



FLYING SQUIRREL NEST BOX

Installation and Management Instructions

Introduction

There are two species of flying squirrels found in North America, they are the Northern (*Glaucomys sabrinus*) and Southern (*Glaucomys volans*) flying squirrel. In Niagara, along the escarpment in a hardwood forest, is where you might just see a Southern flying squirrel- if you're lucky. They are the only nocturnal tree squirrel species and often reside in tree cavities, making them harder to find. They may use a single or multiple nest boxes year round. Although they spend most of their time in trees they do forage for food on the ground at night for things such as nuts, seeds, berries, insects and have been known to sometimes eat eggs.

Unlike their name suggests, flying squirrels do not actually fly but rather glide from perching areas such as a tree limb. They use their furry membrane under their arms, called a patagium, by adjusting the tautness of it and their tail as a stabilizer as well as a brake before landing. They can glide between 80 to 150 feet (24.3 -45.7m) [2]. This species has scent glands within its cheeks to help mark and track the fastest route within the forest to continuously travelled routes.

Nest Box Construction

Design: Nest boxes with either open from the side or top, varying on the design, which allows for accessibility for both cleaning and maintenance.

Mounting a Flying Squirrel Box

- Nest boxes should be mounted 10 feet (3.04m) to 26 feet (7.93m) off the ground

- Place nest boxes within the oldest stands of coniferous or mixedwood forest.
- If installing multiple nest boxes (up to 5) ensure they are well spaced within in a minimum of five acre (2 hectare) area

Location and Placement

Habitat Preferences: The location of a nest box is one of the most important considerations in not only attracting flying squirrels, but also in optimizing their chances for successful nesting. Have your nest box place in the oldest stand of coniferous and mixed forests (especially those that produce mast [nuts] such as maple, beech, hickory, oak and poplar), with a good tree canopy overhead [1].

Placement of Nest Boxes: have nest boxes facing away from prevailing winds

Monitoring and Maintenance

Monitoring: You can check your nest box occasionally, once every 2-3 months, however once occupied do your best to leave it alone. If bothered enough the flying squirrel will find the structure unsuitable and leave with high amounts of disturbance.

Maintenance: Clean your nest box **only** during January or February as this will be the period of time when the nest box will be vacant.

Keep us informed on the success of the structure and share with us on our facebook page!

References & Further Information

1. Althoff, Donald P., Althoff, Peggy S. (2001). Monitoring Southern Flying Squirrel Populations with Nest Boxes. The Ohio Journal of Science. V101, n2, 2-11. Retrieved on June 10, 2016 from https://kb.osu.edu/dspace/bitstream/handle/1811/23883/V101N2_002.pdf;jsessionid=00887BD71BEBC54C3ABBF83F08ED2B4E?sequence=1
2. Iowa Department of Natural Resources.(2016) Southern Flying Squirrel. Retrieved June 7, 2016 from < <http://www.iowadnr.gov/Conservation/Wildlife-Landowner-Assistance/Technical-Assistance/Southern-Flying-Squirrel> >