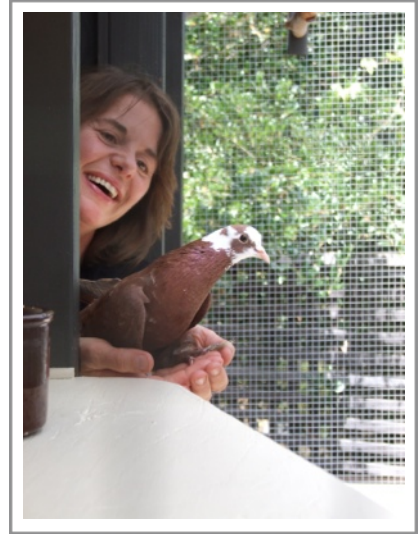


MickaCoo Pigeon & Dove Rescue: How to Create a Beautiful Aviary

By Guest Author Elizabeth Young, Founder and Executive Director of MickaCoo Pigeon & Dove Rescue

Many people are surprised to learn that Bay Area shelters get in domestic (unreleasable) pigeons and doves all the time that, for lack of adopters, are at high risk of being killed. [MickaCoo \(www.PigeonRescue.org\)](http://www.PigeonRescue.org) has saved more than 500 of these gentle birds in the past five years by helping adopters create beautiful, life-saving aviaries.

And MickaCoo Pigeon & Dove Rescue folks love their aviaries! Whether you're fostering or adopting, a small flock of birds living happily in your yard will be a constant source of smiles. It's easy to create a beautiful, safe aviary that is enjoyable for both birds and people. You can enhance your world with the serene beauty and cooing of sweet birds and save their lives at the same time. An aviary for pigeons or doves can be built by do-it-yourselfers or by a hired handy-person in a few days and for as little as a couple of hundred dollars.



Choose the sunniest location in your yard that will also offer you the best views from your home or patio (you'll enjoy watching your birds). Shade is easy to create so don't worry about it ever being "too sunny".

I recommend a minimum size aviary of 8' long x 4' wide x 6' high for a small flock of four to six pigeons or eight to twelve doves but bigger is even better. No one has ever wished for a smaller aviary so design it to be as big as your space and budget allow. Making it big enough to walk in to will make care and cleaning easier and, if you've got the space to add a bench, you'll find it both a fascinating and peaceful place to spend time.



No matter where you live, your aviary must be built predator and rodent-proof. The structure can be as simple or as fancy as you choose but it must be sturdy. Use two by fours for the framing and "seal the envelope" with hardware mesh all the way around so there are no exploitable gaps. Use 16 gauge or better hardware mesh with openings .5" or smaller. (Chicken wire is not at all predator/rodent proof- don't use it!) An easy way to prevent dig ins and make cleaning simple is to build on a cement pad. If you'd rather use rock (8" depth drain or river rock- not pea gravel) or wood (smooth marine grade plywood works great) for the floor, don't forget to secure it well with hardware mesh underneath. Pigeons and doves don't chew on or climb aviary walls and so they don't require stainless steel materials - galvanized hardware mesh is safe for for them.



Pigeons and doves thrive outside year-round and, here in the Bay Area, so their aviaries don't require any heating. About half of the aviary should be sheltered with a slanted roof and

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siding that will provide deep shade on the hottest days, and protection from driving wind and rain on the coldest. The other half should be open to allow for maximum air flow, view, sunshine, moonlight and rain bathing. (Pigeons and doves love to bathe!)

Birds love living outdoors and you will love having the beauty and ease of birds outside. They have happy, full lives even when you're busy (no guilt) and aviary maintenance is much easier than cage cleaning. For more details, see How to Create an Aviary for Rescued Pigeons or Doves (<http://www.rescuereport.org/2011/01/how-to-create-aviary-for-rescued-king.html>).

Pigeons & Doves Available for Adoption (<http://www.mickaboo.org/our-birds/species-19.html>)

Questions? Email Elizabeth at AdoptKings@gmail.com

