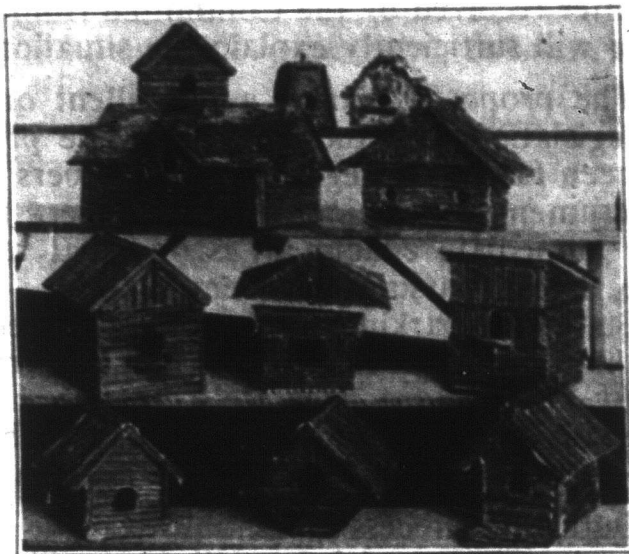


Bird Houses Boys Can Build

Mr. A. L. Siepert.

THIS is the time to prepare for the return of the birds, and to help them find proper homes to rear their families. Of the many varieties of birds, only a small number will nest in homes built for them and these can be attracted most successfully if the houses meet certain specifications. Wrens, blue birds, martins, and sometimes robins, fly catchers and flickers are most likely to accept hospitality.

In general bird houses vary in area of floor space,



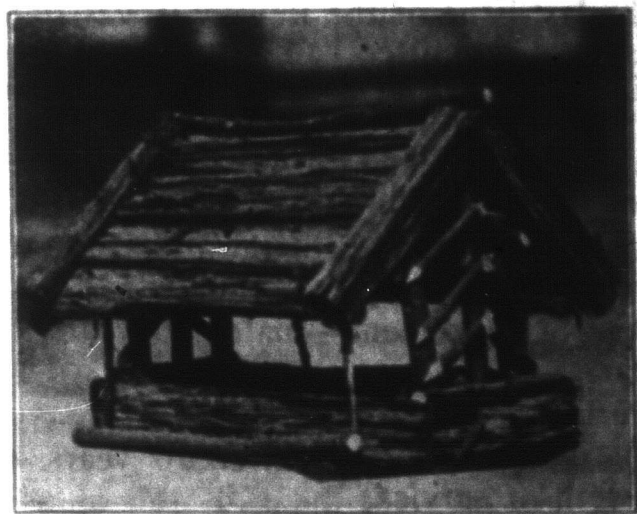
By courtesy of Manual Arts Press
RUSTIC HOUSES

depth, diameter of opening, and material used for construction, depending upon the kind of bird for whom the house is built. Houses made of old and weathered boards are more attractive than those made of new lumber. Again, the odor of fresh paint is no more pleasing to birds than to human beings. All joints should be made square and tight to guard against drafts and rain.

Blue birds are among the early comers. The house must be wide and deep enough to provide sufficient space to permit the young birds to mature fully before being obliged to leave the nest. That means floor space of about 5 in. x 5 in. or even 6 in. x 6 in., and a depth of from 6 in. to 9 in. The opening should be placed 5 in. or 6 in. from the floor and be from $1\frac{1}{4}$ to $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. diameter. It is not necessary to provide a perch as the parent birds readily enter by holding on with their claws. The house may be built with a gable roof or a sloping shed roof. Boards taken from packing boxes serve well as material. A rustic effect which the birds seem to like is easily secured by splitting small saplings in two and nailing these halves side by side to the walls of the house until the entire surface is covered. Since blue birds frequently rear two or even three families during a summer it is advisable to plan the house so the top or one side can be removed for cleaning purposes. The cleaning should be done as soon as the young birds have all left the nest. The house should be firmly fastened to a pole

and set up so it stands eight or ten feet from the ground with the opening facing east or south and away from the prevailing wind and rain.

Wrens have built in all manner of places, but a house measuring 4 in. x 4 in. on the inside and from 5 in. to 6 in. deep is very welcome. The opening should be from $\frac{7}{8}$ to 1 in. in diameter. If made larger sparrows can enter and very easily destroy the eggs or young. It is better to have the house too large than too small, since the housekeep will carry in tiny sticks and straws until just the right amount of room is left to rear the family. If the house is made too small, this filling-up process is curtailed, but the youngsters are forced to leave home too early to be able to fly or take care of themselves. Set the



By courtesy of Manual Arts Press
ROBIN SHELTER

house on a pole, or nail it under the eaves of some building.

Blue birds and wrens are not sociable. They do not welcome other bird families in the near neighborhood. It is therefore useless to build a two-family house for them, or to place two houses within a short distance of each other.

Robins make use of nesting shelves placed in trees, on telephone poles, or the side of a building. These shelves may be closed on one or two sides only. The idea is merely to provide a safe place for the robin to build a nest.

Bird houses should be set in place before the birds arrive from the South land, so that they are ready for inspection when the tenants arrive. Protection must be given against cats, sparrows and sometimes boys. If safety from enemies is given, the houses will be occupied as the builder's reward, and a splendid opportunity becomes available for the study of bird life.

Those who think must govern those who toil.