**CHIMNEY SWIFT TOWER NESTING TIDBITS FOR KCA MONITORS**

Two causes of nesting failures in the towers are from:

1. **Overheating** which can bake the eggs.
2. **Predators** can eat or break the eggs, disturb the nesting pair or the young.

**Overheating**

Because Chimney Swift towers are not surrounded by a house as regular chimneys are, they are subject to overheating. Tower construction includes the following to help prevent this:

1. They are double-walled making the nesting chamber separated from the outside wall by a space. This space is filled with ¾” rigid insulation board.
2. Exterior is light in color to reflect sunlight rather than absorb it.
3. A grid of small holes is placed on the bottom to help air move up threw the tower.

Other ways to minimize overheating is to limit the amount of sun entering the tower. This is achieved by:

1. Tower placed where it will be protected from afternoon sun by shade of trees or other structures.
2. Top opening, called a sun collar, is no more than half the inside diameter and is situated on the North edge. This limits the amount of direct sunlight, as well as rain, which penetrates inside the tower.

**Predators**

Predators could be raccoons, flying squirrels, cats, snakes, or ants. Prevention measures are:

1. Place tower at least 10 feet from overhanging branches so predators cannot jump to the tower.
2. The tower’s exterior is smooth to prevent animals clinging and climbing it. If a textured siding or wood is chosen for exterior then a smooth metal flashing is used to cover the top 24 inches of the tower.
3. Vegetation kept low near the tower. Tall grasses and other plants that come into contact with the tower can provide a “highway” for ants. They can overrun a nest and devour the nestlings which are the size of a jelly bean and weigh about 3 paperclips. **If ants are found the situation needs to be addressed immediately!**
4. A 2-3 inch band of sticky insect barrier (Tanglefoot) is applied to each leg near the base of the tower in the spring. It will need to be inspected several times during nesting season for effectiveness and replaced **immediately** if needed.
5. People can also be a deterrent to nesting, if they get too close to the tower for whatever the reason: curiosity, grounds maintenance, or vandalism. There is a critical stage when the young have left the nest and are learning to fly within the structure. People too close to the tower may accidentally “force-fledge” the young causing them to leave the tower before they are fully capable of supporting themselves.  If this happens, they will not survive.

**THE GOOD NEWS**:

If nesting is successful: Chimney Swifts maintain a very strong bond to their nest site. Mated swifts will usually return to the same nesting structure faithfully year after year. If one adult fails to return, the survivor courts a new mate and continues to occupy the site. Offspring also return to their area of origin. They will secure mates and nest in close proximity to their parents if suitable structures are available.