



Dear Possum Box Owner,

Re: Possum Box Installation Guidelines supported by the Western Ringtail Action Group.

Thank you for choosing to install a possum box in your backyard.

This possum box was created using the skilled craftsmanship of Men's Shed members.

Possum boxes are routinely installed in native trees to create additional nesting options for the Western Ringtail Possum (WRP) and provide greater protection from predation from cats, dogs, owls and crows at times when their natural habitat is removed or severely degraded. Possum boxes are also installed in trees to encourage possums from roofs and living in buildings, and for research, rehabilitation and educational purposes. These actions will help provide an alternative home for the critically endangered Western Ringtail Possum.

Possum boxes can be installed yourself or by a professional arborist in backyards where cats and dogs are contained at night. When installing a Possum Box;

- Choose a suitable tree greater than 10 years old preferably without hollows or dreys. The tree must be alive – no dead trunks. Ideally choose its known food source i.e Peppermint Trees- *Agonis flexuosa*. In the absence of a suitable Peppermint Tree, Marri, Jarrah, Tuart or a known habitat tree can be used.
- Place the box 4m or higher above ground amongst the branches and leaves to provide protection when the possum emerges from predators such as owls.
- Do not place the box on the main trunk, as this can be climbed by goannas/cats etc. Rather, place the box out in the branches of the tree.
- Attach box to tree using wire inserted through old hose (to protect tree) or plastic coated clothesline (available from hardware stores). Black, stretchy tree tie (from revegetation suppliers) or old rope could also be used.
- Ensure your pets (dogs and cats) are kept inside or contained.
- Place boxes near food source (*Peppermint Trees- Agonis flexuosa*).
- Face the nest box away from the prevailing weather - south-east is suggested, if possible. Stormy weather comes mostly from the south/south west. West-facing boxes are too hot, and the low beams of the sun on dusk may impair the vision of the possum when it emerges in the evening.
- Face the door close to the trunk of the tree to reduce the time that the animal is exposed leaving the box. Small branches in front of the box will impede the entrance or flight of possible predators.
- If painting the possum box, use an outdoor, weather-proof paint in a camouflaged colour. This will also help prolong the life of the box.

Monitoring possum box use

Check your box every 4 weeks to see if it is being used by possums or native wildlife, and to ensure it's not being overtaken by feral bees. If feral bees are using your possum box, seek professional help to remove existing bees.

Please report possum or wildlife use to DBCA using the Fauna Report Form <https://www.dpaw.wa.gov.au/plants-and-animals/threatened-species-and-communities/threatened-animals>

Injured and orphaned possums

Injured or orphaned possums are often found and there is a network of carers available to rehabilitate and release these animals. For assistance contact DBCA **Wildcare Helpline on (08) 9474 9055** or phone FAWNA on 0438 526 660. Follow the advice from the call center operator. They will put you in touch with the nearest wildlife rehabilitator that can take the animal into care.

While you wait, contain the animal securely so that it does not injure itself further or injure you – where protective gloves or use a towel or similar to pick it up and place in a secure, well ventilated box in a quiet, dark place. **Do not** feed the animal or give it water unless you have been advised to do so. Be careful of teeth, claws, beaks etc. when approaching and handling wildlife. Although injured, animals can be very dangerous when frightened or stressed.

Possum Conservation

Possums along with other types of wildlife benefit from retaining areas of natural bush on your land and placing nest boxes in your garden. **Keeping cats and dogs inside or contained**, driving slowly at night, covering up the compost bin and not leaving pet food out at night time are all actions that will help conserve possums and other wildlife.

Possums are a part of suburban living and are not shy of humans. They provide a wonderful link between urban people and the natural world. Their antics and acrobatics are a delight to watch at night. However, sadly, the effects of land clearing, road kill and cat and dog attacks are having a detrimental effect on their population.

Further Information:

GeoCatch: www.geocatch.asn.au, geocatch@dwer.wa.gov.au, or 9781 0111.



Boxes supplied by:

Busselton Men's Shed: 0438 166 694, E: mensshedbsn@gmail.com, 555 Roe Tce Busselton.



Margaret River Men's Shed: 0428 909 198, <https://www.margaretrivermensshed.com.au/>



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