

Easy Reference Sheet

Possum Boxes

Wildcare Australia Inc has over recent years designed a possum box that is ideal for Common Brushtail Possums. These instructions are provided to assist wildlife carers with the construction of these boxes for their own use.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED

Item	Quantity / Size	Description
Timber	Large sheet = 2400mm x 1200mm	17mm or 18mm Slash Pine or Hoop Pine CD external plywood (Radiata Pine is not suitable as it has too many knots) Cost - \$75 to \$95 a sheet One sheet should make about 5 possum boxes.
Screws	Approx. 20 screws 40mm length	Timber screws – galvanised or powder coated (must be suitable for external use)
Oil (optional)	1 x Small Tin	Feast Watson Outdoor Furniture Oil. This should help to prolong the life of the box.
Timber Dowling	150mm lengths	22mm diameter Purchase from any hardware store. Alternatively, you could use a branch.

MEASUREMENTS

The diagrams on the following pages have each part of the possum box numbered. Measurements for each part are as follows: -

No.	Name	Measurements / Notes
1	Side Panel – Left	400mm x 360mm x 215mm
2	Side Panel – Right	400mm x 360mm x 215mm
3	Top	245mm x 320mm
4	Top Lip	210mm x 30mm
5	Front - Top	210mm x 235mm Hole diameter – 90mm
6	Front - Bottom	245mm x 120mm
7	Front - Ledge	245mm x 35mm
8	Front - Clasp	15mm x 55mm
9	Dowling	Length – 150mm Diameter - 22mm
10	Bottom	210mm x 210mm
11	Back (not shown)	245mm x 400mm

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Possum Boxes (continued)

NOTES

- The better the quality timber used, the longer the box will last. Marine Plywood would be the most practical and long-lasting but is considerably more expensive.
- Purchase 17mm or 18mm thick timber – anything thinner will not last as long. Thicker timber may make the box too heavy.
- Care must be taken to position correctly the screws that act as hinges for the door to ensure that it can open.
- Oiling the box may help to preserve the box for longer. Once oiled, leave the box for at least a week before using.
- Ensure that the corners of the bottom are cut away to allow for drainage of water. Alternatively, drill several holes in the bottom.
- A front opening box is ideal for rehabilitating or hand-rearing possums as it allows the carer to check the animal and if necessary to administer medications. Having the bottom portion of the front of the box fixed prevents the animal from falling when the box is opened.
- Do not be tempted to make the hole larger – a brushtail possum can fit through the hole as instructed. Any larger and the possum may feel unsafe and may not use the box.
- Use screws as opposed to nails, as they will make the box last longer.
- There is no need to place “stairs” or “mesh” to help the possum exit the box – they are arboreal and have to get used to climbing smooth-barked trees! If you would prefer, you can “roughen” the inside of the front section of the box in case something (other than a possum) gets into the box and cannot escape.

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS – AVIARY

- When placing a possum box in an aviary, ensure that it is as high in the aviary as possible to provide the possum with a sense of security.
- For ease of removal and cleaning, secure the possum box to the aviary with cup hooks and wire.
- Position the possum box close to branches so that the possum can climb from the branches into the box.

INSTALLATION INSTRUCTIONS – OUTSIDE

Before installing a possum box in the bush or in your garden, spend a little time planning a suitable placement for the box. A possum box that is placed in an unsuitable position will not be used.

- Ideally the possum box should be placed at least 4 metres off the ground
- The box should be positioned side on to the tree trunk (rather than the back of the box to the tree) as this will help the possum to get out and up the tree more easily and hopefully escape predators.
- Position the box so that it faces away from prevailing winds
- Do not place the box in a fork as the growing tree may squash it.
- The box should not face towards the hot afternoon sun
- The box should be attached to the tree trunk in two places. How the box is attached may depend upon the type of tree and the availability of branches.
- When choosing materials to attach the box to the tree, use materials that will not perish too quickly and that will not harm the tree. Wire sheathed by garden hosing helps to protect the tree. Remember to allow for the growth of the tree when choosing fixtures.

