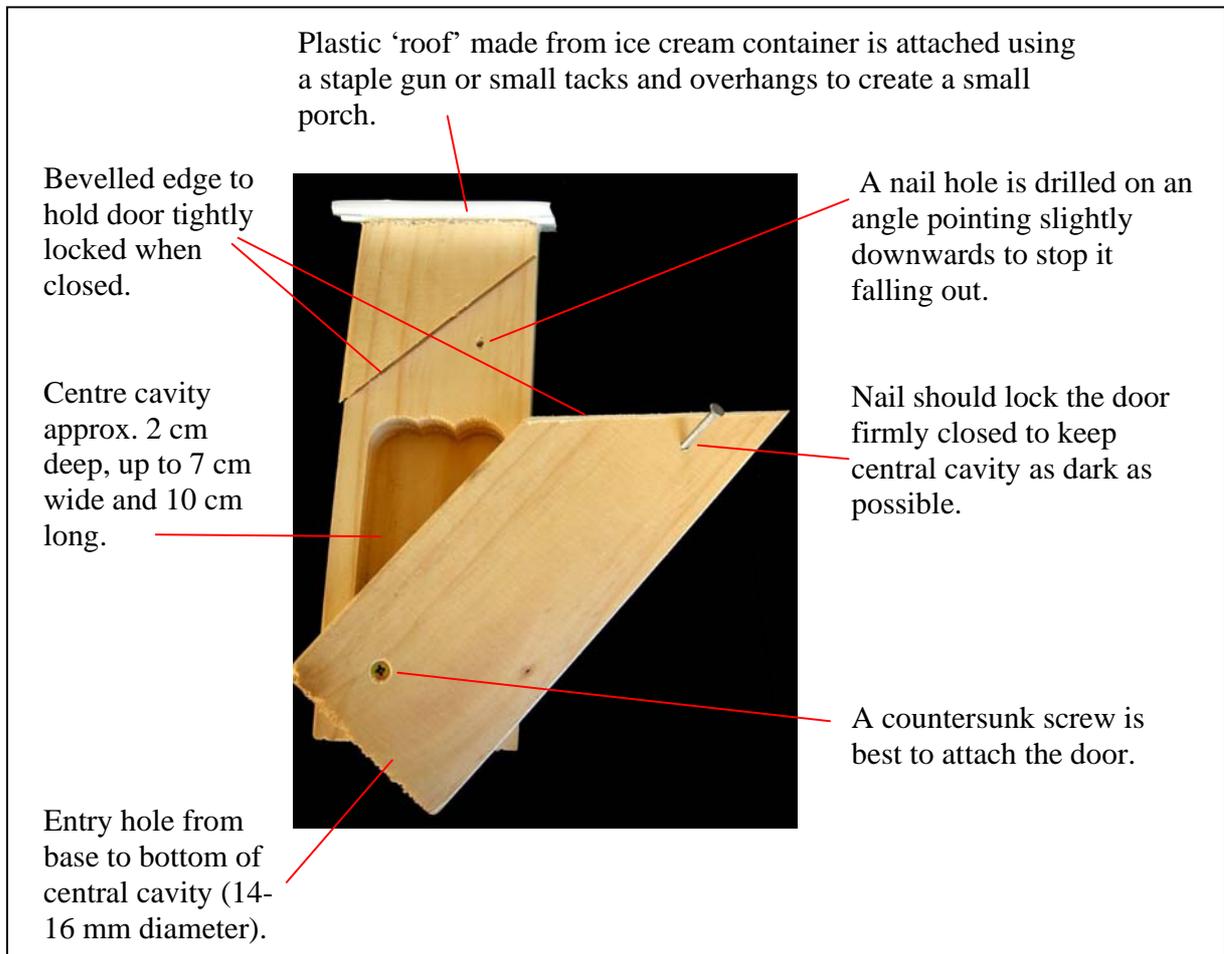


# Making weta motels

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Pieces of scrap untreated timber up to 4" x 2" (100 x 50 mm) and 240 mm in length can be used to make weta motels, although kiln dried timber is best. The top and bottom are cut on an angle to help the rain run off.



The 8-10 mm thick door is cut from the original block with an angled cut and bevelled edge (see pictures below).



Side view showing sloping roof and base (above). The bevelled edge of the viewing door is also shown (above). The angled edge of the door slots in to motel base (see below).



The central cavities are drilled using a drill press (above). We used a 35 mm tungsten tipped Super End Mill bit with 8 mm shank. The holes are drilled in line to create a chamber and any wood remaining can be chiselled out to give a roughly rectangular chamber.



A 14-16 mm entry hole is drilled from the centre of the base into the central cavity. The entrance hole diameter is important as it must be large enough to accommodate large adult male weta, but small enough to protect the occupants from predatory mice entering.



A hole was drilled through the motel approx. 40 mm below the top to thread with some lacing wire to attach it firmly to a tree trunk or vertical branch.

A removable nail is used as a latch near the top of the door.

The viewing door is secured with a screw or nail in the bottom corner.



Because tree weta tend to favour kanuka on Banks Peninsula, some motels have been constructed from kanuka logs approx. 70mm in diameter. While essentially the same design as the pine motels, the hardness of the kanuka wood made these motels extremely difficult to drill and cut. However tree weta do use them as can be seen in picture to left.



Attach motels to the shady side of trees on the edge of bush remnants or native gardens. Good tree species for attachment on Banks Peninsula include: kanuka, ribbonwood, tree fuchsia, broadleaf, mahoe and large mountain holly.

Invertebrates may take from weeks to many months to colonise, so be patient!

Open motel doors slowly so as not to startle the occupants with bright light and do not open too regularly or occupants may abandon the motel.