



SPARROW-B-GONE!™

Send your house sparrows packing!

Sparrow-B-Gone! for Bluebird Houses with Flat Level Roofs (Model SBG-BBF, SBG-BBF4)

Thank you for purchasing Sparrow-B-Gone™ - your house sparrows' worst nightmare!

PLEASE READ THIS FIRST!

As you may already know, invasive House Sparrows and native bluebirds are a bad combination. House Sparrows are highly aggressive birds that will take over a nest box, destroy eggs, and drive away many of our native bird species whenever they get the chance.

Sparrow-B-Gone! is based on solid research from the 1990s conducted at the University of Nebraska. Scientists found that hanging clear fishing line around bird feeders scared away more than 90% of House Sparrows — without frightening away native birds. Some native species may avoid the line for about a week at first, but they quickly get used to it. If you are familiar with the older Magic Halo product, think of Sparrow-B-Gone! as a much more advanced version built on that same research.

The original studies on using reflective or clear cords to repel House Sparrows focused on bird feeders, not birdhouses. However, a large amount of real-world experience from bird enthusiasts strongly suggests that this same approach works very well at keeping House Sparrows away from bluebird nest boxes, too.

Several organizations offer guidance on the House Sparrow problem as it relates to bluebird houses. We especially recommend Sialis.org as a reliable and detailed resource. It is also worth knowing that some people in the bluebird community take a firm stance: if you are not willing to trap and kill House Sparrows, you should not set up bluebird houses. (Trapping and killing House Sparrows is legal in the United States because they are classified as an invasive species.) That said, trapping is not simple. It requires constant attention, and if traps are left unmonitored, native birds that accidentally enter the trap could be harmed or killed.

If you do plan to trap and remove House Sparrows, one effective strategy is to start by attaching Sparrow-B-Gone! to your bluebird house. This will keep sparrows away while letting bluebirds move in and use the nest box. Next, place a decoy birdhouse near the bluebird house — one that contains a built-in sparrow trap. Because bluebirds are very territorial, they will not try to enter another bluebird's nest box. The House Sparrows that are pushed away by Sparrow-B-Gone! will often be drawn to the decoy house instead, where they can be caught. Important: if you choose to use a trap, you must check it frequently so that any native birds that accidentally enter can be released right away.

Here is the bottom line: there is currently no method that is 100% effective at keeping House Sparrows away from feeders and nest boxes. But Sparrow-B-Gone! has been shown to make a real difference, and it can be a powerful tool in your efforts to protect native birds from these aggressive invaders.

Sparrow-B-Gone! model SBG-BBF and SBG-BBF4 are designed to work with bluebird houses that have a flat level roof. Model SBG-BBF has six protecting arms and works with bluebird houses that are either bottom mounted or have open space above the roof of the birdhouse. Model SBG-BBF4 has four protective arms and is designed to work with bluebird houses where the back of the house is mounted to a post, tree, or wall. Both products are available in black or natural color.

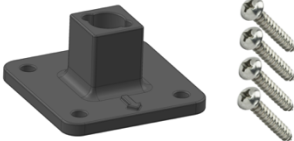
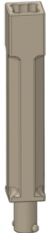



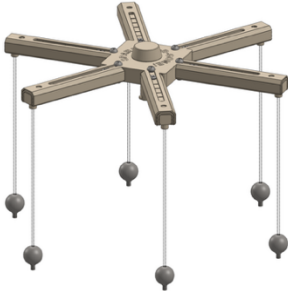

Your product consists of four parts:

1: **Roof mount base** that attaches to the top of the roof and remains attached until you remove it. Since most bluebird houses have wood roofs, we include a screw-on base and four stainless steel screws. We also include a double-sided adhesive pad that can be used to attach the product to smooth plastic or metal roofs.*

2) **Flat Roof Connecting Rod Assembly.** This is attached to the Sparrow-B-Gone! product during the simple assembly process. Note that the combined connecting rod assembly and Sparrow-B-Gone! can quickly and easily be removed from the roof mount base. More on that in a bit.

3) **Sparrow-B-Gone! Six Arm Top (SBG-BBF) or Four Arm Top (SBG-BBF4):** This is pre-assembled and includes arms that are easily adjustable to protect most sizes of bird houses.

