

Be a possum buddy

Try to:

- build or buy a nest box that can offer your possum buddies a hangout for daytime naps or even a safe place to sleep through winter.
- keep your cat or dog inside at night, as this is when possums come out to feed.
- cover your compost bin securely so little possum hands don't investigate it.



Ringtail Possum in a nest box.
Photo: [David Cook](#).

Avoid:

- leaving pet food outside at night time.
- cutting down trees with hollows in them. These are prime locations for native animals to sleep and have their young in. It takes up to one hundred years for tree hollows to form, so they will take a long time to replace if removed.
- touching or handling possums. If you find a possum that you think may need assistance – call your [local wildlife rescue service](#) or Council for advice.

Don't be surprised if:

- you find a possum living in your walls or roof. If there is a possum in your roof, provide an alternative home for it outside by putting up a nest box. Encourage the possum to the nest box by placing some fruit near it. Block up the entry point to your roof at a time when you know the possum is not inside, such as night time. Possums are highly territorial and relocating them outside your property is illegal.

Find out more about your buddies

VISIT: www.backyardbuddies.net.au
www.facebook.com/backyardbuddies

CALL: 1800 283 343 to purchase a Backyard Buddy toy. The proceeds go to threatened species conservation programs.

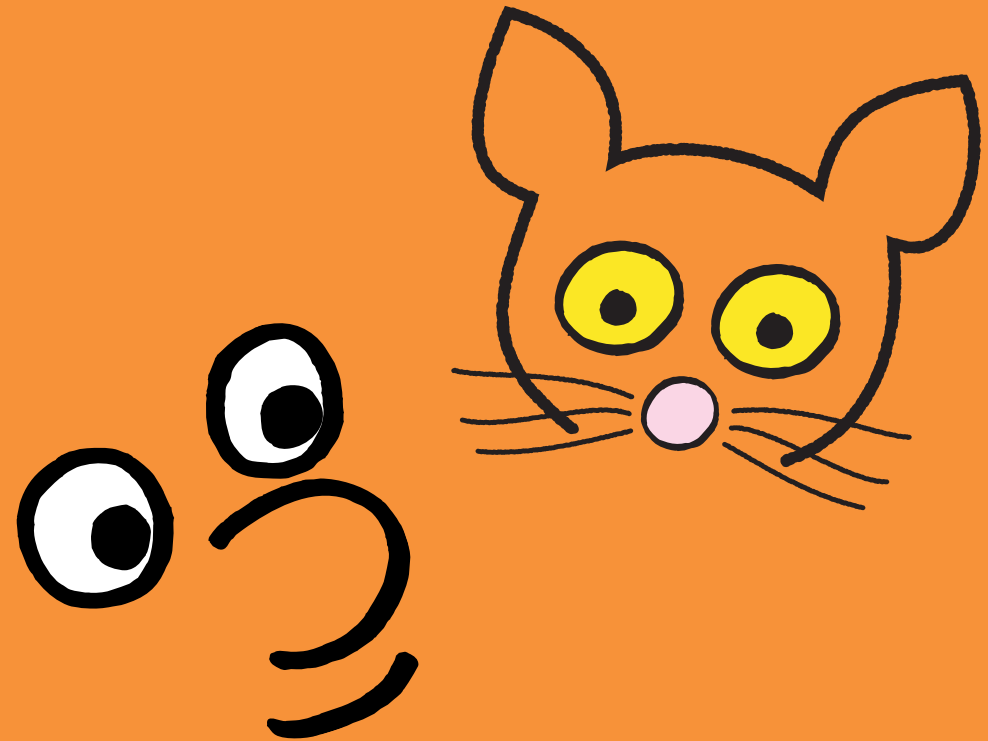
READ: Each month you can receive an email about animals you're likely to see in your backyard with tips on how to make your backyard friendly for them. It's called Bmail & it's free.

SIGN UP: www.backyardbuddies.net.au/Bmail.php



Be a backyard buddy

Make your backyard possum friendly



Have you heard possums scampering over your roof? If you sneak out quietly at night and watch - you may be lucky! Possums may be looking for food and playing in your area.

Possums live in the trees and occasionally come down to the ground to look for food. Brushtail Possums live in tree hollows and Ringtail Possums in the south of Australia build a nest (called a drey) out of sticks. Both kinds of possum may live in your roof if they can't find suitable homes in trees.

Possums live in territories and mark the boundaries with smells. They rub the scent from glands under their chin, chest and base of tail against trees so everybody knows who's boss in the area. Possums protect their territories by fighting off intruders.

The body of a possum is made for life in the trees. They have strong, sharp claws, and hand-like back feet. The Ringtail Possum has a prehensile tail which acts like another hand to help it grip tree branches with ease. They can also use it to carry nesting material.

You can look after possums in your own backyard

Many of our possums are dependent on tree hollows. They need them to sleep in during the daylight hours. Competition from other possums, birds, bats and gliders along with the clearing of many old trees means that possums may find the roof or walls of your home as the perfect sleeping place.

By providing a nest box outside 4 m up in a tree, your backyard can become a better home for possums.

That's why the Foundation for National Parks & Wildlife, local councils and other interested groups are running Backyard Buddies.

What is a backyard buddy?

Backyard buddies are the native animals that share our built-up areas, our beaches and waterways, our backyards and our parks. The possum is a backyard buddy.

Backyard buddies are also the local people who value the living things around them, like microbats, and are willing to protect and encourage them by doing a few simple things around their own homes.

So you can be a backyard buddy.

Be a backyard buddy

It's easy. All you have to do is care... and take a few simple steps.

Step one is to find out what possums do and do not like.

Possums love:

Eucalyptus leaves

– are Ringtail Possums' favourite food. They, and Brushtails, also eat flowers, fruits and veggies. In your garden they love to eat roses, gardenias, fuchsias and passionfruit.

Tree hollows

– to nest and sleep in safely. Eucalypt hollows take over one hundred years to develop, and competition for them can be stiff.

Night time

– especially the first half, when they are active and searching for food. Possums rest during the day.

Nest boxes

– as tree hollows are in short supply. Nest boxes encourage possums to nest outside, instead of in your roof.

But they don't like:

Trappers

– who take them away from their territories. It is very stressful for a possum to be relocated and most don't survive.

Stinky plants

– like chrysanthemums, mint bushes, geraniums and daisies. Possums also don't like spiny grevillias and hakeas, or tough, woody banksias or tea-trees.

Bright lights

– such as spotlights, porch lights or party lights.

Possum Magic!

Ringtail Possums live along the east coast of Australia and in the south-west corner of Western Australia. They get their name from their thin, white-tipped tail which can grip onto tree branches.

In southern Australia, Ringtails build nests called dreys out of sticks, bark and grass.

Brushtail Possums do not build dreys. They live in tree hollows, nest boxes or rooves.

Brushtails get their name from their thick, bushy tail. As well as the areas the Ringtail is found, the Brushtail also lives in the centre of Australia and a greater area of south-east South Australia.



Ringtail Possum in a 'drey' or nest.
Photo: Eltham Mob.



Brushtail Possum.
Photo: Andrew Culverston.