

Building and Installing a Nestbox

Introduction

Did you know?

- There are estimated to be around 400 species of Australian fauna that use tree hollows.
- It takes more than 100 years for eucalypts to develop hollows suitable for occupancy by vertebrates.

Conserving wildlife in your backyard can be fun and easy. Install a nest box!

Natural tree hollows are declining due to the pressures of urbanisation and land clearing. You can provide a supplementary hollow for wildlife in your area by installing a nest box.

Many species of frogs, reptiles, birds and mammals will utilise nest boxes, check out the list of species you might have present in your backyard. (See table 1)

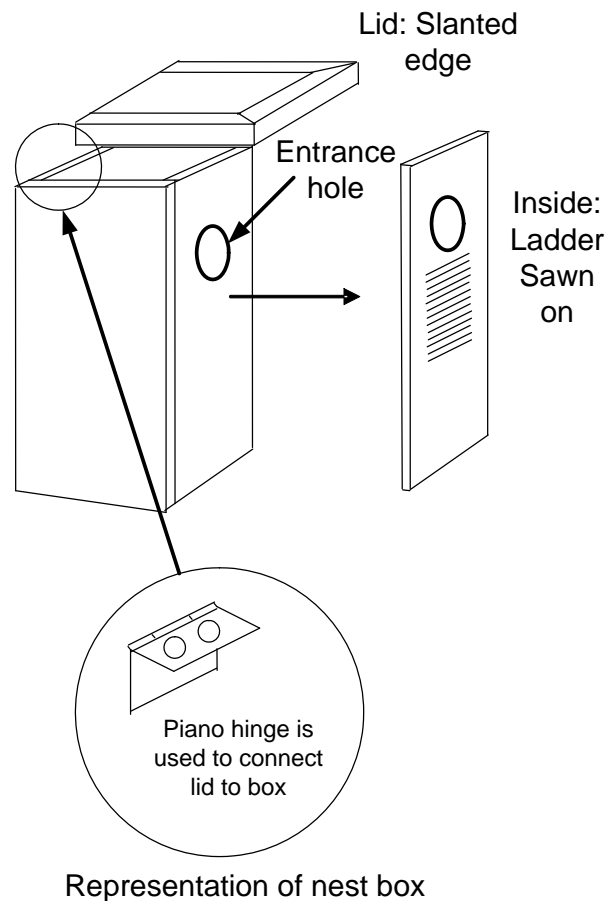
Constructing your nest box

Materials:

- sturdy untreated timber >1.8cm thick
- stainless steel piano hinge
- sawdust
- clamps for securing timber
- saw
- nails and hammer
- safety glasses and dust mask

Methods

Cut timber to the relevant size. The size of your nest box will depend on your target species (see table 2). Create an angle along the edge of the lid for runoff. If required create a ladder within the inside of the front panel by sawing parallel notches. Join the sides of the nest box together using screws (do not use glue). Paint the outside of the box with non-toxic paint if desired (do not paint inside). Place saw dust at the bottom of the nest box to replicate a decaying hollow.



Installing your nest box

It's all about location!

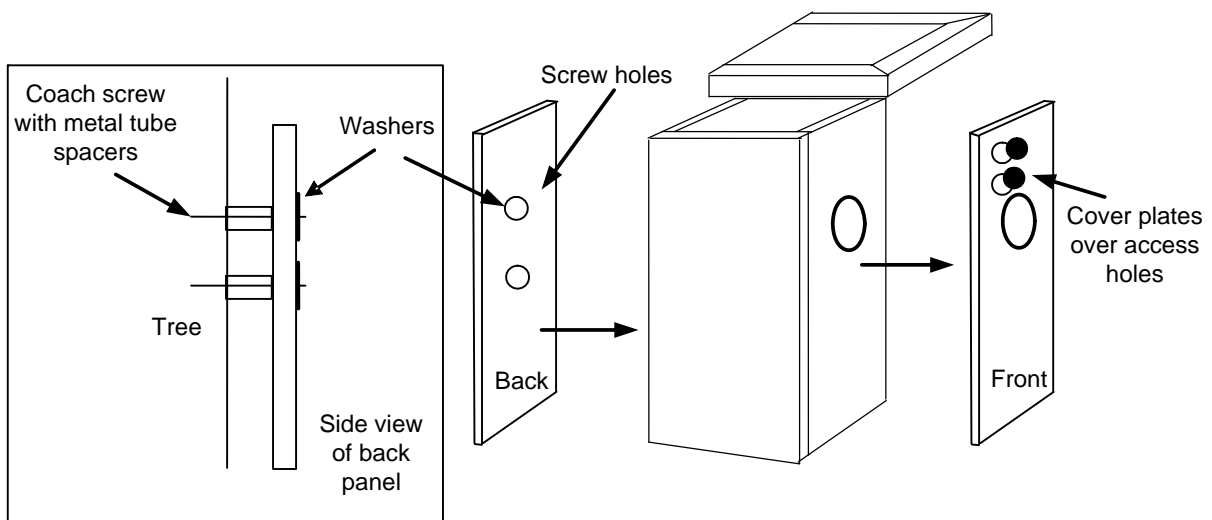
By adhering to the following guidelines you will be able to select a safe and desirable location to install your nest box.

