

Possum bush tucker diet (pre-release)

Leaves:

Should be offered fresh every day, with an absolute minimum of 3 x a week prior to release.

Offer only bush tucker on these (3+) days to ensure they are eating it - especially if possum is not going to be soft-released.

- ✓ Eucalyptus spp especially stringybark (*E. tetradonta*) and woollybutt (*E. miniata*)
- ✓ Black wattle (*Acacia auriculiformis*), or other any wattle/acacia spp
- ✓ Ironwood (*Erthrophloem chlorstachys*)

Bush tucker flowers and fruit:

Seasonal, offer when available.

Not essential but exposure is good to ensure a variety of bush food is recognised, and reduces use of cage alternatives.

- ✓ Grevillea spp, esp orange silky oak (*G. pteridifolia*) flowers
- ✓ Turkey bush (*Calytrix exstipulata*) leaves and flowers
- ✓ Bridal tree (*Xanthostemon paradoxus*) flowers
- ✓ Eucalyptus spp especially stringybark (*E. tetradonta*) and woollybutt (*E. miniata*) flowers
- ✓ Milky plum (*Persoonia falcata*)
- ✓ Paperbark (*Melaleuca* spp) flowers
- ✓ Kapok bush (*Cochlospermum fraserii*) flowers
- ✓ Sand palm (*Livistona humilis*) fruit/seeds

Recommended alternative diet for cage possums

Food group	Proportion of diet	Frequency	Suggested food items	Quantity	Comments
Leafy greens	30-50%	Daily, unless bush tucker (leaves) provided	Sweet potato vine/leaves	Handful	Wild possums can eat only leaves: For obese possums increase greens component, and reduce other food groups. <i>Note – feeding too much of the cabbage (Brassica) family may be toxic</i>
			Lettuce (leafy, cos)		
			Salad greens		
			Broccoli/cauliflower leaves	2 leaves	
Vegetables	20-40%	Daily, unless bush tucker (fruit & flowers)	Carrot	1 cm slice	If you have any of these in your fridge or cupboard, use them. Don't need to peel fruit and veg - skins and cores are fine and it makes the
			Sweet potato		
			Corn-on-the-cob		
			Broccoli		

		provided	Pumpkin		possum work harder for food (ie enrichment). Use (recycle) the tops and tails of the vegetables you are going to eat.
			Capsicum including seeds, Zucchini/squash		
			Mushrooms		
			Frozen peas	1 teaspoon	
Fruit	20%	Daily, unless bush tucker (fruit & flowers) provided	Apple	1 cm wedge	Total quantity of fruit and veg should be equivalent to 1 apple (~100g), with as much variety offered as possible every day. This quantity will maintain an adult possum (1-1.2kg) in good condition, adjust amount for smaller animals but proportions should remain the same. For overweight possums, avoid high starch veg (sweet potato) and high sugar fruit (grapes).
			Pear		
			Kiwifruit		
			Tomatoes		
			Oranges, mandarins etc	1 segment	
			Grapes	3	
			Banana	1 cm slice	
			Carambola		
			Paw paw	1 x 5cm cube	
			Rockmelon		
			Honeydew		
Watermelon					
Protein etc	Adults 5%	2-3 x /week	Bird seed	$\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon	If offered too much of these foods caged adult possums will rapidly become obese. For already overweight possums offer $\frac{1}{2}$ quantity of various items 1/week. For sub-adult possums offer these quantities daily (ie 10% of diet) whilst still growing. <i>For juvenile possums milk will still be providing most of the protein requirements. Introduce the softer items initially and build up to include the harder items when weaned from milk.</i>
			Rolled oats		
	Sub-adult 10%	Daily	Pumpkin seeds		
			Rockmelon seeds		
	<i>Juvenile</i>	<i>2-3 x / week</i>	Dog biscuits	2	
			Cat biscuits	4	
			Nuts eg almonds, peanuts, cashews	2	
			Grasshoppers	1	
			Cockroaches	2	
			Crickets	4	
			Mealworms	6	
			Boiled egg	1/4	
			“Wombaroo” nectar mix (dilute to a watery syrup)	1 tablespoon	