4) **Top Spook™ Reflective Ribbons:** these can optionally be added to the four or six-arm top for added protection during active bluebird nesting season.

			
<p>Roof mount base for wood roofs*</p>	<p>Flat roof connecting rod</p>	<p>Screwdriver</p>	<p>Adhesive pad and alcohol wipe*</p>
			
<p>Sparrow-B-Gone! Four arm top</p>	<p>Sparrow-B-Gone! Six arm top</p>	<p>Top Spook™ Reflective Ribbons</p>	

* Note: If you purchased this product through our website or Etsy store and selected the adhesive base option, we pre-apply the adhesive pad to the roof mount and omit the screws, so they are not wasted.

When everything is assembled and attached to the bluebird house, this is what it will look like:



Time to assemble your Sparrow-B-Gone! product!

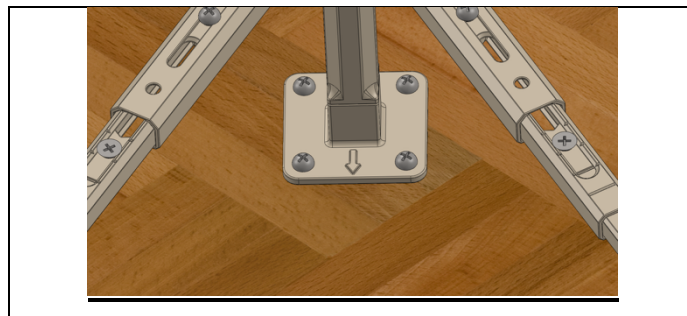
Assembly is quick and easy with four simple steps:

Step 1: Attach Roof Mount Base

First, an important timing issue. If you have an active bluebird nest, it is best not to disturb the nest if you can avoid it. However, if you are having an active house sparrow problem with an active nest, it may be worth the risk to quickly install Sparrow-B-Gone!, but try to disturb the nest as little as possible. If you can bring the bluebird house into your home, we recommend doing so rather than trying to install the roof mount base using a ladder (for safety reasons).


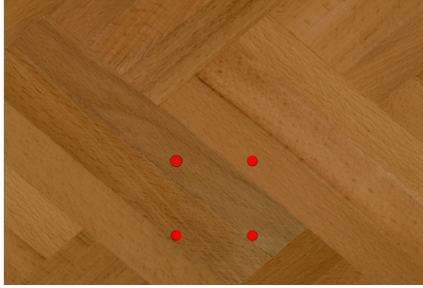

Where Do You Put the Roof Mount Base?

Look at the two images above. We generally recommend that the base be positioned centered on the top of the roof. Note the position of the front pointing arrow on the roof mount base. We recommend that the arrow always point towards the front of the roof.



Wood Roof

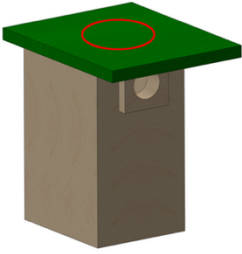
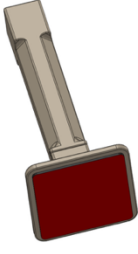
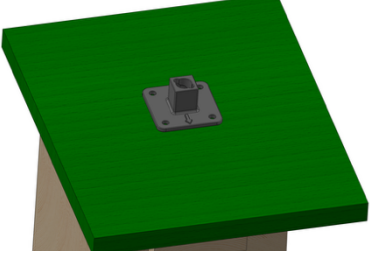
Most bluebird houses have a wood roof. Assuming this is the case, you will need to attach the base with four screw holes to the roof using the included stainless-steel screws. While this is simple to do, it does require you to mark and drill four small pilot holes. You will need a center punch, small drill bit, and drill plus a Phillips head screwdriver to tighten the screws after drilling the pilot holes.

