

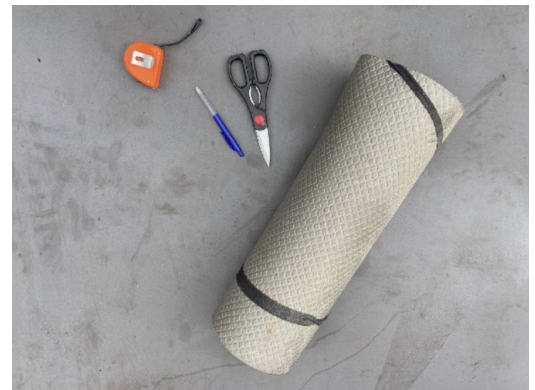
HOW TO MAKE A (BUDGET) WĒTĀ HOTEL

Joakim, lead for 'Te Motu Kairangi – Miramar Ecological Restoration' group has created this great resource, detailing how to make a budget wētā hotel out of an old yoga mat. It also works for geckos.

Mum or dad not using their old yoga mat? Why not make a shelter for your local resident invertebrates like wētā or maybe even geckos? It's super easy and will be much appreciated by some of the wildlife around us. Nailing a foam cover to a tree trunk will act as a loose bark substitute for wildlife to take shelter underneath. If you use a dark one, it will also heat up slightly and can become a basking spot for geckos too.

Materials

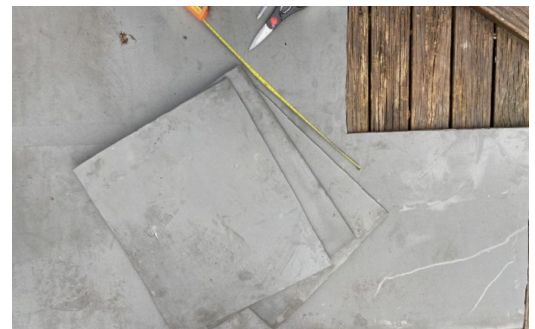
- 1 bit foam cover or yoga mat 40 x 50cm
- Bunch of nails
- Hammer
- Marker pen
- Measuring tape
- Scissor
- Good sized tree trunk



Instructions

STEP 1 – Measure

Measure out the size of each "sheet" and mark it with a pen. A good size is 40 x 50 cm. Cut out each sheet. A usual yoga mat allows you 2 or three sheets



STEP 2 – Find a tree

Any tree will do, but if it is a native tree (like mahoe, ngaio, fivefinger, manuka or totara) you will have a higher chance of animals finding it and moving in.

HOW TO USE A CHEWCARD

STEP 3 – Attach

Use a good sized hammer and 4-5 nails with large flat heads, so the sheets don't come off.

Position the sheet vertically and nail each corner to the tree about 3 cm in from each side. If the tree is not completely straight, a 5th nail can be attached to make sure it's secure.

TIP: Don't hammer the nail completely in to the trunk. Leave about 1-2 cm between the nail head and the trunk – enough space for animals to crawl into and feel safe.

What you can expect to find:

It can take some time for the first residents to find it, but eventually things will move in. Invertebrates you might find could include animals, such as the Wellington tree wētā or the painted wētā.

Other animals could be major strippers or different spiders. If you're super lucky you might find the peripatus or velvet worm, "a living fossil" that has been unchanged for 400 million years and is considered to be a missing link between insects and worms.

