

## ANIMAL PEST CONTROL

### POSSUM CONTROL

#### Timms Kill Traps

##### **Introduction**

Timms kill traps are considered to be a humane method of possum control because death of the trapped possum is immediate. The trap features a reverse keyhole opening: when the possum takes the bait laid inside the trap it trips the striker bar and the neck of the animal is forced into the confined upper part of the opening, the arteries to the brain are compressed and death is quick.

The Timms kill trap is made of tough polyethylene plastic. It is very light (1.25kg), compact (measuring 260mm x 180mm x 165mm), and the light colour of the trap is an effective lure to the naturally curious possum. The possum goes straight to the keyhole opening because the bait scent is strongest at the point.

**Note:** With all traps or snares, the Animal Welfare Act 1999 requires that they are checked every 24 hours after setting, to avoid any unnecessary suffering or pain to any animal caught.

##### **Safety precautions**

To avoid any chance of endangering children or catching non target animals such as cats, follow these basic precautions:

- Keep fingers clear of the front of the trap at all times.
- Timms kill traps can be located in a tree or on a fence, out of reach of children.
- Raising the trap on bricks or a block of wood stops hedgehogs getting to the trap.
- Set the trap in the late afternoon/early evening.

- Release the set trap early in the morning.
- If concerned, ensure that the family cat is restrained indoors while the trap is set. Some breeds of cat and young cats may become inquisitive and enter a set trap.
- To satisfy curious cats when the new trap arrives, put the unset trap out for several nights with a mixture of curry powder and flour on the ground around it - this should discourage them
- Do not use any food types as bait which will attract cats, such as bread, jam and meat.

##### **Where to set the trap**

Locate traps in close vicinity to suitable dry nest sites such as in roofs and around houses and woolsheds, haysheds, hedges, flax, large trees and other suitable



*A Timms Kill Trap set in a tree*

vegetation. Alternatively, the trap can be set in and around areas where possums move to feed, such as on or near exotic and native tree species especially willows, poplars, pines and fruit trees; and around vegetable and flower gardens, particularly where roses are grown.

The trap can also be set near “ possum pads” (possum tracks) or play trees, where possums are known to regularly visit.

The trap can be free standing on the ground secured by wire pegs through the angled holes on either side or securely fixed to a flat piece of timber by nailing through the angled holes. It can also be tied to sites such as roofs, fence posts and trees. If not secured a possum could topple a trap, wind could blow it over or a scavenging dog could run off with the dead possum and the trap.

### **Baits**

The most effective baits for Timms kill traps are apples, oranges and kiwifruit. The bait should be firm and fresh, and should be changed every two days. If possums are still evident but are not taking the bait, it would be wise to change the bait type.

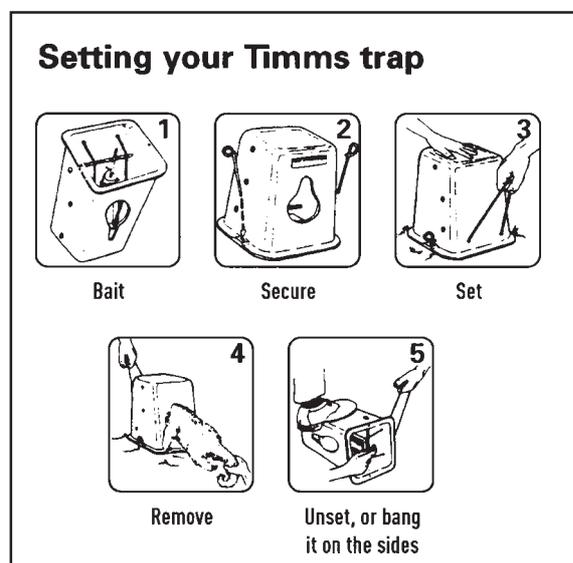
A possum which is feeding on an apple tree will not be very interested in apple bait. A small amount of lure, such as essences, cinnamon or aniseed, placed on the bait works well or a mix of cinnamon, icing sugar and flour sprinkled around the trap and coating the fruit acts as an additional lure.

If fruit baits only are used, it is extremely unlikely that other animals, such as cats, will be caught.

### **Bait Size**

If the bait is too small or too large, the possum will not be able to set off the trigger mechanism. An ideal size is about 25mm in diameter and 12mm thick, placed 12mm in front of the trigger.

### **To bait and set a Timms Kill Trap.**



1. Turn it upside down and push the bait on to the trigger wire as far as the stop or bend. The sensitivity of the trigger action can be adjusted by bending the bait rod where it contacts the cross rod - approximately 50mm from the tip. Bend the bait rod towards the front of the trap to make the release action more sensitive.
2. Secure the trap in position.
3. Apply pressure by pushing with one hand on the top of the trap and with the other hand pull the nylon cord until the striker bar comes down into the set position. Keep fingers clear of the front opening at all times.
4. Place two or three small pieces of bait on the ground in front of the trap.

### **Releasing the set trap**

1. To release the set trap, always keep tension on the nylon cord.
2. Release the striker bar and, holding the trap with the other hand, slowly let off the tension until the striker bar comes against the stop.

Another method is to hit the trap hard on its sides which will set the trap off.

### **Availability**

See the Environment Topic “*Subsidised Pest Control Products*” for information on eligibility and availability of subsidised traps.

Timms kill traps can also be borrowed from Hawke’s Bay Regional Council, 102 Vautier St, Napier for short term loan on payment of a \$35 deposit.

### **Acknowledgements**

Information and photos provided by Auckland Regional Council.

### **For further information**

For further information on animal pests or the Regional Pest Management Strategy, please contact the Biosecurity Animal Pest Officers at the Hawke’s Bay Regional Council for advice.

|  |              |
|--|--------------|
| Wairoa   | 06 838 8527  |
| Napier   | 06 835 9200  |
| Waipukurau   | 6 858 8636   |
| TOLL FREE  | 0800 108 838 |
| <a href="http://www.hbrc.govt.nz">www.hbrc.govt.nz</a> |              |