Controlling Wildlife in the Home Garden

Yankton Extension Office
Cynthia Bergman

Who do you call?

- The state wildlife officer closest to you.
- South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks Dept. (605) 773-3381
- Yankton area call (605) 668-2985 ext. 0
- Your county animal control office.

Correctly identify the species causing the problem.
Quick guide to woody plant damage

- Deer strip the bark and leave no teeth marks; twigs and stems show a rough, shredded surface.
- Rabbits leave a neat, sharp, 45° angled cut
- Voles leave narrow teeth marks when feeding on branches.

Controlling Wildlife

Alter the habitat to make the area less attractive to the pest.

Snakes

- Vegetation should be kept short; reduce mulch layers around shrubs.
- 3" layer of pea-size gravel around the foundation will help plug small holes.
- Snakes like to hide under objects; raise up 10".
- Eliminate cool, damp areas where snakes hide. Remove brush and rock piles, keep shrubbery away from foundations, and cut tall grass.

Snakes

- Seal foundations to keep out of basements.
- Close cracks and crevices in buildings and around pipes and utility connections with ¼" mesh hardware cloth, mortar, caulk, or sheet metal.
- All doors and windows should have tightly fitting screens.
Snakes
- Move with long handled garden rake.
- Can be coaxed to one area by placing wads of damp cloth covered with dry ones at different places along a wall.
  - Piles must be large enough to allow a snake to crawl under
  - Check piles daily

Squirrels

Squirrel
- Prune branches 6' up off ground and from the roof.
- Encircle tree with a 2' wide collar of metal 6' off the ground.
  - Attach metal with springs to allow for tree growth.

Squirrel
- Prevent squirrels from traveling on wires by installing 2' sections of lightweight 2" diameter plastic pipe.
  - Slip the pipe lengthwise, spread it open, and place it over the wire.
  - The pipe will rotate on the wire and cause traveling squirrels to tumble.

Squirrel
- Cage your bulbs.
- Place a wire mesh over the entire flower bed or vegetable patch once you've finished planting.
- Use chicken wire or hardware cloth.

Controlling Wildlife

Use the correct control measures at the right location at the right time.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repellents</th>
<th>Exclusion</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Contact repellents are applied directly to plants, causing them to taste bad.</td>
<td>• Prevent wildlife from gaining access to the plant with fencing, row covers, plant tubes, tree wraps, etc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Area repellents are placed in a problem area and repel by their foul odor.</td>
<td>• For individual plants a fence of woven wire (chicken wire under 1&quot; mesh) is the best all-around protection for prevention.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Repellents are generally more effective on less preferred plants.</td>
<td>• Needs to be well staked with the bottom tight to the ground.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Removal</th>
<th>Rabbit</th>
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<td>• Shooting</td>
<td>• Love flowers and bulbs. Will eat them to the ground.</td>
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</table>
| • Live trapping and relocation  
  - the creature you release somewhere else will bother someone else.  
  - NEVER leave an animal to starve to death in a trap because you don’t know what to do with the skunk you just caught. | • Repellents often not effective. |
|                    | • Fence the plants you want to keep. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rabbits and shrubs</th>
<th>deer in the home garden</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Rabbits usually chew bark off cleanly above the snow line.</td>
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<td>• Shrub damage is usually entire twigs or stem cut cleanly at a 45° angle</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Fence or wrap woody plants 3’ ABOVE the snow line.</td>
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Deer Plant Selection

- A hungry deer will eat anything; no plant is deer "proof".
- Plant lists of less susceptible (less likely to be eaten) plants available.
- Place plants near the home, in a fenced area, or inside a protective ring of less-preferred species.

Deer Repellent Home Remedies

- The greatest amount of protection is using several different items and rotating use.
- Hang items (two handfuls) in small bags of fine mesh.
- Replace monthly, or when deer start to approach the plant again.
- Suggestions include human hair, bar soap, feathermeal, bloodmeal, bone meal, fishmeal, creosote, mothballs, and animal waste.

Deer Repellent - commercial

- Plantskydd www.plantskydd.com or (800) 252-6051.
- Organic and acts as a mild fertilizer; blood hemoglobin mixed with vegetable oil.
- Can last up to six months in winter and three months during the summer.
- Most effective when applied before the deer start eating the plants.

Standard Deer Fences

- Deer fencing is expensive, but the only sure way to control deer damage.
- Deer normally will attempt to go under or through a fence rather than jump over it.
- The conventional deer-proof fence is 8' high and made of woven wire.
- Small animals also stopped.

Electric Deer Fences

- Use screen door springs at fence corners will prevent deer from breaking the wire.
- Triple-galvanized, high-tensile, 13.5-gauge wire carrying a current of 35 milliamps and 3,000 to 4,500 volts.
- Single wire electric fence, 30'-50' off the ground.
  - two wire electric fence at 15' and 30'
  - three wires place at 10', 20' and 30'

Baiting Deer Fences

- When using electric fence, help the deer to 'notice' the wire with cloth strips, reflective tape, or foil.
- Otherwise, the deer may not even see the fence and go right through it.
- Deer are attracted by the peanut butter, and you can encourage them to make nose-to-fence contact.
Turf Diggers

- Distinguish by differences in shape and location of the burrow exit.
- Common for voles to use mole tunnels.
- **Mole hills**: volcano shape; exit vertical; symmetrical cone; exit point in the center of the cone.
- **Pocket gopher**: fanlike mound; exit at angle at the focus of the fan; exit is a visible plug of dirt.

Pocket Gophers

- Trap when actively working near the surface; in the spring and fall.
- Attempting to control the pocket gopher at other times may waste lime, money, and labor.
- Zinc phosphide (2%) treated grains.
- Bait must be placed in their tunnel systems.

Moles

- Solitary creatures, live underground, rarely surface.
- Eat grubs and earthworms; do not consume grain, so toxic grain baits are seldom effective.
- Trapping is the most successful and practical method.

Voles (meadow mice, field mice)

- Stocky bodies, short legs & tails, small eyes, ears partially hidden; live in colonies.
- Chew bark off woody plants cleanly under the snow line.
- Excellent swimmers.

Voles (meadow mice, field mice)

- Eat roots and grains, so baits work.
- Put mouse traps on the ground, along their runs, baited with peanut butter & oatmeal.
- Provide habitat for predators if you live outside of town. Voles are low in the food chain and are prey for many predators.

Contact Information

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