

HOW TO BUILD A POSSUM NEST BOX



Brushtail possum



Ringtail possum

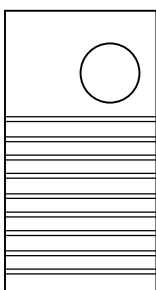


This box is suitable for Brushtail possums, but even Ringtails may make their home in this. The roof slopes backwards to prevent rainwater from forming a waterfall that blocks access to the entry hole.

Things you will need:

- Hand saw or table saw
- Power drill
- Jigsaw
- Screwdriver
- Sandpaper
- Pencil
- Measuring tape
- Straight edge
- Industrial strength plywood (1 cm thickness). **Do not use chipboard or other wood that is inclined warp.** For the post, you should use wood that is at least 3.5 cm thick.
- Nails or screws (for putting together the box)
- 3 screws (for attaching the Post to the box)
- Wood glue
- Weatherproof paint
- 2 x galvanised 125 mm nails (for attaching the box to the tree)

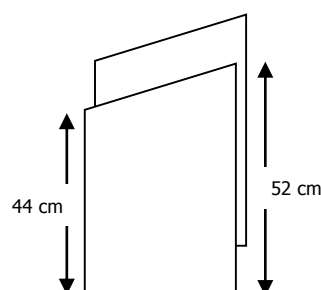
Parts of the box:



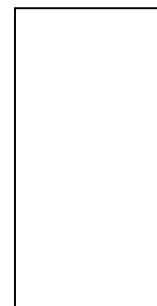
Front piece
26 cm (W)
50 cm (H)



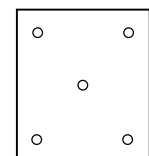
Back piece
26 cm (W)
42 cm (H)



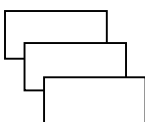
2 Side pieces
26 cm (W)
42 cm & 50 cm (H)



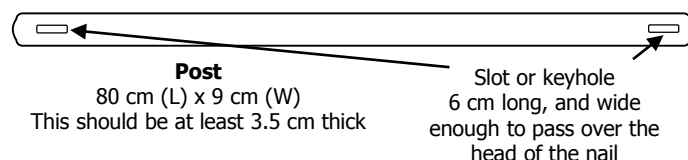
Roof
52 cm (L)
28 cm (W)



Bottom piece
26 cm (L)
24 cm (W)



3 Ledges
10 cm (L) x 6 cm (W)
These enable trapped birds to hop upwards to escape



Post
80 cm (L) x 9 cm (W)
This should be at least 3.5 cm thick

Slot or keyhole
6 cm long, and wide enough to pass over the head of the nail

Instructions:

1. Cut out all the pieces according to the measurements.
 - a. Cut out a circular hole measuring 10 cm in diameter near the top right of the Front piece.
 - b. Cut horizontal grooves across the Front piece, below the hole. These will help young possums climb into the box.
 - c. Drill five drainage holes in the Bottom piece, each measuring 1 cm in diameter.
 - d. Cut out two slots in the top and bottom end of the Post, each wide enough to pass over the head of the nails you're using to attach the box to the tree.
 - e. Read #7 – you will have to do the bevelling before you start attaching pieces together.
2. Attach the Side pieces to the Front piece using wood glue and nails/screws.
3. Place this frame over the Bottom piece but do not attach it yet. You need this in position to measure the heights of the ledge placements.
4. Attach the Ledges, using nails/screws. Top Ledge should be placed just under the entrance, aligned lengthwise to the Front piece. Bottom and middle Ledges should be aligned lengthwise to the Side pieces. Bottom Ledge should not be placed more than 10 cm from bottom of the box. Middle Ledge should be placed equidistant from the top and bottom Ledges.

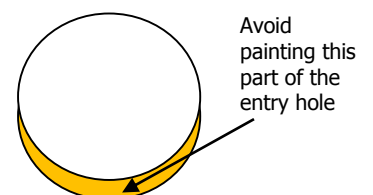


Height spacing of ledges



Directional placement of ledges

5. Attach the Back piece to the 3-sided framework. Then place this over the Base piece and nail/screw that into place.
6. Attach the Post to the right side of the box, preferably by screwing the box from the inside to the Post. If you are inserting the screws from the outside in, ensure you protect the sharp end with a nut (not wing nut). Check that no sharp points protrude into the box.
7. Attach the Roof ensuring a front overhang of about 14 cm. You may need to bevel the top edges of the Front and Back pieces to accommodate the sloping Roof piece.
8. Fill all gaps with wood glue to make it watertight.
9. Sand away all splinters and rough edges, especially around the entry hole.
10. Paint the box a natural colour (dark green or brown) to weatherproof it. Possums like to chew around the entry hole so avoid painting the rim. Ensure the smell of paint has dissipated before installing the box.



Note:

There is no need to provide any nesting material. Please do not place newspapers, towels or other fabrics inside as these can trap urine and water and cause infections.

Where to position the box:

- Choose a mature, evergreen tree with lots of leafy coverage and sturdy branches.
- Install the box at least 2.6 m to 3 m from the ground, avoiding areas of the tree that are bare.
- The post should lie against the main trunk, with the hole facing southeast, or as much away from the afternoon sun as possible (possums are nocturnal and sleep during the day).
- Depending on which part of the tree you select, you may choose to make either a right-hand or left-hand box, with the post on either the right side or left side of the box. Do ensure that the entry hole is positioned nearer the post in either case, and that the positions of the ledges are adjusted accordingly.

How to attach the box:

You will need a ladder and a hammer. Please ask someone to help you by holding the ladder securely. For your safety, do not climb higher than the ladder will allow. Take all necessary precautions!

- Once you have ascertained the position of the box, hammer in the top nail at a 45 degree angle. Leave 5 cm sticking out.
- Climb carefully with the box and hang it on the nail.
- Insert the second nail at a 90 degree angle in the bottom slot, positioning it at the top of that slot. You may wish to use a metal washer between the nail head and the post for a firmer hold.
- If you anticipate more tree growth that might loosen the nails, you can thread a bungee cord through the bottom slot and strap the box to the tree.
- Check that the box is securely attached and will not shift in strong winds. Check every few months thereafter.

Congratulations! You are now ready to welcome our native wildlife into your garden!

Most importantly, save the Wildlife Victoria emergency phone number in your mobile phone: 03 8400 7300. You can also report any emergency online at www.wildlifelivictoria.org.au/wildlife-victoria-rescue

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