

SECTION A - OPENLANDS AND WOODLAND MARGINS

No Vacancy: Between nesting seasons, seal entrances against use by sparrows and starlings. Ideally, a house or gourds should be cleaned and stored inside after the nesting season. This will extend the life of this relatively expensive housing. By mid-March reinstall the housing exactly as it appeared when taken down, but with door plugs.

Open For Business: Martins begin arriving in southern Pennsylvania in late March or early April. Landlords with established colonies can reopen their apartments as soon as the first martins are seen. New sites should remain sealed for an extra 4 or 5 weeks (until May 5). Keep housing open through August. Martins may arrive and begin nesting as late as the end of June.

Management Tips: In the spring, when putting up your martin housing, place a handful of wood shavings in each compartment. Also, spread alfalfa and twigs broken into 4 inch lengths or dry pine needles on a bare spot near the house.

Create a 2' by 2' mud puddle for a water supply. From nest building on, spread crushed egg shells on a bare spot near the martin house. This provides calcium for parents and young.

To keep sparrows and starlings under control, remove their nests repeatedly. Do this in mid-afternoon when martins are at a pond or river, bathing or feeding.

Following are ten reasons why people fail to attract Purple Martins and twelve reasons why people lose their Purple Martins.

These tips were provided by the PMCA. Accompanying explanations are available from this organization.

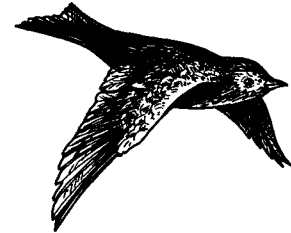
Failure to attract purple martins because:

- Housing placed too close to tall trees or in yards that are too enclosed.
- Landlord allows other birds to claim house first.
- Housing placed too far from human housing.
- Housing not painted white.
- Housing opened up too early.
- Failure to open the martin housing.
- Vines and shrubs under the housing.
- Housing not built to specifications. Compartments should be at least 6" x 6", but 7" x 12" is far superior. The entrance hole can range from 1³/₄" to 2¹/₄". See plan 8A.
- Housing attached to wires or placed too close to wires.
- Landlords buy or build housing that cannot be easily managed.

Colony threatened with collapse because:

- Predation; failure to install predator guards. (Plan 23)
- Tree encroachment.
- Weather extremes.
- Nest site competition.
- Parasite infestations.
- Better housing nearby.
- Not enough housing for established colony.
- Local pesticide use.
- Failure to open housing on time.
- Housing not reoriented to same compass direction after a nest check.
- Housing changed between seasons.
- Death of a landlord/leaving no one to manage the site.

If you're a Purple Martin enthusiast, more information and memberships are available from the Purple Martin Conservation Association, Edinboro University of Pennsylvania, Edinboro, PA 16444. Phone: 814-734-4420.



Purple Martin

Raccoon

Plan 15 (page 49)

The raccoon is a common mammal. Most nest box projects are designed to exclude use or predation by raccoons. If someone wishes to provide a box specifically for use by raccoons, however, the wood duck design, (Plan 15), is appropriate. The entrance hole should be 5 inches high and 9 inches wide and face east or south, so it is sheltered from prevailing winter winds. The box should be placed on live or dead trees at a height of 10 to 20 feet. The tree should be at least 12 inches in diameter.