		
<p>Measure carefully and position screw-mount base in position, centered and parallel with the top</p>	<p>Mark drill holes, remove the base, and drill a small pilot hole at least ½" deep.</p>	<p>Screw in the four included screws to attach the base to the roof.</p>

Smooth Plastic or Metal Roof

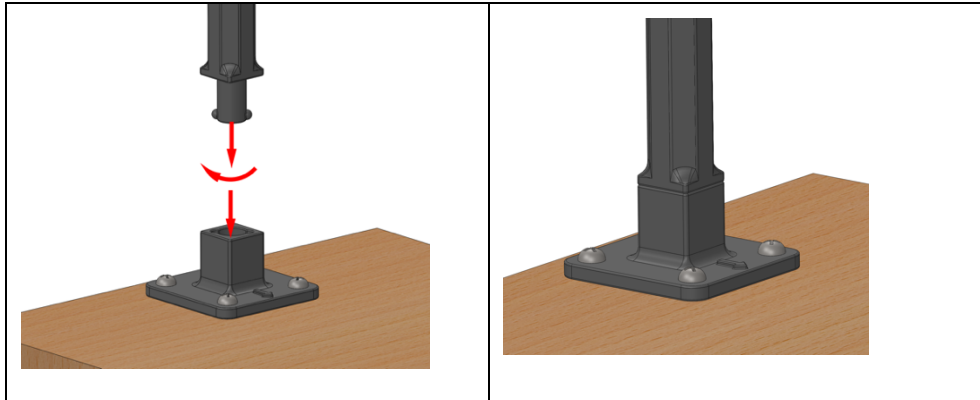
If your bluebird house has a very smooth roof, either plastic or metal, you can attach the base of the roof mount system to the roof using an included adhesive pad that you can add to the base of the screw base. Before installing the adhesive mount base, clean the circled area with soap and water or other suitable cleaner and then use the enclosed alcohol wipe to make sure that the surface is clean and dry. Also, wipe the bottom of the screw base. (Note: If you purchased this product through our website or Etsy store and selected the adhesive base option, we pre-apply the adhesive pad to the roof mount.) Let both surfaces dry before attaching the pad to the bottom of the roof mount base, aligned as shown in the second picture below. Once the pad is correctly aligned, press down hard to help it to adhere to the bottom of the roof mount base. Then remove the other cover and press it firmly against the birdhouse roof to complete the installation.

IMPORTANT: After pressing the roof mount base firmly to attach it to the roof of the birdhouse, let everything sit for 24 hours before continuing with the remaining installation steps.

		
<p>Clean area at the center of the roof. Before removing the adhesive cover, we suggest aligning the base where you want it and tracing around it with a pencil.</p>	<p>If the adhesive pad is not already attached to the roof mount base, remove the cover from one side of the adhesive pad and carefully align it as shown above.</p>	<p>Remove the other adhesive cover, align the base where you had previously marked the position, and then press firmly to attach the base to the roof.</p>

Step 2: Roof Mount Base and Connecting Rod Assembly

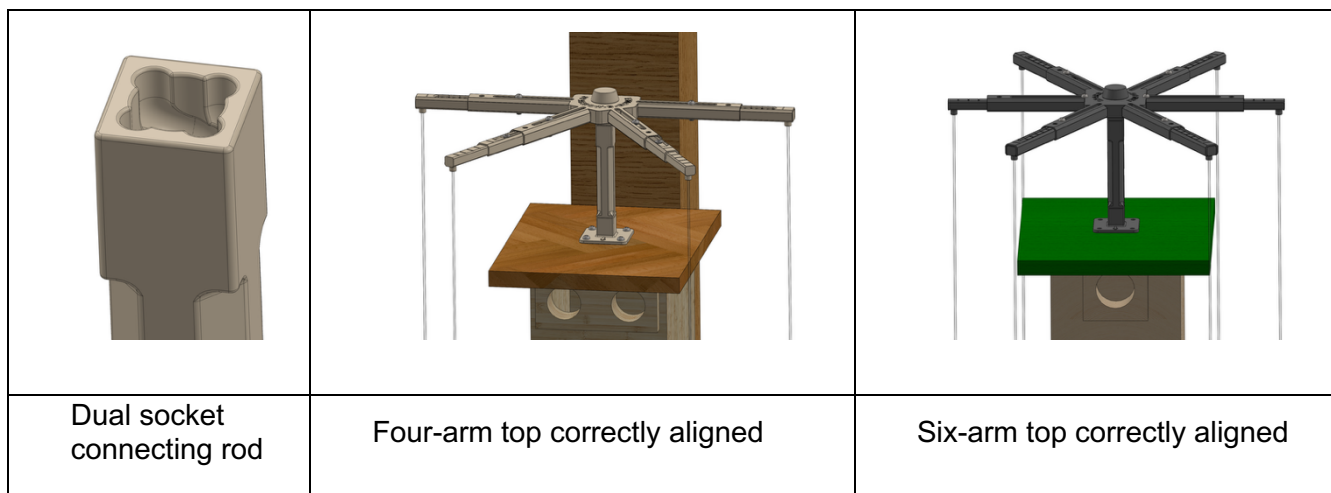
Many bluebird houses require you to lift the roof, either at a hinge at the back of the roof or the middle of the roof, in order to clean the inside. To make this easy to do, the Sparrow-B-Gone roof mount system is designed so that you can very quickly separate Sparrow-B-Gone from the base that stays attached to the roof of the house. Connecting Sparrow-B-Gone to the base is done by inserting the bottom of the roof mount assembly into the socket, rotating it $\frac{1}{4}$ turn, and it will then drop in place as shown in the middle picture below. Separating Sparrow-B-Gone from the base is done by reversing this process: pull the bottom of the roof mount system up slightly, rotate it $\frac{1}{4}$ turn the other direction, and it easily will lift out to separate the two parts of the roof mount system.



