

SMALL PARROT

Habitat Box Designs



Lifestyle Capital of Victoria

Five species of small parrots are found in the Frankston area that use tree hollows but only two are regularly recorded, the **Rainbow Lorikeet** and **Musk Lorikeet**.

Rainbow Lorikeets are often seen in parks and on sports fields where they use their bristle brush tongue to extract sweet sticky nectar and pollen from deep within native flowers. They will explore a number of hollows are investigated before one is chosen and nesting can continue for 8 months of the year beginning in March.

Musk Lorikeets feed on the nectar of eucalypts, and other larger flowering shrubs and trees, and lerps (sap sucking insects). They breed in hollows in gum trees so habitat boxes can be placed accordingly.

The one preference that these two parrots have is the size of the entrance hole. Musk Lorikeets like a slightly smaller hole (50mm) compared to the Rainbow Lorikeet (60mm).

General tips:

- Face away from prevailing winds
- Face them away from direct midday sun- north-east
- Ensure water proof with drainage and sealant
- Monitor your habitat box (from a distance as to not disturb the birds)- this data is useful for council and Birdlife
- Be aware of unwanted visitors moving in!
- Please resist feeding your new neighbours as it creates a dependency on artificial food sources



Musk Lorikeet (Photo Credit: Kym Farnik (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0))

Materials

Material	Quantity (per box)
Timber	1600mm x 300mm wide x 18mm marine ply
	600mm x 70mm x 35mm treated pine
Screws	40 x 40mm treated pine screws
Gap sealer	To seal box eg. Silastic
Cup head bolts	2 x bolts, nuts and washers, recommend M8 ≥60mm (for attaching box to mount)
Coach / screws	2 x coach screws M8 ≥90mm (for attaching box to tree). Can also use large treated pine screws of similar length (would need washers for TP screws)
Rubber Grommet	4 x grommets, 2 per screw
Butt Hinge	1 x butt hinge for lid of box
Gate hook and eye	1 gate hook and eye
Paint / timber seal	Acrylic paint or organic sealer to preserve box (eg Tung Oil)
Box lining	To insulate box - natural wood chips / shavings. Avoid treated wood

Equipment

Bench Saw	To cut timber lengths
Cordless Drill	For construction and installation
Jig saw or similar	For entrance hole – drill pilot hole (8mm bit) so jig saw blade can fit in
8mm drill bit	For drainage holes, for jig saw, fixing cup head bolts to box mount and coach bolts
Screwdriver / screwdriver bit	For box construction
3mm drill bit	Pilot holes for screws
22mm Spade Bit	To countersink nuts and washers into box mount
Socket wrench	Helpful to tighten cup head bolts into box mount / coach screws into pole / tree

Assembly

Prepare the Pieces

1. Cut the timber to the dimensions provided to make the pieces. **See Diagram Insert.**
N.B *Dimensions are for 18 mm ply and will need to be adjusted for other materials.*
2. Use the bench saw to mark" (shallow cuts) onto the upper part of the front piece. This gives the small parrots a rough surface to climb over and hold on to.
3. Use bench saw to cut bevel 82 degrees into lid.
4. Use a jig saw to cut the entrance hole 50mm for Musk Lorikeet and 60 mm for Rainbow Lorikeet. – drill pilot hole (8mm bit) for jig saw blade to fit into first.
5. Drill (8mm drill bit) 4 drainage holes in the bottom piece.
6. To prepare for assembly- drill pilot holes (3mm drill bit) into ply to avoid splitting. 2 holes on short edge and 3 holes on long edge are recommended.
7. Mark and drill 1 pilot hole (8mm drill bit) on the back piece and the box mount. Countersink 1 bolt hole with 22mm spade bit into box mount pilot hole for the washers and nut. Add another 2 pilot holes (3mm drill bit) to box mount 40mm from each end.



Construction

8. Bolt the box mount to the back panel using cuphead bolts, nut and washer (cuphead on the inside of the box). Don't tighten it until you have determined the positioning of the box on the tree.
9. Prepare the joints with Silastic or similar sealant.
10. Screw box edges together. Attach lid last, allowing an overlap on each side, if mounting the box on an angle, ensure the hinge is "under" the box. Place the butt hinge to be evenly positioned in the middle of one side. Attach gate hook on lid and eye, on the other side of box to fit snugly.
11. You can now paint or coat the outside of the box. Acrylic paint or an organic timber seal is preferable.
12. Add two handfuls of your insulation (e.g. wood chips etc.) to the box.

Installation

Note: Your box can be installed professionally by an arborist or wildlife expert. If you are using a ladder to install, follow manufacturer's safety instructions

Musk and Rainbow Lorikeets like a habitat box that is easily accessible by flight and 4m above ground.

13. Select a suitable site for your habitat box. With the box mount against the tree, drill and mark the position of the holes on the tree.
14. Return box to the ground and drill 2 holes (8mm drill bit) for coach screws / timber screws (3mm bit) into the tree.
15. Attach box to tree with coach screws using the socket wrench (put grommets on screws before screwing into place). If using timber screws, place a washer between the screw head and the two grommets to ensure screw doesn't go through the grommets while drilling into the tree.
16. Congratulations- your nest box is ready for use!



Rainbow Lorikeet (photo credit: faunature.com.au)

Diagram

