

fauNature Brushtail Possum Box



Encouraging wildlife at home!

Thank you for purchasing a fauNature wildlife box. It is hoped this “home” will give you many hours of pleasure, as it provides sanctuary for our furry friends.

The clearing of native trees across Australia has resulted in the loss of millions of natural hollows. The devastation is particularly apparent in urban environments, which account for 85% of the nation’s human population.



Which animals will use a wildlife box?

Over 200 bird and mammal species rely on hollows for nesting or shelter throughout the country. These include possums, gliders, bats, parrots, kingfishers, raptors, and ducks as well as other lesser-known species. This wildlife box has been specifically designed for the Common Brushtail Possum, however, many different animals may utilise the box (e.g. Ringtail Possums, gliders, birds and insects).

Siting and installation instructions

You’ve bought this wildlife box to enjoy it, so locate the box where you can see it regularly and access it relatively easily. Having said that, it is preferable if certain considerations are met:

A mature gum tree is ideal; if not, an exotic tree will do. Few animals nest/roost close to the ground - most prefer hollows higher up in a tree. A possum will make use of a box as low as 2m off the ground, however, 4-6m would be preferable. Brushtail Possums will utilise a number of hollows or “dens” within their territory.

The wildlife box needs to be protected from the hot north/westerly sun and the entrance avoiding the wettest winds; northeast through to a southerly direction would typically work (for southern Australia). Ideally, the box will also be placed on a vertical or slightly forward-angled trunk, to reduce rainwater entry which could affect the inhabitants. Thus, the specifics of erecting the possum box will vary from one location to another.

Hanging a wildlife box by wire was historically recommended to prevent damage to the tree. However, the damage done by securing bolts is likely to be minimal; while wire-mounted boxes compromise the tree, if not regularly managed.



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Brushtail Possum Box

A couple of tek screws (100mm) have been included to enable you to affix the box to a tree. Pre-drill the tree and screw in the top tek screw (3/4s of its length), then hang the box through the “keyhole” in the back. Next drill the lower hole, then screw in the second tek screw. Finally, using the open door for access, tighten the top screw, ensuring the box is firmly affixed to the tree.

The use of “PV Spacers”, small spacing rings which fit over the tek screws between the tree and the box, is highly recommended. They serve two purposes 1) simplify the installation process on difficult trees; 2) perhaps more importantly allow the tree room to grow while minimising the impact on either the tree or the box. These have also been included with your box.

Once the wildlife box is in place: empty some native mulch (e.g eucalypt leaves, bark and possum droppings if available) into the bottom of the box, so it smells more like “home”.

Potential predators

Foxes and domestic pets may come into conflict with possums. “Tree collars” are guards which can be placed around the trunk of a tree to prevent these predators from gaining access to the box.

A possum will still have access if the branches of neighbouring trees penetrate the canopy of the tree with the box. While guards are not essential, placing the box a suitable distance above the ground and the use of such devices may be particularly helpful in reducing the impact of the threats identified above.

Keeping the wildlife box clean

Putting up the wildlife box is just the first step, for its continued success maintenance is crucial. The box (assembled) has already been treated. However, to extend its useful life we would recommend re-treatment/coating the exterior of the box with oil or paint. If oil is used (e.g. environmentally friendly Lanotec timber seal), it is recommended to retreat the box every 1-2 years, or exterior grade acrylic paint is likely to last the life of the box, with a few minor touch-ups. The PV Spacers will need to be replaced every 12-24 months and the bedding material ideally changed every year. The removal of pest species is likely to be important.

European Honey Bees may inhabit the box. This pest species is likely to displace a possum and would need to be removed. Obtaining advice from a beekeeper or pest controller is recommended.

Enjoy your new neighbours

Some wildlife boxes are occupied quickly, others may take a little longer. Often you will attract the species you are targeting, though not always. Either way, we hope you enjoy providing for your wild neighbours.



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