. If your vent is a different size you can simply measure the vent and adjust accordingly.

Step 2 - Remove Factory Bug Screen



Remove Factory Bug Screen from the new Gable Vent Remove Factory Bug Screen from the new Gable Vent

You must remove the cloth bug screen to allow bats to use the entire area between the bat house and the gable vent.

Use a pair of pliers to grab one corner of the screen and then remove, as shown in photo here.

Step 3 - Screen the Existing Gable Vent



Cut the piece of 1/4" galvanized screening to fit over the entire gable vent. (the one that is installed on the side of your house)

*** Please take a quick look inside the vent to make sure that there aren't any bats inside before you screen it. ***

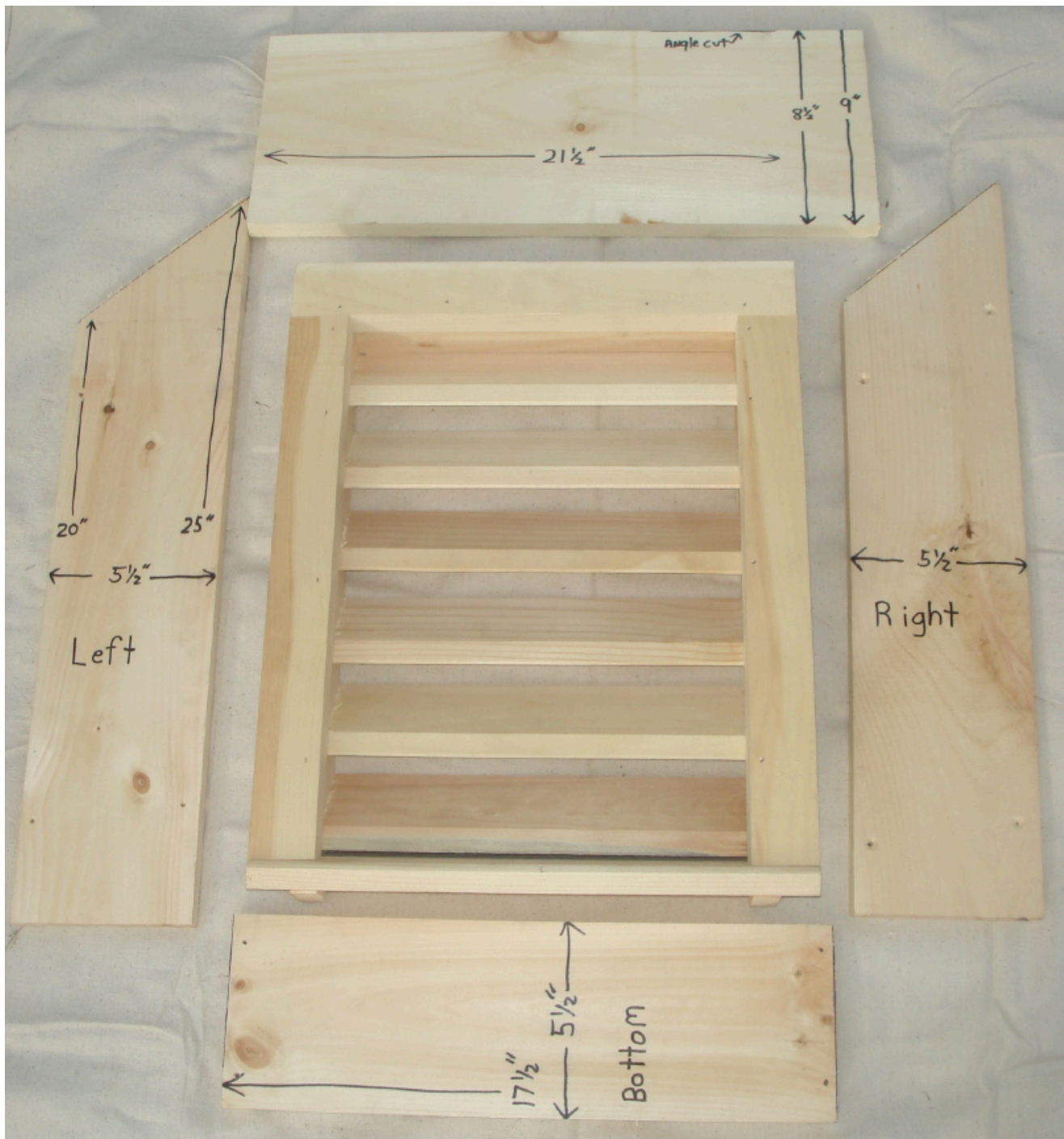
Fasten Screening to gable vent using 6-8 screws as shown in photo here. Be sure to cover the entire vent but do not let the edges of the screen extend beyond the edges of the vent or it will interfere with the installation of the bat house.

Step 4 - Cutting the Wood

Both Left and Right- Measure 5 1/2" wide by 25 inches to the long end of the angle and 20 inches to the short side of the angle.