- Ensure that the nest box is protected from human disturbance, cats and away from roads.
- Place your nest box where it is protected from rain, cold and direct light.
- Place your nest box in a place where you can later observe it.
- Place at least 5m above ground in a north to north easterly direction.



Installation

Method 1



Materials:

- coach screws and washers
- metal spacers
- ladder, rope to secure ladder to tree
- tabs of metal (cover plates)

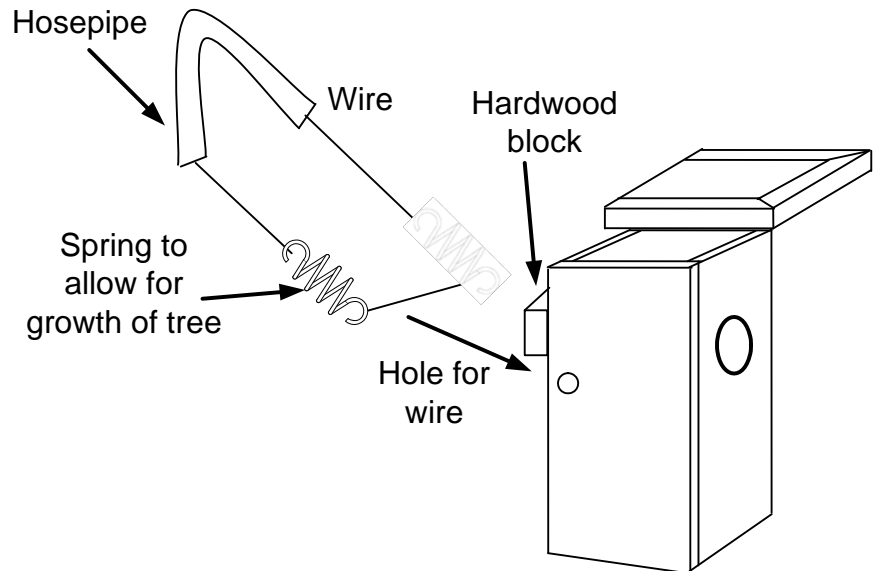
Leave the lid unattached and drill two small holes at the front of the nest box to allow for access to the screws with a spanner. Drill two 8.5mm holes through the back of the nest box, one above the other. Place a washer and screw through the top hole of the box and then place the metal spacer over the back end of the screw. Fasten screw into the tree so that it is supporting the weight of the box. Repeat to secure the bottom screw ensuring that the metal spacer is firmly against the tree. Cover the front holes with metal 'cover plates' using small screws and attach lid.

Method 2

Materials:

- multi strand wire
- old garden hose
- 2x springs
- ladder, rope to secure ladder to tree

This method requires a tree with a branch on the opposite side to the position of the nest box. Thread the wire through the hosepipe. The wire should be 50% longer than the width of the tree and the hose pipe should be long enough so that it covers the wire wherever it comes in contact with the tree. Fasten a spring at each end of the wire. Fasten a length of wire to one of the springs and then loop the wire through the nest box and tie off with the other spring. Ensure there are no rough ends that could potentially harm wildlife.

