

Tree mounts for possum traps

The standard 'Timms'-style possum trap has been criticised for not killing cleanly when staked to the ground—an exploratory paw may be inserted before the head, for example. A tree mount that encourages the animal to just insert its head into the trap, because paws are needed to hold on, was required for the hundred or more possum traps we have at Ark in the Park. Over the course of a couple of days and at the cost of about \$300 I produced the mounts shown below, which do indeed seem to make a clean catch. (Photos on request.)

Two sheets of 12 mm H 3.2 structural plywood (\$88 x 2) were cut up into 21 cm squares. This made about 110 squares, with the waste timber cut up into 2 by 21 cm strips for the sides of the mounts. My son-in-law's mitre saw was invaluable!

Eight 3 m lengths of 10 x 10 mm aluminium channel (8 x \$11.50) were cut into 21 cm lengths, using a reciprocating saw to cut the shrink-wrapped bundle up that was delivered.

An old Jaycar drill press stand was used to drill holes at each end of the channels. I had to remember that I was making two mirror image strips, 100 or so of each! One hole at each end was widened with an 8 mm drill, the drill press stop set so that the drill merely countersank the hole at the bottom of the channel.



Then I made a little jig out of scrap wood to speed up assembly. The sides fold out to allow the edge strips to be placed and held, the 7 mm strips along the side hold the base down on them and position the aluminium strips for screwing. (End view.)



All the parts of the mount, ready for assembly. A hundred of them needed 200 8 x 25 and 200 8 x 35 mm stainless screws, quite an additional expense!



The side pieces are clipped into the jig. They are really only there to give longer screws something to bite into. The base then goes on top of them, and then two mirror-image channels are placed at each side and screwed down, 25 mm screws at the top and 35 at the bottom.



A finished mount, emerging from the jig. Try it for size with a trap, just to make sure it is OK.



The base mounts to a tree or fence post with two 10 x 50 screws (more expense!). A baited and set trap slips right in.



Just fyi, in the Ark we use little core-flute 'tables' that slide up the trigger bar and hold peanut butter well, even in the vertical plane.