

Build a Nest Box



Community members making possum and bird boxes with the Mosman Men's Shed, as part of the Living Mosman Program in September 2013. Photo: Mosman Council.

Nest boxes replicate natural shelters such as tree hollows. They are fun, easy and cheap to make, and will provide a secure home for many years to come.



Above left: Brushtail Possums will use a nest box as they sleep in tree hollows if they can find them. Ringtail Possums (like the one pictured above left) build a nest of sticks called a 'drey', but will occasionally use a nest box, too. Photo: David Cook.

Above right: Sugar Gliders in a nest box in Plenty Gorge Park, Victoria. The Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife funded the installation of nest boxes in this park for animals such as Feathertail Gliders, Sugar Gliders, and vulnerable Brush-tailed Phascogales. Photo: Mick Francis.

Below: A baby Kookaburra in a nest box. Photo: Rae Allen.



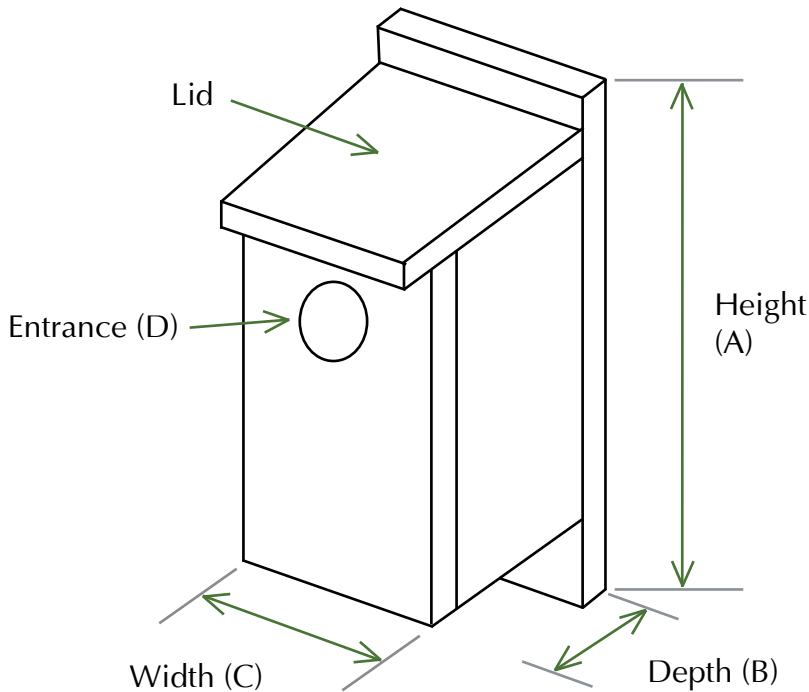
Nest Box Tips

- Use untreated wood. Animals may chew it and chemicals can harm them.
- Arrange timber so that growth rings radiate away from the centre of the box. Subsequent 'warping' will force the box together rather than apart.
- The box should have drainage holes in the bottom and ventilation holes toward the top but not in the roof, or water will leak in.
- Place the entrance hole near the top so that the bottom remains dark.
- Add 'toe holds' inside the box so young can climb out.
- The lid of your box must slope from the back of the box to the entrance with an overhang of at least 25 mm. Use hinges so you can clean it out after breeding season.
- Choose your position carefully. The best place for your box is in a sheltered location, so think about which side of your house takes the brunt of cold wind and driving rain. Position your box at least 3 m above the ground.
- If you attach your nest box to a tree, use wire that is covered with a piece of garden hose to protect the tree from damage.
- Choose a spot with a branch on the opposite side of the tree to rest the wire on.
- Cover the bottom of the box with wood shavings or shredded bark.
- Keep an eye on your nest box and make sure that pest species such as Common Mynas haven't moved in. If you find that is the case, empty the box and close the entrance hole for a while.
- Put your new nest box up in late winter or early spring. This is the time that early breeders like rosellas are looking for a place to raise their young.

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It Takes Time

Don't be disappointed or surprised if your buddies don't move into their nest box straight away. It can sometimes take a few weeks or even months for them to show interest in their new home.

Need Some Help?

Your local Men's Shed or high school woodwork class may be able to help you construct a nest box if you ask nicely.

Different Buddies like Different Nest Boxes

The size of the animal matters when it comes to finding the right real estate. The entrance hole should be just big enough for the residents to get in.

You can also add a stick under the entrance hole to help buddies on their way in and out of the box, if you like.

Give Possums a New Home - Out of your Roof!

A nest box may be part of the solution if you have a resident Brushtail Possum in your roof.

At night, when your possum is out, place a bright light in the roof to discourage it from coming back, seal all access holes to your roof.

Place the new nest box nearby so your possum can find shelter when it finds your roof locked up.

The measurements below are in millimeters and are the minimum guidelines for the dimensions of the boxes.

Ringtail Possum Nest Box

A 400, B 240, C 200, D 70

Brushtail Possum Nest Box

A 500, B 250, C 290, D 100-120

Rosella Nest Box

A 400, B 240, C 200, D 70

Treecreeper Nest Box

A 400, B 190, C 170, D 45-50

Sugar Glider Nest Box

A 400, B 240, C 200, D 32-35

Find out more about your buddies at
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