Step 3: Attach Connecting Rod Assembly to Sparrow-B-Gone

If you look closely at the top of the connecting rod assembly, as shown in the left column below, you will see that it has an unusual design. This special dual-socket design allows you to position the top of the Sparrow-B-Gone! in two different orientations.

If you have the four-arm version of Sparrow-B-Gone! (Model SBG-BBF4), you will want to position the top part so that the four arms face forward, as shown in the second picture below. If you have the six-arm version of Sparrow-B-Gone! (Model SBG-BBF, while either orientation will work, we recommend that you orient the top so that the two arms that are near the entrance hole are oriented so that entrance hole doesn't have a hanging cord directly in front of it. This recommended orientation is shown in the third picture below.

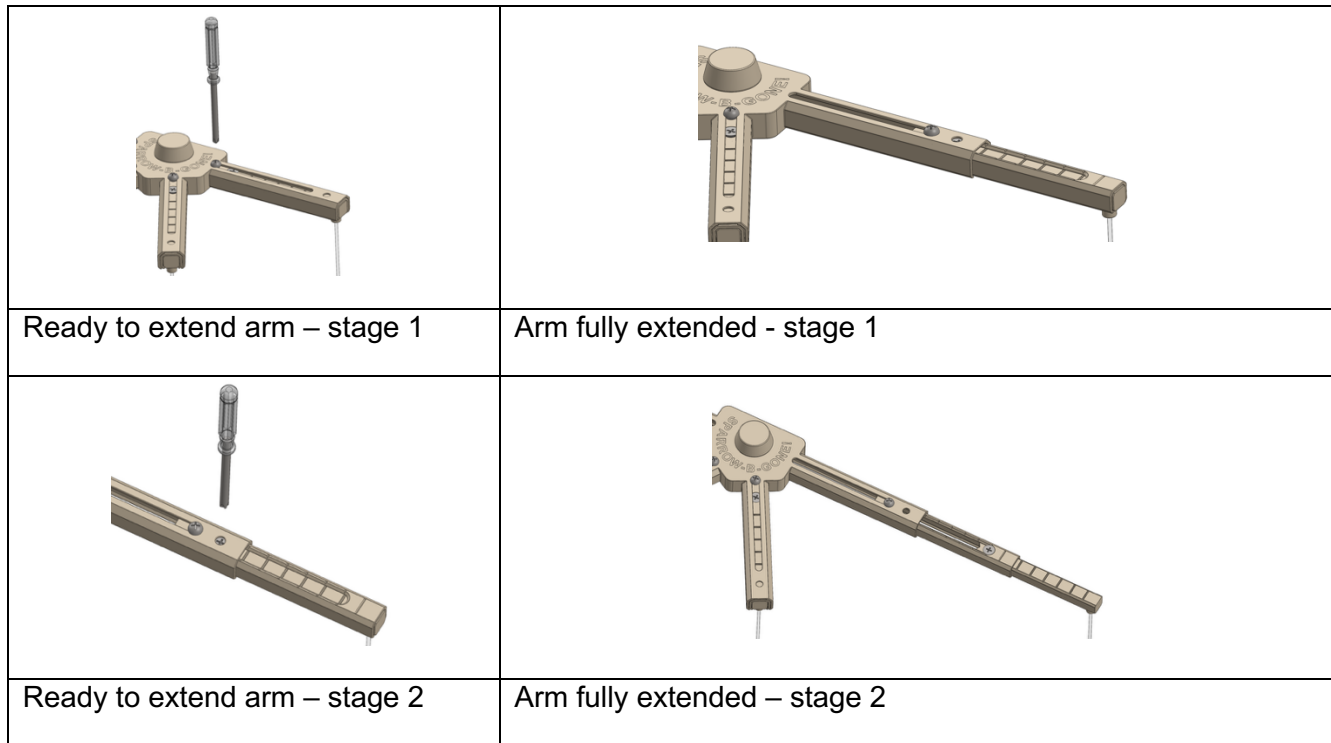


Step 4: Adjusting Sparrow-B-Gone

Changing Arm Length

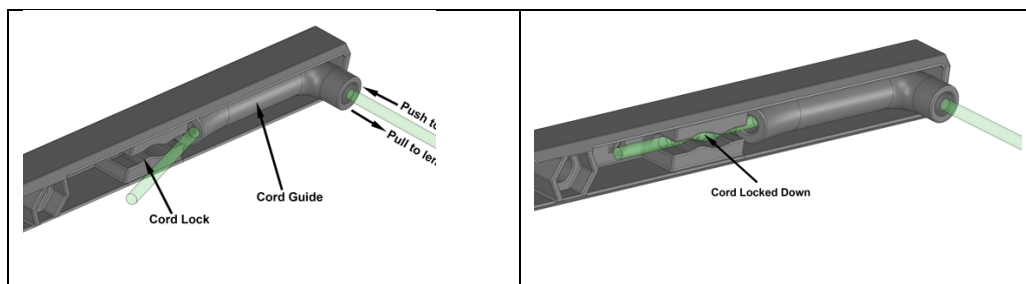
Sparrow-B-Gone has two levels of arm length extension. You can add up to 2 ½” to the length of any arm by loosening the round head Phillips head screw and pulling the two inner arm sections together to the desired length. Tighten the round head screw fully when it is adjusted to the desired size.

