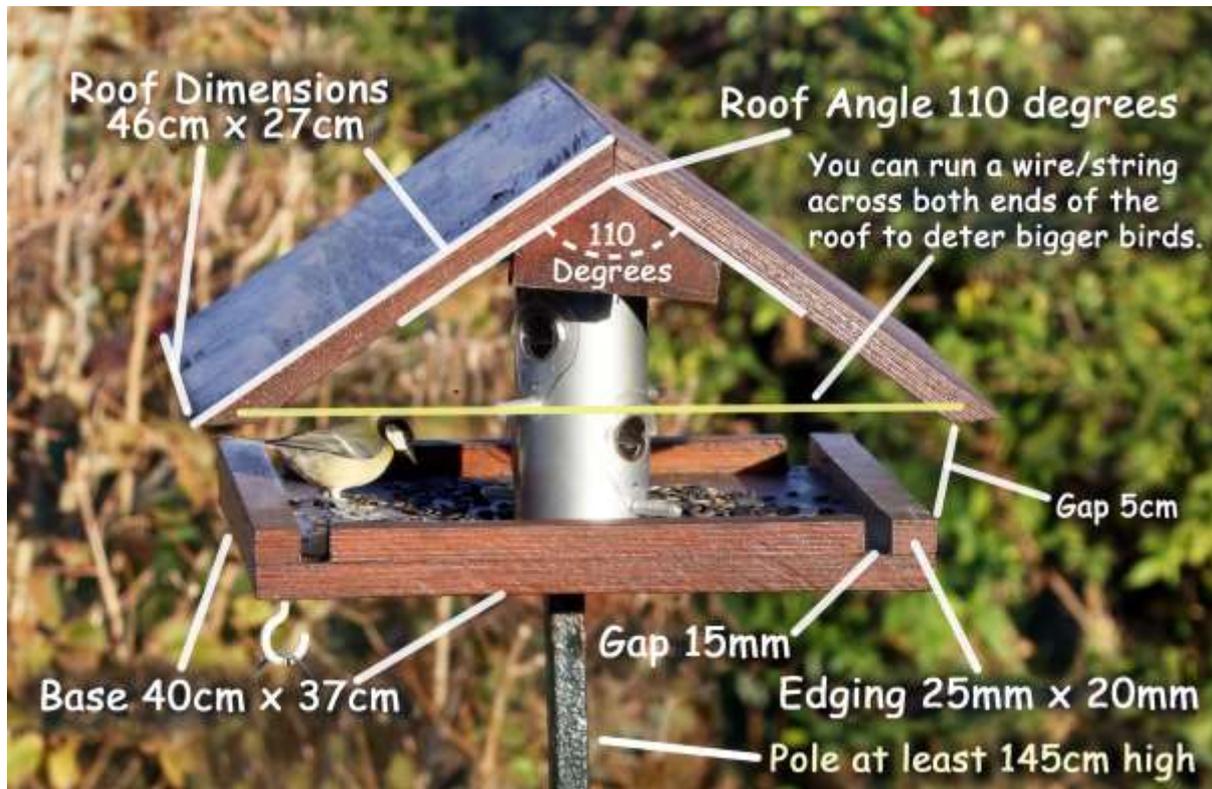


Making a Garden Bird Table



The roof on a bird table is very important. If it is too high off the table itself then it is purely ornamental. You usually use a table for putting out kitchen scraps or loose seed or seed cake and so if it is not adequately sheltered by a roof everything gets wet, soggy and blown off the table. In this design keep the roof height deliberately very low. This proves no problem to the smaller birds and deters the bigger ones. Also if you are putting out loose seeds like niger or sunflower seeds in a dispenser like the one in the photo above it needs to be kept dry or the seed will get wet, swell up and block the opening and turn the seeds mouldy. Placing the seed dispenser near the centre of the table gives it as much protection from the rain and wind as possible. I cut short a seed dispenser to make it fit on the table and it works very well, with a good selection of birds using it. The roof also overhangs the table on all sides for extra protection. The pole can be made of timber or metal. If you want to be able to move your bird table around you will need a sturdy base like that used to support a large Christmas tree to ensure it does not blow over and get damaged. I put my table on a 'repurposed' length of scrap metal, making a hole up through the centre of the table and the central roof support column. This is long lasting and neat.

Dimensions

Table base - 37cm x 40cm x 20mm

Batons for table edge - 20mm x 25mm

15mm gaps on the short end of the table

Roof Panels x 2 - 27cm x 46cm each

Roof Apex Angle – 110 degrees

Central roof support column – 21cm high and 5cm x 5cm

Supporting pole – at least 145cm high.

Notes

- Whatever is used for the central roof support column make sure the end result is that the gap between roof and edge of the table as close to 5cm as possible. This is very important for keeping the table itself as dry as possible and to deter bigger birds.
- The table could be hung from a sturdy unobstructed branch but better on a pole at least 145cm off the ground and not too close to cover for an ambush by a cat.
- If you can place the table 2-3 metres from a bush or tree that gives the birds a place for a quick retreat if they sense danger.
- I have the table leaning slightly to one side and I face the roof towards the Southwest if possible (into the prevailing wind direction). This allows for any water landing on the table to drain away quickly and provides an extra bit of shelter.
- If you wish you can run a piece of wire or cord between the outer edge of the roof panels to further deter bigger birds (see illustration above).
- Clean the surface of the table every week or two with disinfectant and dry the surface before putting food on it.

Any bits of scrap timber will do and the finish does not have to be perfect. Ideally use marine-ply timber as it is long-lasting.

Jim Wilson, 24th November 2020