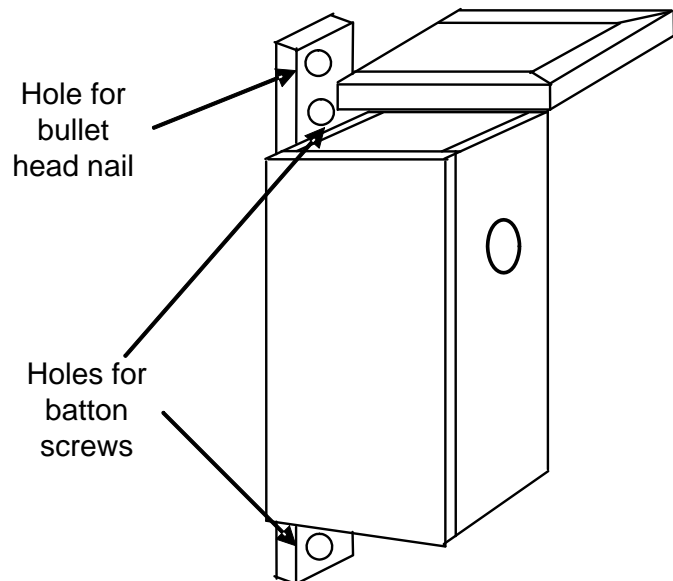


Method 3

Materials:

- bullet head nails
- batten screws
- ladder, rope to secure ladder to tree

Screw a hardwood batten to the back of the nest box so that it extends above and below the height of the box. Drill and countersink holes on the top and bottom of the hardwood batten for the batten screws. Drill another hole above the top hole large enough for the bullet head nail. Hammer the 150mm bullet head nail into the tree half way and hang the nest box by the top hole on the nail. Fix batten screws to the other top and bottom holes.



Safety

- Wear appropriate footwear
- Ensure that someone is on the ground to support and secure the ladder

Monitoring your nest box

Checking for damage

Check that the lid is intact and that the nest box is held securely to the tree. Check the condition of the tree, in particular any signs of ringbarking.



Checking for occupants

Watch for wildlife entering or leaving the nest box.

If you identify introduced species occupying the nest box you should try to deter them. The most common pests to occupy nest boxes are Indian mynas (not to be mistaken with the native noisy miner) and introduced bees. In order



to deter Indian mynas, remove nesting material and block the hole to stop the birds from returning. To deter bees you can attach insulation wool to the inside of the box. This material is undesirable for them to attach their hives to.

It may take a very long time, maybe even a year, before your nest box is occupied so don't be disheartened if something doesn't move in immediately.

Any Questions?

Find us on Facebook! Just search for 'Queensland Glider Network' and look for our logo.



Table 1: *List of some of the species that utilise tree hollows in Queensland*

Brushtail Possum	Kookaburra
Ringtail Possum	Black Cockatoo
Striped Possum	Pardalote
Feathertail glider	Little Treecreeper
Sugar/squirrel glider	Barn Owl
Mahogany Glider	Masked Owl
Greater Glider	Owlet-nightjar
Yellow-bellied Glider	Fletcher's Frog
Yellow-footed Antechinus	Green Tree Frog
Insectivorous bats	Brown Tree Snake
Paleheaded and Eastern rosellas	Stephen's Banded Snake
Crimson rosella	Green Tree Python
Galah	Rusty Monitor
King Parrot	Lace Monitor
Rainbow & scaly-breasted lorikeets	

Table 2: List of nest box specifications for common species

(Sources: *The Nestbox Book* by the Gould Group ©2008, and *Nest boxes for Wildlife: A Practical Guide* by Alan and Stacey Franks ©2003)

Species	Dimensions (l,b,h)	Diameter of entrance	Depth below entrance	Height above ground	Placement
Brushtail Possum	30x30x40cm	100mm	300-500mm	3-5 metres	vertical
Ringtail Possum	20x20x45cm	60-80mm	250-350mm	3-5 metres	vertical
Feathertail glider	15x15x45cm	30mm	100-200mm	2 metres	vertical
Sugar/squirrel glider	20x20x50cm	50mm	250-450mm	4-8 metres	vertical
Insectivorous bats	10x20x45cm	10mm slit	entrance at bottom	3 metres	clear flight path
Paleheaded and Eastern rosellas	15x15x50cm	70-80mm	400mm	4-10 metres	vertical
Crimson rosella	20x20x50cm	80-100mm	400mm	5 metres	vertical
Galah	20x20x75cm	120mm	600mm	6 metres	vertical
Rainbow & scaly-breasted lorikeets	13x13x80cm	50-70mm	400mm	5 metres	45 degrees
Kookaburra	22x40x22cm	180mm arch	level	5-10 metres	horizontal
Pardalote	12x50x12cm	30mm tube	80mm	5 metres	horizontal
Barn Owl	40x90x20cm	Platform	Platform	5-10 metres	horizontal
Owlet-nightjar	15x15x15cm	70mm	300mm	5 metres	vertical
Little Treecreeper	15x15x15cm	70mm	400mm	3-5 metres	vertical