How to Build a Nesting Box

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A nesting box is a necessary item for any rabbit who will be having babies or lives outside to keep them warm in the winter and away from cold drafts. The nesting box is a warm and secure place for the mom to give birth and where the babies will live for the first few weeks of life. Without a nest box, the babies can become separated from their mom and become cold.

The size of your rabbit determines the size of your nesting box. The rabbit must be able to move around in the box, it should be a few inches wider and longer than the mom. One end of the box is made lower so the mom doesn't have to jump as high to get in and out, thus reducing the chances of her accidentally landing on a baby when she gets into the box. Peg Board is used on the bottom of the box to keep the babies dry in case the mom would go to the bathroom in the nesting box; it also keeps the babies cool in the summer. Finally, many people also like to cover the top of their nesting box to reduce heat loss and provide some privacy for the mom.

The following measurements and instructions are a good base to use when building your own nesting box. Remember, these measurements are just a base, make sure your nesting box is right for your rabbit.

INSTRUCTIONS

Small to Medium Rabbits

Materials
Scrap lumber
Peg Board
Screws

Step 1. Using the peg board, cut a rectangle that is 14 ½" x 9". This will be the bottom of the nesting box. The peg board is cut ½" longer than the length of the box to allow for easy removal when cleaning.

Step 2. Using scrap lumber cut two rectangles 14" x 9". These will be the two sides of the nesting box.

Step 3. Depending if you want the top of your nesting box to be open or to be covered determines what you will do next.

    Covered Nesting Box: Take one side and measure 4 ⅝" along the length of the rectangle. Then measure 5" along the width of the rectangle. Connect those two points with a straight line. Discard the triangle that left after cutting. (figure 1, discard shaded area) Repeat this step for both sides. Finally, a small square, 9"x 4⅝", will need to be cut for the top of the nesting box.
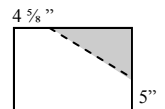
Fig. 1

    Open Top Nesting Box: Take both the sides and measure 5". From that point draw a line that reaches to the top left corner of the rectangle. Cut along that angled line discarding the small triangle that is cut off. (fig 2, discard shaded area) Repeat this step for both sides.
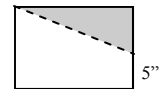
Fig. 2

Step 4. Cut a rectangle that is 9" x 8 ½" this will be back of the nesting box

Step 5. Cut a rectangle 5"x 8 ½" this will be the front of the nesting box.

Step 6. Next, a groove will need to be cut into the two sides and the back. This groove will allow the peg board bottom to slide in and out for easy cleaning. Make the grooves ½" up from the bottom of the four pieces of wood. (fig 3) Make the groove deep enough and wide enough that the peg board slides easily, but does not fall out.
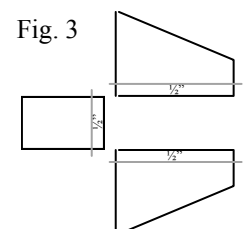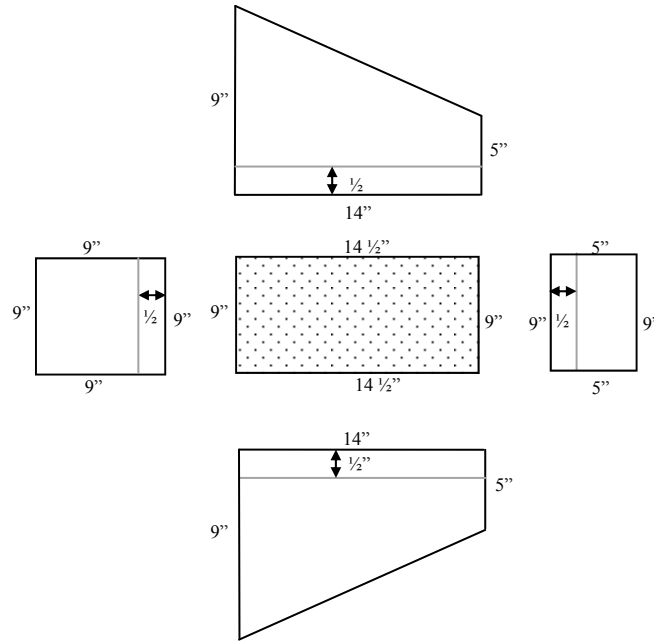
Fig. 3

Step 7. Last, screw it together using 1 screw at each corner for a total of 8 screws. If you are having a top on your nesting box a few more screws will be necessary. When screwing on the front, make sure to place it just above the groove so peg board can slide in and out.

Step 8. YOU'RE DONE!! Just remember not to paint or varnish the nesting box. Rabbits will chew on the box and paint and varnish would be harmful to the rabbit. Also, make sure the lumber you use has not been treated with anything.

Small to Medium Nesting Box

9"

5"

½

14"

9"   14 ½"   5"

9"   ½   9"   9"   9"   9"   9"   ½   9"

9"   14 ½"   5"

14"

½

5"

9"

Large Nesting Box

To make a nesting box for large rabbits follow the same procedures used for the small to medium sized rabbits, just use the measurements shown below.

12"

7"

½"

20"

12"   20"   7"

11"   ½"   11"   11"   11"   11"   ½"   11"

12"   20"   7"

20"

½"

7"

12"