



Build a nest box

Nesting boxes or birdhouses replicate natural bird shelters such as cavities in trees or branches. They are fun, easy and cheap to make, and will provide a secure home for many years to come.

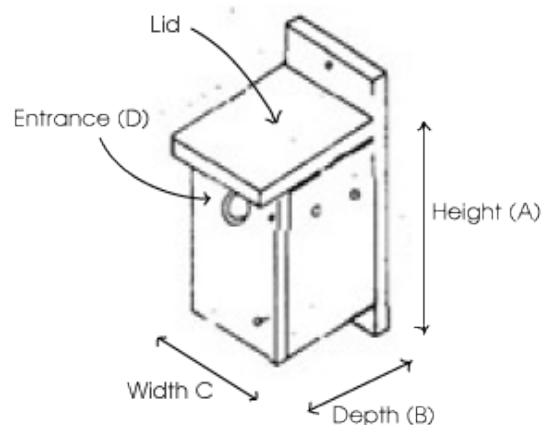
Some basic rules

- Use untreated wood - the 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 (D) near the top so that the bottom remains dark
- Add 'toe holds' to the inside walls so the 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 25mm. Use hinges so you can clean it out after the 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 three metres 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. 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 Indian Mynahs 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.

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.

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



Rosellas A 400, B 240, C 200, D 70

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

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

Ringtail Possum A 400, B 240, C200, D 70-80

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

A nest box may be part of the solution if you have a resident 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 and place the new nest box nearby so your possum can find shelter when it finds your roof locked up.

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.