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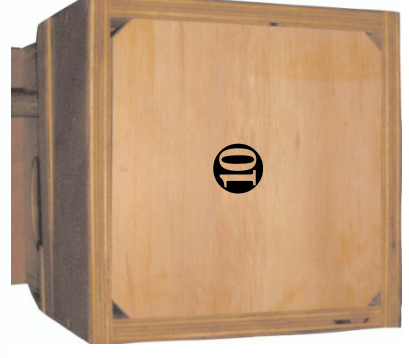
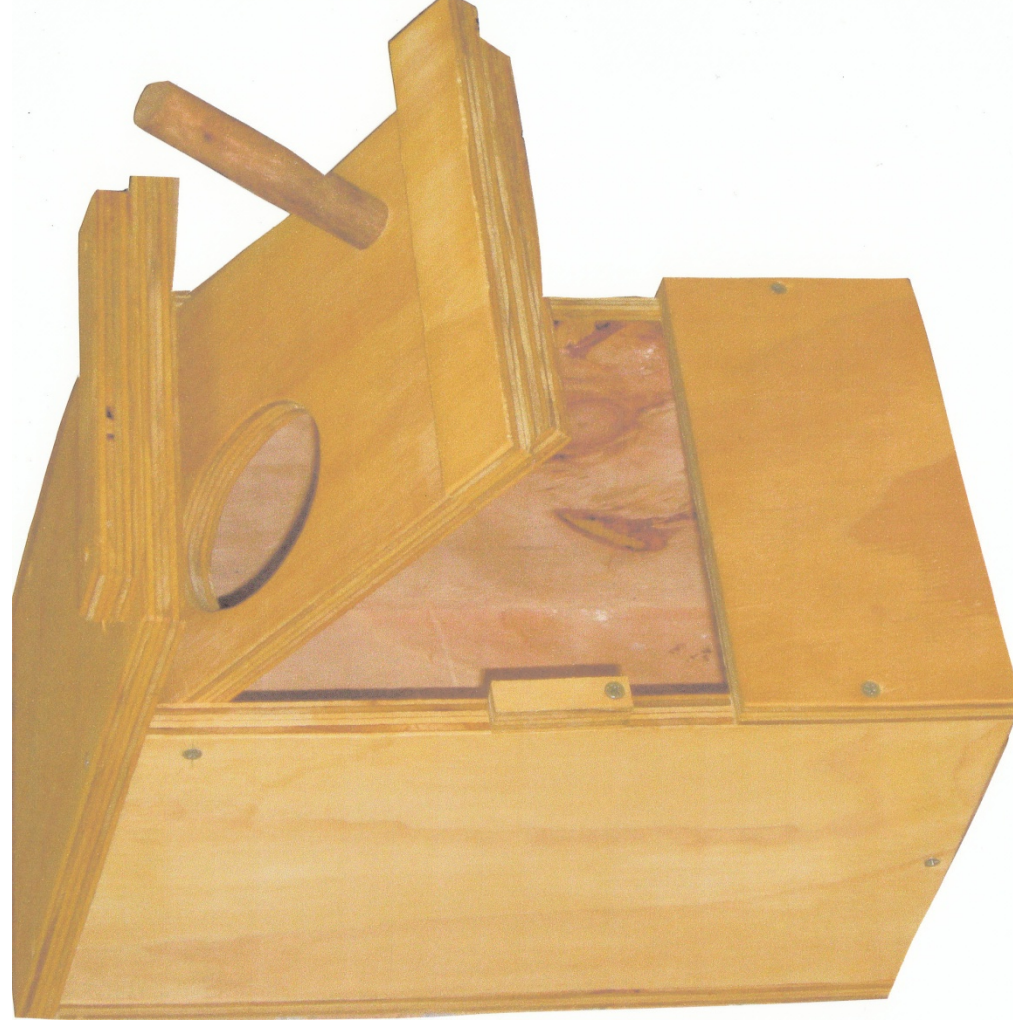
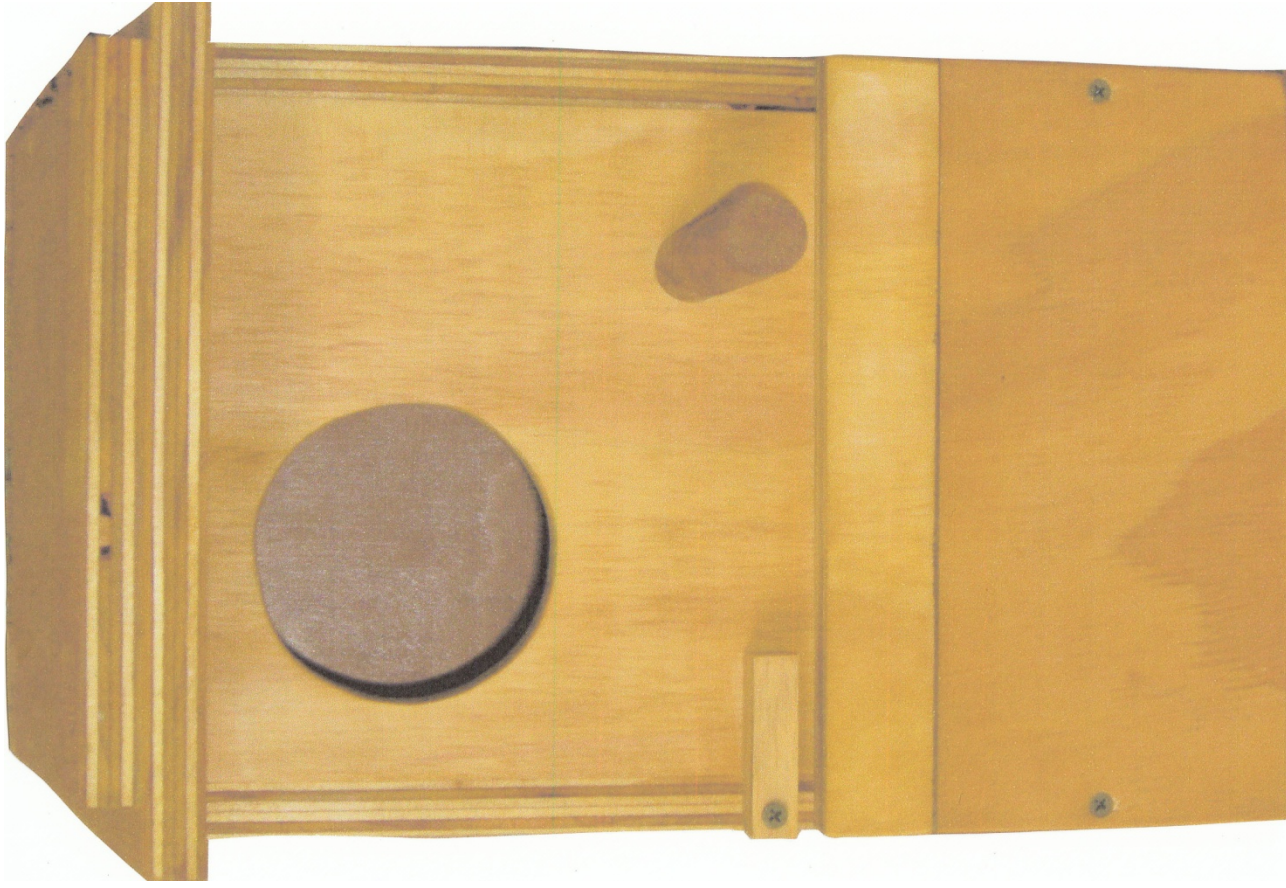
Possum Boxes (continued)

Please note that this possum box design has been designed and altered over many years by Wildcare Australia possum carers.

Please respect the fact that these instructions are provided to assist wildlife carers and we ask that the design not be used for commercial purposes.

Photos Below – E. Hanger





Wildcare Australia Possum Box Instructions

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