If you want to extend the arms even more, start by fully extending the arms as indicated above. You will then see the head of the flat head screw used for the second stage adjustment through a small hole at the end of the outer arm. Loosen the flat head screw slightly until you can pull the inner arm out to the desired length. Then tighten the flat head screw when it is adjusted to the desired size.



Adjusting cord length

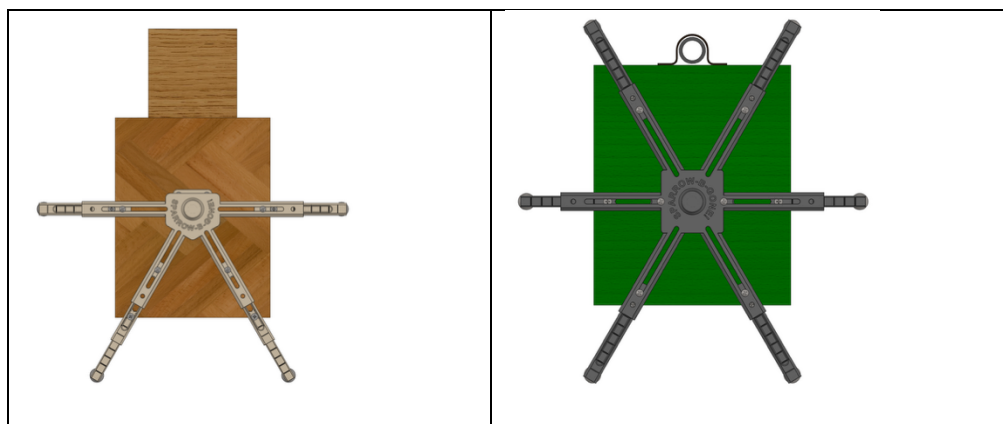
While the main product feature that scares away house sparrows is the reflective cords, it is likely that the reflective round ball weights might help as well. We generally recommend that the ball weights hang 2 to 3 inches below the bottom of the feeder or house. Adjusting the length of the cord is easy – just push or pull the cord where it comes out the bottom of the inner arm, as shown below. Note that initially, the end of the cord is above the cord lock. This makes it easy to move the cord in or out to adjust length. Once you are satisfied with the length, you should push the cord down into the cord lock and trim excess length with scissors. We recommend that you leave at least 1/2” of cord sticking out beyond the end of the cord lock.



