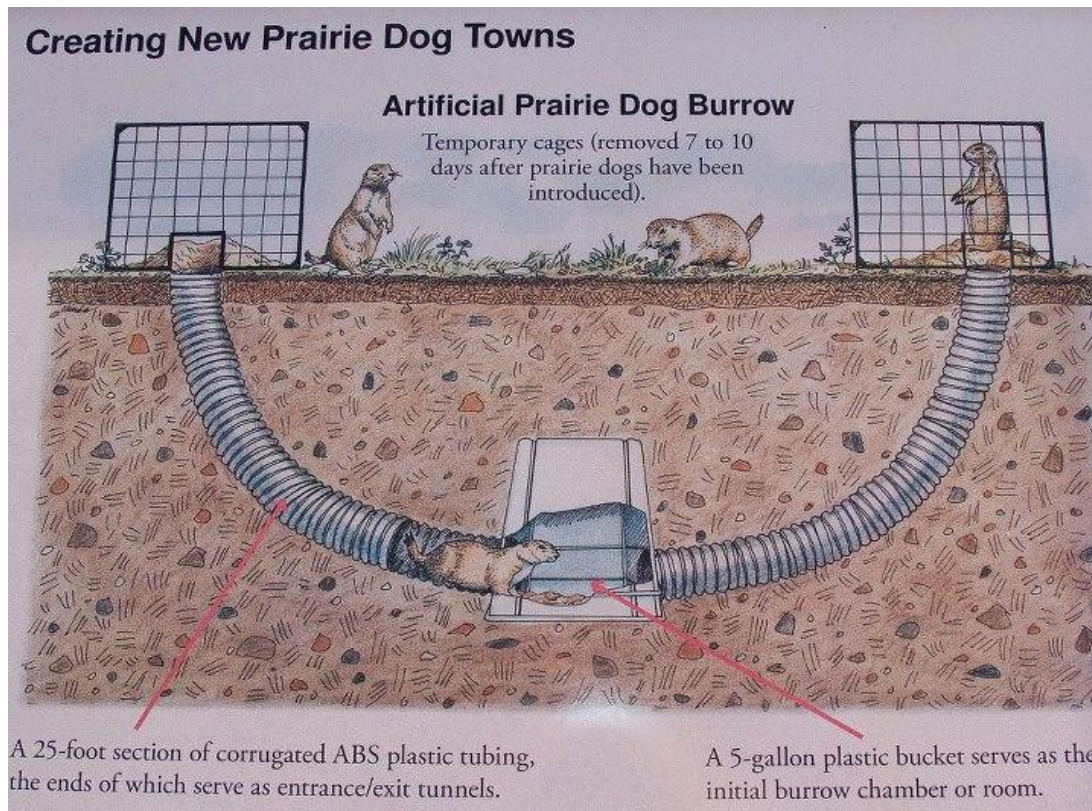




Architecture of an Artificial Burrow



The picture above illustrates one example of an artificial burrow. PDP uses a slightly different design. We use a 25-gallon, plastic nursery pot for what we call the nesting box (described in the illustration as the “initial burrow chamber or room”). We attach a ten-foot long tube to the side of the upside-down nursery pot for an entrance/exit tunnel, as shown. Our second tube, unlike the one in the picture, we install through the top of the nursery pot, extending down into it so that the end of the tube sits a few inches above the base. We dig a hole in the ground roughly four feet deep, lay a piece of hardware cloth in the bottom, and then set on that the upside-down nursery pot with attached tubes. The hardware cloth prevents the prairie dogs from digging out of the nesting box, while the tubes allow them to climb to the surface. When we release the prairie dogs, we usually send them down the vertical tube; gravity encourages them to proceed to the bottom rather than stopping in the tube and causing a traffic-jam.

After inserting the prairie dogs into the artificial burrows, we place a containment cage (we call them cage caps) over each egress tube. We continue to feed and monitor the prairie dogs for up to five days. This gives them a chance to acclimate to their new surroundings. Then we remove the cage caps and allow them to “escape” from the artificial burrows. Able to come and go as they please, they continue to use the man-made burrows as a refuge from predators and for temporary shelter until they can construct their own burrows.