

MY BIRD HOUSES.

BY CLYDE L. PATCH.

As it will soon be time to construct bird houses, which should be in place a couple of weeks before the feathered tenants arrive, thus giving the newness time to wear off, an account of my last summer's experience may assist and encourage other members of the O. F. N. Club.

Until last spring I had supposed that a martin house was usually in place two or three years before the birds discovered it, or at any rate would nest in it; also, that the person owning the house was particularly lucky, and thirdly that the house must be situated in a large open yard.

Having been requested to furnish bird house plans for manual training work, I built an experimental martin house, with twelve compartments measuring 6 in. x 6 in. x 6 in., each having an entrance 2 in. in diameter the bottom edge of which is 2 in. above the floor. Across the outside of the house and 2 in. below the entrance holes is a 3 in. platform, which forms a landing stage for the parent birds and a play ground for the young when they first venture out.

So, having constructed the house I, one evening, with the assistance of a neighbor, erected it on a twenty foot pole in my sixteen by twenty back yard in the Glebe, (Ottawa) expressing the hope that if the wind didn't blow it down I might get tenants by 1920. Three days later Mrs. Patch informed me that house seekers had been about during the morning, and upon looking out I saw a pair of those beautiful opals of the air, commonly called tree swallows, exploring my apartment house. A few days later they began carrying sticks and straws from all over the neighborhood and alighting promiscuously on the landing platform running under the three top holes, followed their noses straight into the nearest hole, thus building three nests. Seeing that this would never lead to a happy family, I constructed a box 6 in. x 6 in. x 15 in. deep with a landing platform under the $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. entrance hole and the overhanging eave of the sloping roof above it. A day or so after placing this house on a near-by fifteen foot pole, the swallows examined it and after driving off another pair of persistent house-seekers, they abandoned the three nests in the martin house and began house furnishing in the new home. Following a few days of busy stick carrying the feather lining was added, and thereafter for the next two weeks Lady Swallow was seen only a short time each day when she trusted the four transparent and later delicate rose-coloured eggs to the care of Mr. Swallow and fed in the immediate neighborhood.

Then one day to my great delight a martin lit on the martin house, remaining a short time and returning next day with a mate. This pair