Fact Sheet 1

Raising dung beetles in nurseries

Getting started

Breeding dung beetles in nursery beds is proving successful for establishing beetle populations on farms and across landscapes. There are a number of options and design considerations for constructing a nursery bed. Choose the option/s that suit you best.

Fit for purpose nursery kit

A complete kit can be purchased and constructed in less than an hour. The main advantage is the zipper in the shade cloth which is easy to open and close. This is the most expensive to buy but quicker in labour to construct.

DIY versions

A number of Landcare groups are testing out DIY designed nursery beds which are much cheaper in materials but take a bit more timeto construct.

There are three options being trialled by Landcare groups:

1. IBC container with the bottom cut off and covered with flyscreen or similar material to prevent beetles escaping but water can drain. You may be able to source this for free or a small cost. Cover with shade cloth as for the raised garden bed.
2. Purchase a raised garden bed and construction materials. Details in the next section.
3. Wooden nursery beds that can be constructed through a local volunteer group such as Men's Shed.

Nursery bed with fresh dung and beetles

Image credit: Hew Richards, Macedon Ranges

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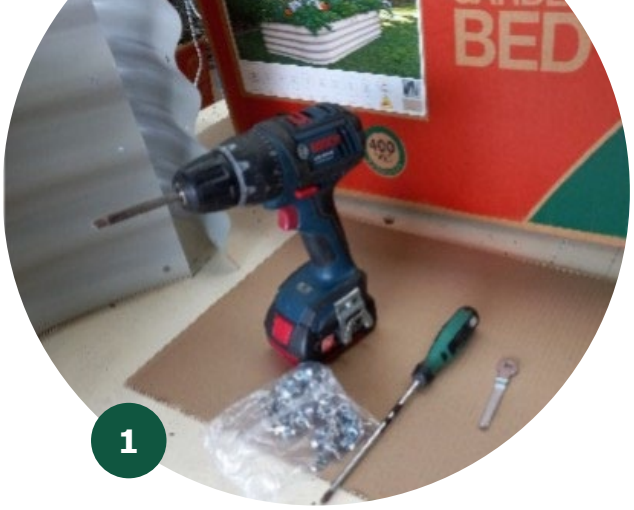
Tools of the trade



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2


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6

Here are the tools (image 1) needed to construct a nursery bed- in particular the raised garden bed which is as close as possible in design to the commercial kit.

You will also need shock cord, shade cloth and staples and staple gun (or hammer and nails).

Construct the nursery bed following the manufacturer's instructions. Corners on the outside (image 2 and 3) and remove the clear plastic film from the bed. It can be constructed in a shed or outside directly in the paddock.

Cut the plastic strip from the top and prise it off (image 4). Cover with white shade cloth and secure the edges with shock cord (image 5).

Staple some timber planks to the long edges to provide some weight on the sides.

Dig a 2-3 cm deep trench into the soil for the nursery bed it down to stop the beetles from digging underneath.

A timber frame (image 6) can be built and added to the inside of the bed and staple the shade cloth along the top, this allows each side to be opened independently if beetles are active, less will escape! Timber nurseries are also being trialled.

Keep up to date with what's happening

For more information about this project or our other activities please contact Karen Thomas on karen.thomas@melbournewater.com.au or visit https://www.melbournewater.com.au/building-and-works/projects/dung-beetle-nursery-network

For an interpreter, please call the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS National) on 13 14 50

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