Top- Measures 9" wide by 21.5 inches long. You must also make a 1/2" angle cut on this piece so that it fits flush as shown here.

Bottom- Measures 5 1/2" wide by 17.5 inches long.



Step 5 - Assembly

The assembly of these pieces is rather simple and is outlined in the steps below.

**** You must drill pilot holes into the pine in the spots where the screws will enter. If you do not drill these hole out first you will split the pine and ruin the wood.****



Fasten the side left and right side pieces to the side of the gable vent as shown in the picture above. Make sure that the bottom of the pieces are flush with the bottom of the vent and the front of the pieces are flush with the front of the vent as shown in picture.



Fasten the bottom piece as shown in the pictures here.



Fasten the top piece in the same manner. You'll notice that the top piece is over-sized. You will center this piece onto the bat house leaving an equal amount hanging off each side. When centered there should be a 2-inch overhang on each side of the bat house.



That is it. The assembly of this bat house is very simple. Your Suburban Bat House is complete. We will now move on to the installation.

Step 6 - Installation

Once the bat house is completely assembled it is ready to be installed over the gable vent on the side of the house. As mentioned in the disclaimer, working on ladders can be very dangerous. If you are not experienced with working on a ladder I strongly suggest that you do not install this bat house. You should find someone that is experienced with ladders and working up high and let them install it for you.

Drill Pilot Holes



Before you go up the ladder you need to drill 4 holes in the sides of the bat house. Drill one hole on each side in the location shown above. Then drill another hole approximately 3 inches up from the bottom on both sides underneath the first holes. These will be the holes used to secure the bat house to the gable vent.

Mounting the Bat House

You will need four 1 1/2" screws to secure the bat house to the existing gable vent. Be sure to have



them on hand before you go up the ladder.

Once in place you simply push the bat house over the gable vent. If it was built correctly it will fit over the gable vent nice and tight.

** If the bat house does not fit over the gable vent you can remove these screws from the bottom of the bat house to loosen it up. Once that is done you should pull the sides out a bit and then try it again. Once it goes on you can replace the screws that you removed from the bottom of the bat house.**

Securing the Bat House



Push the Bat house hard up against the side of the house to be sure that all sides are flush against the siding. Sink screws through the pilot-holes and into the side of the gable vent as shown in the pictures above. Do this on both sides. You will use 4 screws total.

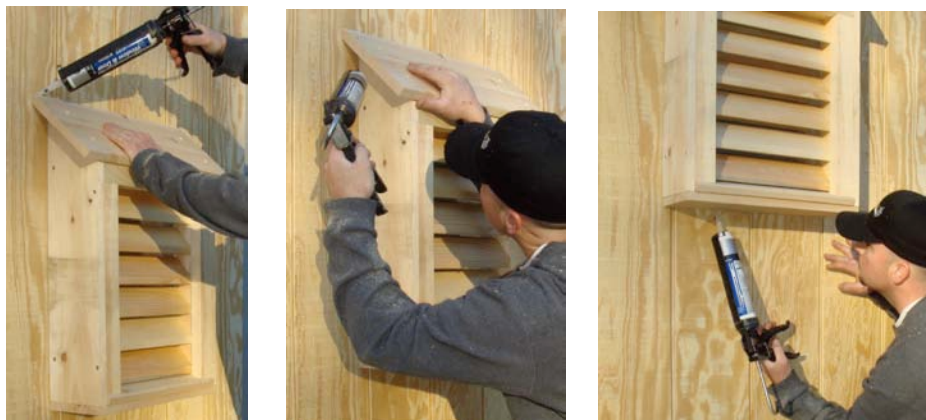
At this point the bat house has been properly mounted and secured onto the gable vent.

Step 7 - Caulking/Waterproofing

**** Very Important- You must seal all edges where the bat house meets the siding of the house to prevent leaks!****

Please do not skip this step. If you do not seal the edges with sealant you will have water leaks inside the bat house. Water will deter bats and could possibly cause a leak in your gable vent.

Sealants- Pure silicone is best for keeping water out but it is not paint-able. If you use Silicone you will not be able to paint over the bead of sealant. If you plan on painting the bat house you should use some type of paint-able waterproof caulking.



Caulk all sides of the bat house as shown in the pictures above. Be sure to use a thick, heavy bead on the top to prevent water from getting behind the bat house.

Step 8 - Painting



Apply one to two coats of exterior latex primer, then two coats of exterior latex paint to the Bat house. Most people choose to use the same color as the siding of the house. In this case the bat house will all but disappear once it is painted. You can also use the same color as the house's trim.

Completion!

At this point your Suburban Bat House is complete. You can expect bats to use these houses anytime from Early April through late October depending on the temperature. In warmer years I have seen bats in gable vents in December and January.

If you have any questions about the Suburban Bat House please feel free to email me with any questions at Info@BatGuys.com. Also if you build one of these bat houses I would love to see it. Please take a picture and email it to me.

Matthew Grady
BatGuys Wildlife Services