

IN BRIEF

Quenda "Safe Houses"

by Robert Huston

THE old saying "necessity is the mother of invention" also holds true for *innovation*. Sylvia Garlick of Sawyer's Valley has discovered an innovative way of providing artificial shelter for young quendas living around her home. Sylvia feared that they were quite vulnerable to attack from cats, dogs and foxes, so, in an effort to provide them with places to escape, she located little safe havens around her house for them to retreat into.

Sylvia's quenda safe houses are simply tunnels made out of lengths of PVC piping which she places around her native garden. The diameter of the pipe can range from 80mm to 100mm, and can vary in length to about 2m or more. The length of the tunnel must be long enough so that the quendas are a good arm's length from prying predators. Sylvia suggests placing the tunnels on the surface near bushes and securing them firmly to the ground with rocks and logs so that they will not move about. She then covers the pipe with leaf mulch, leaving the openings nice and clear. The entrances to the tunnels may need to be checked now and again to keep them clear of debris.



A straight length of pipe is not the only design as "L" or "Y" shaped tunnels may also prove effective. In order to encourage the quendas to become familiar with the tunnels, food parcels may be placed in them. Sylvia has also considered moving the safe havens every few weeks, so that cats and other predators may not get the idea of setting up ambushes at the entrances. It is clear that this novel idea still has room for innovative thought.

The very successful fox baiting program implemented by CALM has led to increased numbers of quendas moving into household gardens in the outer metropolitan area. So, if we haven't got natural hollow logs we can recycle old drainpipes and so help wildlife to survive on our properties. Sylvia's creative action is an invitation for *Land for Wildlifers* to conceive other practical ideas to assist the return of wildlife to their *Land for Wildlife* area.

Ref: Encouraging Quendas - Wildlife Note No 5.

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