

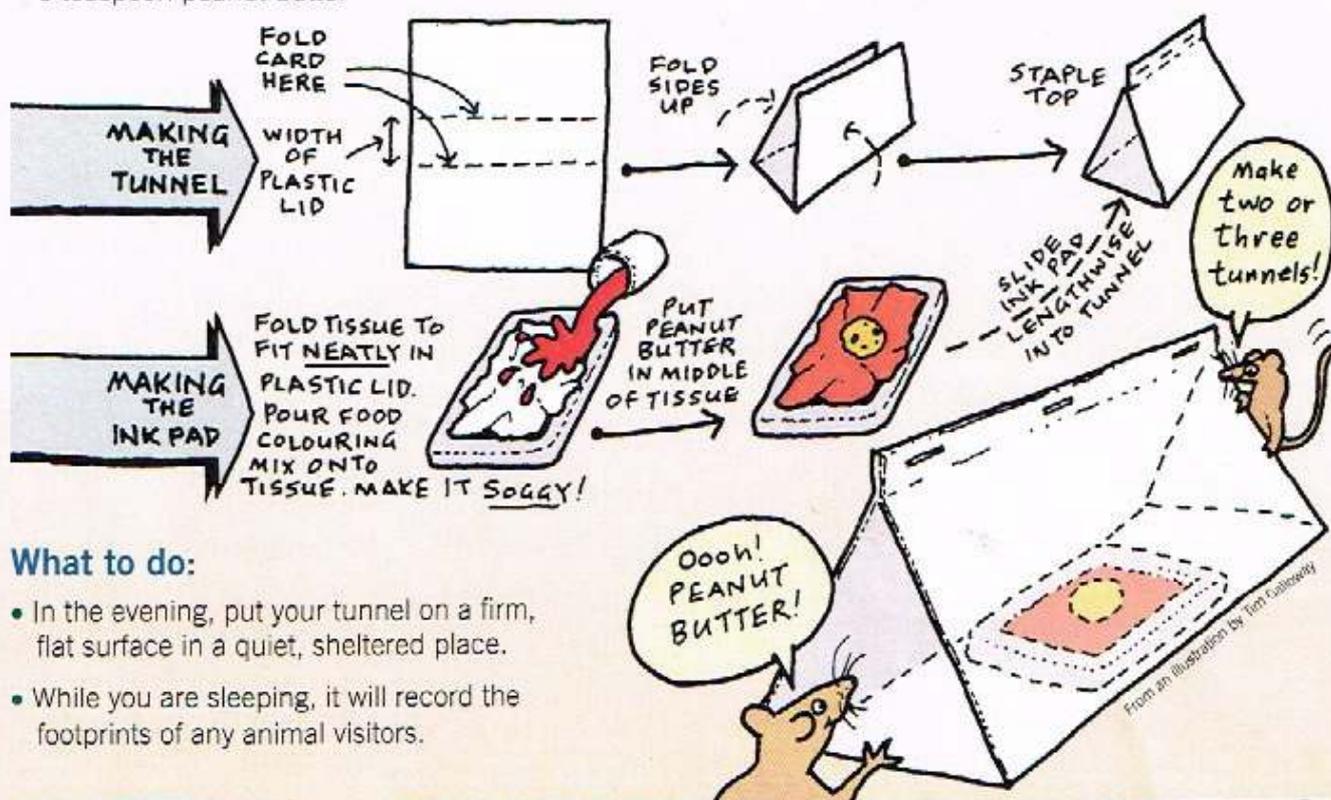
Are there rats in your garden?

Make your own Tracking Tunnels

What is a tracking tunnel? Tracking tunnels are used by scientists to find out which kinds of creatures are in gardens, nature reserves or national parks. You get a rat or other animal to walk across an ink pad to eat some food. It will then leave its inky footprints on the tunnel floor.

What you need:

- **Tunnel** – Thin white card, A3 size or larger.
- **Ink pad** – 1 rectangular plastic lid (margarine or butter tub lids are good) and 1 tissue.
- **Ink** – 1 teaspoon food colouring mixed with 2 tsp water.
- Stapler
- 1 teaspoon peanut butter



What to do:

- In the evening, put your tunnel on a firm, flat surface in a quiet, sheltered place.
- While you are sleeping, it will record the footprints of any animal visitors.



How to set tracking tunnels

Tracking Tunnels are useful for two aspects of predator control:

1. To see what predators you have in the area you are investigating so you can decide which predator control to use
2. To see if your predator control is working - kill rates don't indicate successful predator control.

Making Tunnels

- 1) Use manilla folders or corflute (old real estate signs are great!) to create your tracking tunnel - see the instruction sheet.
- 2) Attach blank paper inside the base of the tunnel - this means the inky footprints will end up on the paper and the tunnels can be used again.
- 3) When the tunnel is set on the ground, use metal wire to peg the corners down ensuring not to block either end with the pegs. Pegging the tunnels down will hopefully stop Weka taking them, or the wind blowing them away.
- 4) With the butter lid facing up, place a kitchen sponge or tissue/toilet paper/handtowel into the lid and add your watered down food colouring. Add enough to make the tissue moist but not too much that there is a pool of liquid.
- 5) Slide the lid carefully into the tunnel, without spilling the food colouring.
- 6) Put a 'pea sized' blob of peanut butter on the paper at each entrance of the tunnel. Pin the paper or cards to the bottom of the tunnel so weka don't steal them!
- 7) Put the tunnel out before dusk and collect the next day.

Tips

Human scent can be a deterrent for some animal pests so wearing gloves when putting out the bait is a good idea.

Wear gloves when collecting the tunnels as rodents can carry disease. Thoroughly wash your hands after setting up and collecting the tunnels. Peanut butter provided for baiting the tunnels should not be eaten by humans.

Ensure you collect everything and bring it home with you.

For more great info go to

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/predator-free-2050/toolkit-predator-free-2050/monitoring/>



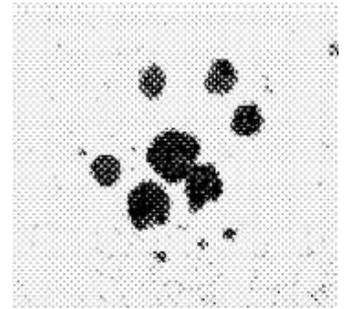
Pest animal prints



Mice tracks look like tiny dots. The prints are very similar to rats, but smaller.



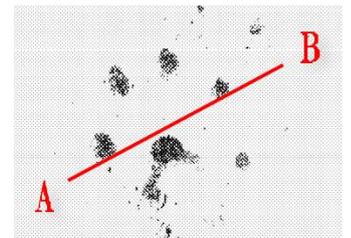
Rats have four toes and five on the back. They also have humps that leave marks behind the centre pads. If you connect toes one and four, the line crosses over the centre pad.



Hedgehogs have five toes and a big centre pad that is closer to the toes.



Stoat prints look very similar to rat prints, but the centre pad is behind toes one and four



Possum prints look a lot like human hands. They have a pad and five fingers.



Photos courtesy DOC and Ruth Bollongino fernphotos.com

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