

You don't need to feed me I can feed myself

If we look at the natural diet of possums, they feed extensively on young eucalypt and wattle leaves (they are our pruners) supplemented by fruits, flowers, shoots, grasses and insects within a "territory". "Territory" is defined as an area large enough to satisfy an animal's need for food and shelter.

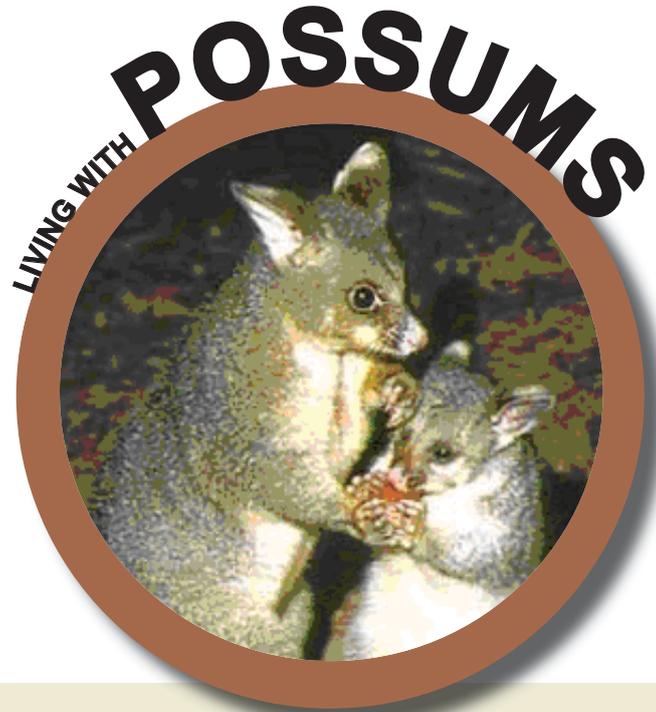
If we look at the territorial nature of possums, artificially feeding possums with a constant supply of bread and fruit means that more possums can live in less territory, so it will actually increase possum numbers in a smaller space leading to over population in some areas.

Possums exercise whilst in search of food and breed more often or less often in accordance with the seasonal changes that bring about an increase or decrease in food. Therefore:

- A constant supply and abundance of rich food will alter their natural breeding cycle and allow them to breed more often adding to the number of possums in the neighbourhood.
- Artificially feeding possums will alter their natural feeding behaviour and cause them to become dependent and sedentary.

Our garden is habitat to a broad range of wildlife –

If we learn to appreciate it and live with it we can gain a huge amount of knowledge and enjoyment.



ATTRACTING NATIVE WILDLIFE

If you would like to attract a healthy balance of native wildlife to your garden:

- Plant a variety of native trees and shrubs that flower or fruit at different times of the year and also increase opportunity for shelter and nesting sites.
- Native shrubs also attract the insects that wildlife species eat.
- Provide a clean water source, safe from predators.
- Never provide sugar, bread or milk. All processed foods are bad for wildlife.
- Ensure all rubbish bins that contain food scraps are secure from wildlife.
- Provide a possum box. By providing a possum house, you are encouraging the possum to stay and claim your yard as its territory. The possum will then discourage other possums from moving into your roof and yard.
- If possible keep your compost heap enclosed to prevent possums from scavenging and using this as their only source of food. It also discourages rodents.



Will you still love me tomorrow?

So you find my kind attractive do you?

- Will you love me after I accept the titbits you offer and I hang around waiting for more? Ah, but you love it, the “wildlife” experience.
- Will you love me when other possums want to join me each night at the food table, scoffing down whatever is provided, then sitting around waiting for more? Still fun eh! Bring out your family and friends for the “wildlife” experience.
- Will you love me when more and more of my kind turn up each night and the fights break because others want to join in?
- Will you love me when this small garden, which once was just a minor part of the family territory, becomes permanently populated with possums at every turn, aggressively and desperately trying to defend the smaller feeding area they are now dependent upon?
- Will you love me when one of my numbers, impatient for titbits extended, bites at the hand that feeds it?
- Will you love me when you have to clean up the larger amount of faeces and urine concentrated round the feeding area and sleeping hollows?
- Will you love me when the neighbours blame you because the steady supply of rich food you put out ensures the females are constantly “barefoot and pregnant” and the neighbourhood is invaded by an explosion in possum numbers?
- Will you love me when the neighbours blame you because the new kids on the block competing fiercely and scavenging for the only food they have ever known now eat the roses and raid rubbish bins and compost looking for exotic food scraps?
- Will you love me when your neighbours complain that possums are invading the roof spaces because there are not enough natural sleeping spaces in the sorely diminished territory?



If you really want to love me you will respect my wild ways!

- I feed extensively on young eucalypt and wattle leaves (possums are the pruners) only supplemented by fruits, flowers, shoots, grasses and insects.
- I exercise whilst in search of food and breed in response to the seasonal changes that bring about an increase in food.
- Plant a variety of native trees and shrubs that flower or fruit at different times and will increase opportunity for shelter and nesting sites and also attract the insects that wildlife species eat.
- Never provide sugar, bread or milk, as all processed foods are bad for wildlife.
- Provide a possum box.
- Provide a clean water source, safe from predators.
- Ensure all rubbish bins that contain food scraps are secure from wildlife.

For more information, contact Knox City Council on (03) 9298 8000 or visit the website www.knox.vic.gov.au

