

How to build a Morepork nest box!

There are lots of ways to help our native owl, the **Morepork, Ruru** but one of the best ways is to put up a nest box!

There is nothing better than hearing moreporks calling on a still evening; Sometimes people are lucky enough to see them swooping at moths attracted to outside lights. Here we provide a basic design to help you build your own morepork nest box, so that you too may be able to encourage and enjoy moreporks in your own backyard.

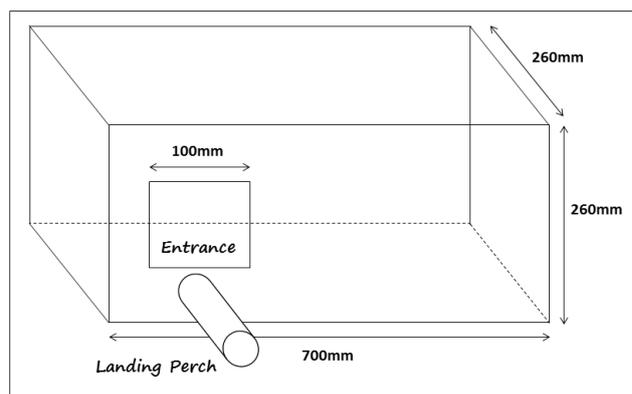
Although Morepork will nest on the ground or in a tree cavity, when they nest on the ground they are very exposed to introduced pests like cats and stoats. A lack of mature trees in many urban areas leaves them with few options for nesting.

Putting up a nest box in your garden is a perfect way to help them out by providing a safe place for them to breed!



Box design

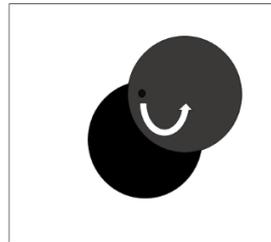
1. We use plywood to construct the box, which can then be painted to provide waterproofing and to make the box last longer.
2. The entrance can be a round or square hole 100mm wide.
3. The floor of the nest box should be filled with small bark chips at least 5cm deep.
4. A large piece of dowel, or a suitably sized branch should be placed underneath the entrance hole to act as a perch aiding entry.
5. At the right-hand end of the box or part of the lid, should be made into a viewing entrance. This allows the box to be cleaned annually and checked to see if it is being used by owls.





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Side View



A small viewing window on the side allows for inspection. A simple round piece of wood can be rotated to allow for viewing.

Tips for the best site to install the box:

1. Choose a dark, quiet, sheltered area in a stand of trees, or up near the roof of a shed or barn, to position the box.
2. The nest box should be situated well off the ground.
3. If placed in a tree, a metal strip around the tree trunk will protect any nesting morepork from pests such as stoats, cats and possums.
4. Cleaning the box annually will eliminate the risk of disease. This is best done during winter when morepork are not breeding.
5. Trapping for rats, stoats and feral cats in the area will further reduce the risk of any morepork getting predated (note if using rodenticides then check the labels and only select those products that do not cause secondary poisoning)





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Other ways you could consider to support Morepork include:

Place a few solar lights in the garden to attract the moths and insects that Morepork like to eat, build a weta hotel and/or plant trees like Puriri & Ngaio that when mature will attract Puriri moths and wetas to provide even more food!