If you do decide to shorten the cords and want to cut off the excess cord, this is easily done with heavy scissors or a wire cutter. If unsure, there is no harm in leaving the ends of the cord exposed until you figure out what cord length you like.

Note: initially the cords will be curved because of the way they are coiled in the package. The cords will gradually straighten out over a few days. It does take longer to straighten fully in cold weather, as you might expect.

Here are top views showing how Sparrow-B-Gone! would typically be adjusted around a bluebird house:



Step 5: When Should I Install Sparrow-B-Gone?

As you may know, house sparrows can have up to four broods per year, so it is important to protect your bluebird house at all times. Sparrow-B-Gone products are made out of a special material which can hold up in Canada in the winter or Phoenix in the summer, so we recommend keeping the bluebird house protected at all times with Sparrow-B-Gone! unless you decide to bring the birdhouse inside when not in bluebird nesting season.

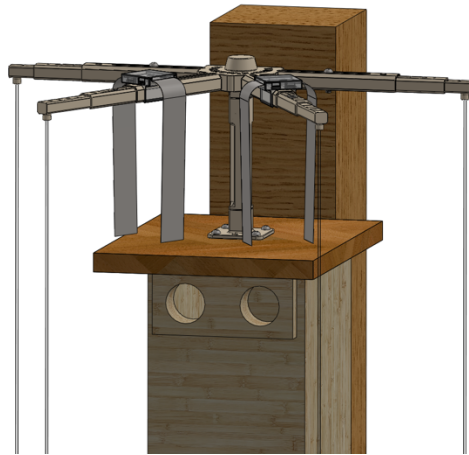
Generally, sparrow spookers like Sparrow-B-Gone! do not scare away bluebirds at all, but in order to be cautious, if you purchase Sparrow-B-Gone! just when bluebirds are getting ready to use the nest box, you might want to follow the recommendations of organizations like Sialis.org and wait until the eggs are laid before adding the product to the nest box.

Step 6: Add Top Spook™ Ribbons (optional)

All Sparrow-B-Gone! products for bluebird houses include two Top Spook™ reflective mylar ribbons that easily snap on to the main arms of the product to add additional protection during active bluebird nesting season if needed. If Sparrow-B-Gone! is left on year-round, this will normally prevent house sparrows from using the nest box during the off-season and they are unlikely to try to use the house during bluebird season, but if they have been actively using the box before adding Sparrow-B-Gone!, it may help to add the two Top Spook ribbons for added protection.

The general recommendation when using reflective mylar ribbon is to not add these until eggs are laid because they can sometimes scare bluebirds as well as house sparrows. However, once eggs are laid, this gives a strong incentive for them to ignore the mylar ribbons to access the active nest. Once the baby bluebirds have fledged and left the nest, you can take these down and just keep the main Sparrow-B-Gone! attached to protect the birdhouse during the off season. The main dangling cords should keep the house sparrows away during the rest of the year, so the following year's bluebird season should no longer require the additional mylar ribbons.

Here is what the product looks like with the Top Spook ribbons clipped on to the arms of Sparrow-B-Gone!. Note that you may need to trim the length of the hanging ribbons. Ideally, they should just touch the roof.



What Happens Next?

As you probably know, when you first put out a new bird feeder or bird house, many birds are initially afraid of it. It can take up to two weeks for them to overcome their fear and start using the new feeder or house. The same thing may happen when you add Sparrow-B-Gone to your bluebird house.

Enjoy!

