

Blue Tits are very easy to recognise due to the bright colours of their feathers. They have a yellow underside, bright blue wings and greenish back, with a black and white face. They are small birds that grow up to 12 cm long and can weigh up to 11 g.



They are common in woodlands and gardens throughout the UK and Europe. They particularly like gardens with bird feeders and can be great fun to watch, as they are able to hang upside down from the feeder with their strong legs and claws to get to the food. Along with the seeds and nuts they get from garden feeders they also eat insects and caterpillars.

Blue tits nest in holes in walls and trees or nest boxes if available. Sometimes they nest in unusual places such as pipes and letter boxes. The female builds a cup shaped nest made from moss, wool, hair and other downy material. The pair return to the same nesting place year after year.

They lay their eggs in April and May when there is a plentiful supply of moth caterpillars to feed the chicks when they hatch. Usually they only lay one clutch in a season. They lay a large number of eggs, between 6 and 12 is normal, but they can lay more! The eggs are white with purple-red or brown-red spots. The female bird incubates the eggs for about 2 weeks and the male feeds her so that she doesn't have to leave the nest. Once the eggs have hatched both parents feed the chicks until they fledge, which takes between 2 and 3 weeks.



When milk was more commonly delivered by a milkman, and left on the doorstep, blue tits learnt to peck holes in the foil bottle top and they would eat the cream that was at the top of the bottle. This is now less common, as we buy milk from the supermarket and we tend to drink semi-skimmed or skimmed milk, which has no fat.



1. Describe what a blue tit looks like for someone who has never seen one.....
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2. Where are you likely to find blue tits?.....
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3. What do blue tits feed on?.....
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4. How do some people encourage blue tits into their gardens?
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5. Describe how the female blue tit builds her nest.
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6. Why do they lay their eggs in April and May?
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7. Once the eggs have hatched how long is it before the baby birds are ready to fly?
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8. Why did blue tits peck holes in the tops of milk bottles when it was delivered to the door?
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9. Use a dictionary to find the meanings of the following words as used in the passage:
a. incubate

b. fledge

Answers

1. A description to include the colours of the feathers and its size.
2. You can find blue tits in woodlands and gardens throughout the UK and Europe.
3. Blue tits feed on insects, caterpillars, seeds and nuts.
4. Some people put up bird feeders to encourage the blue tits into their gardens.
5. The female blue tit builds her nest in the shape of a cup with moss, wool, hair and other downy material.
6. The female lays her eggs in April and May because it is a time when there are plenty of moth caterpillars to feed the chicks when they hatch.
7. Once the eggs have hatched it takes about two to three weeks before the baby birds are ready to fly.
8. Blue tits used to peck holes in the top of milk bottles that were delivered to the door to get the cream off the top of the milk.
9.
 - a. incubate: to hatch eggs by sitting on them
 - b. fledge: developed wing feathers and can fly