

Build Your Own PVC Bird House

If you enjoy watching birds in your yard and would like to give your feathered friends a helping hand, try building a bird house made out of scrap pieces of PVC piping. This type of bird house attracts wrens and small birds, has a nice style, and is easy to maintain. It's a simple project for you and the kids and costs about \$19.00 for the PVC pieces. You can buy all the parts at your local plumbing supply store and you might even ask a local plumber for some scrap pieces of PVC pipe.

This bird house features a 4-inch diameter PVC pipe with a cleanout trap for the top that can be unscrewed for you to clean at the end of each nesting season. The durable nature of PVC will ensure many years of enjoyment with your birdhouse. You can either assemble the bird house without painting it, however scuffing and removing the manufactures' marks at the very least, will make it look more attractive when hanging in your yard.



For this project, you will need:

Tools

- An Electric Drill
- File
- 1 ¼" Hole Saw
- ¼" Drill Bit
- 11/32", 23/64" , or 3/8" Drill Bit for Dowel
- 1/4" Drill Bit for Eye Hook

Birdhouse Parts

- 4" diameter PVC pipe 8" long
- 1 PVC cap for the bottom
- 1 PVC clean-out cap for the plug to screw into.
- 1 PVC clean-out plug for the cover and hanger
- PVC Adhesive (clear)
- 1 - 2 X ¼" diameter eyebolt with 1 nut and 1 washer
- 3/8" X 2-inch dowel rod

Finishing Apparatus

- PVC Cleaner
- 220 grit sandpaper
- Heavy Wire (coat hanger)
- Etch Primer
- Paint of your choice



Figure 1: Bird House Components



Figure 2: Drill Bits

1. Take a piece of 4-inch diameter PVC and cut it to a length of 8 inches.
2. Remove any stickers and adhesive from the PVC pieces.
3. Use the 220 grit sandpaper or sanding block to rough up the exterior pieces of PVC and to remove the manufacturers' markings. The sanded surface will help make the paint adhere to the PVC.
4. In a well-ventilated workspace, apply the clear PVC cleaner to the inside of the PVC cap and to one end of the exterior side of the pipe. Cleaning the pieces first, helps promote adhesion for the connection.
5. Now apply the clear PVC adhesive to glue the same surfaces you just cleaned. The clear adhesive versus the purple is used in case you do not want to paint your bird house and to prevent the purple dye to bleed through the paint.
6. Put the pipe and the cap together. Make sure your push the two pieces are aligned before forcing them together. It will take some force to make a good fit (figure 3).
7. While the adhesive is drying, use the 1/4" inch drill bit to drill a hole through the center of the cleanout plug (figure 4).
8. Connect the nut, washer, and eyehook to the plug.
9. Cut a piece of the wire, such as a coat hanger, to the desired length for hanging the bird house. Attach it to the eye hook and secure it in place.
10. Next, swab the other end of the pipe and the inside of the cap where the two pieces connect. Be careful not to apply adhesive to the threads of the cap (figure 5).
11. Place the cap on the pipe, stand it on end and let it set for 10 minutes.
12. Use the 1 1/4" hole saw to cut the entrance in the center of the pipe.
13. File the inside and outside of the entrance hole to smooth them.
14. Use the 11/32", 23/64" , or 3/8" drill bit to drill the hole for the dowel. Using a slightly smaller hole will create a snug fit for the dowel rod. You may not even need to use the epoxy.
15. Drill the hole underneath the entrance hole and at the edge of the cap. The edge of the cap will help support the dowel (figure 6).
16. Mix up a small batch of epoxy and apply it to the end of the dowel inside the pipe. This will help keep it secure. Let the epoxy dry for a few hours before continuing with the exterior finish.
17. For drainage and air circulation, use the drill bit to drill two or three holes through the bottom cap.

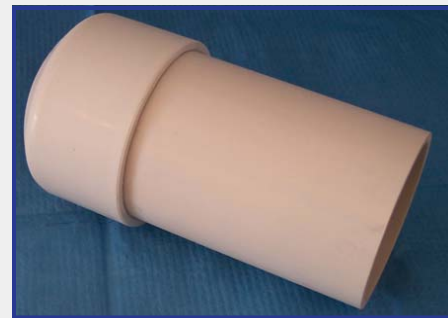


Figure 3: Assembled Cap



Figure 4: Drilling the Hole for the Eyehook

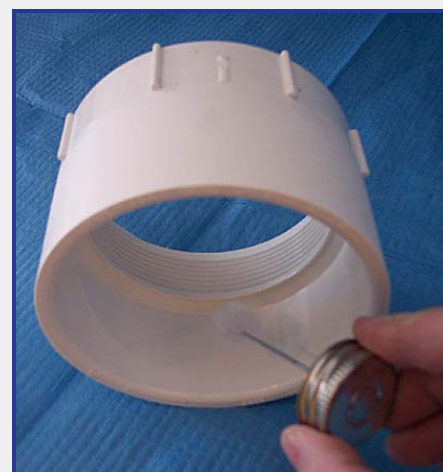


Figure 5: Applying the Adhesive



Figure 6: Installing the Dowel

Painting Your Bird House

Spruce up your birdhouse by painting it with a color of your choice. You can use regular house paint to match the color of your house or find another color for your project. Before painting, you need to properly prepare the PVC surface to make the paint stick to the smooth surface.

1. Make sure to remove all manufacturers' markings before gluing or they could bleed through the paint. Sanding is the best way.
2. Thoroughly wipe all the dust from the assembly with a clean cloth.
3. Screw in the cap and hang the assembly with the hanger you installed.
4. In a well ventilated area, use the PVC cleaner and swab the entire external surface of the birdhouse. Be careful not to let the cleaner drip or run. It will create streak marks. If that happens, you can work the streaks out with the swab.
5. Spray the entire assembly with several light coats of an etch primer or adhesion promoter to PVC. You can buy etch primers in a spray can from an auto parts store. The etch primer helps the paint stick to the PVC. Let the primer dry for 2-3 hours before painting.
6. When the primer has dried for several hours, paint all PVC pieces any color you desire.
7. Let dry for 2-3 hours before hanging outside.

Being that your new bird house is made from Heavy PVC pipe and fittings, it should last you a live time. It's easy to hang and easy to clean at the end of each season.



Figure 6: Setting Up for Primer and Paint

NOTE: Make sure that you do not seal the screw cap when painting and priming. Screw the cap in finger tight, then prime and paint.

If you are using a spray can, you should be okay and not glue the cap to the cleanout. If you brush on paint, remove the screw cap before painting.

