



CONTROLLING GARDEN PESTS

Many gardeners are plagued by problems with aphids, caterpillars and mildew; however, there are bigger and more destructive pests in some gardens. Generally they have four legs and within a day or overnight a garden plant can disappear.

Raccoons have become very comfortable around people and love to find an easy meal. Keep all garbage and pet food cleaned up around the yard so as not to encourage them into your property. They will eat both plant and animal material.

These creatures are easy to catch in a live trap using baits of meat scraps, fish, moist dog food, honey-soaked bread, fruit, marshmallows or peanut butter.

Normal fencing won't keep these creatures out of your garden; they will find a way to go over, under or through it. A floppy fence is a good deterrent. Attach 36" wide chicken wire to stakes (keeping the stakes on the inside of the fence) and leave the top foot of the fencing free. When the raccoon climbs the fence, the top will bend and the creature will lose its balance. A similar deterrent can be made using heavy 6 mil plastic tightly stapled to stakes and leaving 3" to 6" lying on the ground.

Sprinkling black pepper on ripening fruit is said to repel raccoons. Cayenne pepper sprinkled on the ground is a deterrent. Plant squash around your garden, raccoons hate squash. Raccoons like to feed in the dark, so set up lights on a timer. To keep raccoons out of the pond, float a large glass ball in it.

Rabbits love to nibble. A chicken wire fencing around the garden can help. Bury at least 12" of the wire deeply into the ground and at least 24" above the ground.

Dust your plants with black pepper, cayenne pepper, talcum powder, or sprinkle blood meal around the garden.

Rabbits hate onions, squash and cucumbers so plant some of these among your garden.

Groundhogs are vegetarian with a big appetite. One day the garden looks fine and overnight it can be devastated. Young plants may be pulled out of the ground and partly eaten, and older plants will be partly eaten.

Groundhogs emerge from their dens in March and may feed on the garden until fall. These are very brazen animals and difficult to deter from the garden. If they are a problem the best method of control is a live trap.

ROOTS & SHOOTS



Mice love to nibble on garden plants, they will eat the lower bark on trees and eat underground roots. The first defense is to keep the garden clean. Don't leave any unwanted fruit or vegetables lying in the garden, clean up any plant seeds lying in the garden. Old garden waste or leaves lying around provides a nice sheltered home for the mice. If you mulch your garden in the fall with straw or leaves, do not put it down until the garden freezes.

A ground barrier of gravel around the garden at least 6" deep and 12" wide will deter the mice from entering the garden.

The mousetrap is still the best way for control. Set out a large number of traps rather than just one. Bait the traps with peanut butter or bacon for a couple of nights without setting them. The mice will become comfortable feeding from the trap. Then finally set them.

Moles don't eat plants; they eat grubs, beetles and earthworms. Their tunneling through the soil can damage the root systems of many plants. Generally these are solitary animals, and so there is probably only one or two in your yard causing all the damage.

Moles can be trapped but it is difficult and you have to be persistent. Lightly step on the raised mounds of the tunnel. Next day check which tunnels have reappeared, and set your trap in that area.

Juicy Fruit gum is said to be a good control. Moles are attracted to the flavor of gum, however they can not digest it. You must wear gloves so there is no human scent on the gum. Unwrap the stick and roll it lengthwise. With a stick punch a hole in the tunnel and insert the gum stick. Spread them out 6" apart along the runway.

Vibrations in the soil can help deter moles. Put a child's pinwheel or an empty glass soda bottle with the open end up. When the wind blows vibrations are formed.