

Amendments to the VWT marten den box design, November 2006

Roof/Lid

The shallow sloping roof of these boxes has been designed to be steep enough to shed water whilst remaining horizontal enough to allow easy access to martens (for scattng). However, this feature results in the lid being more difficult to build because of the need to shape the battens. We have considered the option of making the roof completely flat, which would aid construction, as tree trunks are rarely vertical and inevitably the roof will slope to some extent. Having now seen this modification to boxes built by Allan Bantick in Scotland, we feel that it is worth suggesting as an alternative design, especially for small-scale home workshops construction. In this case a piece of bitumastic roofing felt (of the type used on garden sheds) cut to fit and tacked on, could be employed to help with waterproofing. If this modification is used it should be achieved by increasing the height of the front to match the back, with appropriate adjustments to the softwood sides and partitions. The lid itself will need to be slightly shorter from back to front.

Tanalising

Since preparing the specification a new form of Tanalising has become available. The timber we use is protected using Tanalith "C". Our information is that this should now be available only to the professional user. A new treatment, Tanalith "E" is available for the domestic market. This treatment uses modern, environmentally friendly active ingredients and although the working life of Tanalith "E" timber is slightly shorter, it might be a better product to use. Unlike Tanalith "C", there have been no reports of undesirable chemicals leaching from Tanalith "E" treated wood. Another advantage is that a surface colouring compound can be added during treatment and it is possible to buy pre-coloured timber. We have used the dark brown colour on other types of boxes and find it helps disguise them 'on the tree'.