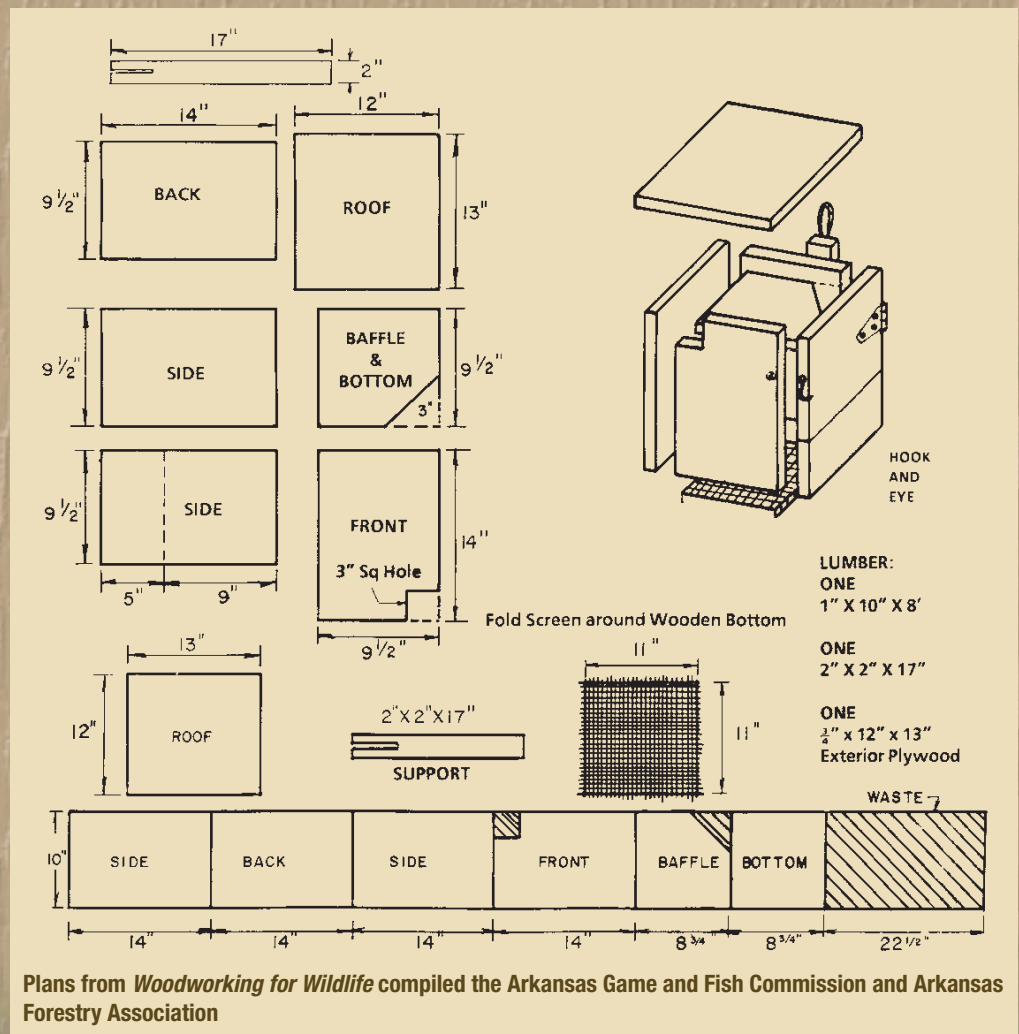


WOODWORKING FOR WILDLIFE

SQUIRREL BOX

The two types of squirrels in Mississippi are the Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) and the fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*). The gray squirrel, or cat squirrel as it is sometimes called for its cat-like cry, weighs about 1 pound and is usually 15 to 20 inches in length. The unique development of the tail in the gray squirrel allows the animal to direct its flight as it searches for food. It also serves as a parachute and a signaling device in times of danger. Usually 4 to 6 gray squirrels are born in a litter. The gray squirrel prefers mature bottomland hardwoods such as oak, hickory, beech and other mast-producing trees.

The other squirrel, the fox squirrel, weighs up to 3 pounds and reaches a length of about 19 to 25 inches. Its color is reddish-yellow with alternate bands of black and orange on the tail. However, it is the fox squirrel that has a black color phase that is found in parts of the Delta. Fox squirrels are late risers. This is one way they are unlike grays, which rise at daylight. The fox squirrel doesn't get up until about the second hour of daylight, but they sometimes feed until noon. Two to five squirrels are born in each litter (two litters per year) of the fox squirrel.



The squirrel box should be at least 18 feet above the ground on a tree that is at least 10 inches in diameter. The entrance needs to face either south or east so it is sheltered from winter winds. When attaching the box to a tree, use a lag screw at the top and bottom of the back piece so that the screw can be loosened each year to allow for tree growth.

