

Canada Geese

Waterfowl is a group containing the Geese, Swans & Ducks. There are 11 races of Canada Geese. Mating happens mid – June. The nest is incubated 25 to 30 days. Up to 12 eggs have been laid in a single clutch. The young hatch out down covered with eyes open. The chicks are precocial – they are not fed by the parents, they are mobile, and are not without feathers. At about 9 weeks of age they begin to fly. In June or July, molting takes place. The adult birds shed their feathers and re-grow all the primary wing feathers.

Common complaints:

1) *Geese have nested near a human dwelling and are attacking.* Erect snow fencing barrier between the nest and the human trafficked space.

2) *Babies are in the pool and can not get out.* Take care not to stress the babies to the point of exhaustion or drowning. a) raise the level equal to the rim of the pool. b) place a ramp to provide a diagonal/slanted exit point. The angle should be 45 degrees or less c) if the ramp is not used, toss in a few floating objects (wood plank, Styrofoam lid, float cushion) so the babies may get out of the water until you can capture them for example slowly pulling the object to you or netting the young with the pool skimmer. Keep the babies together in a box and locate the mother. Often she is watching from a distance. Place the box away from the pool. Make sure she returns and is reunited with her young. Now that they are out – beach balls and other floating toys are deterrents. Fencing for ponds and gardens: www.fishock.com, petsafe-warehouse.com, & Zareba Systems.

3) *They are pooping all over my deck and my property.* The birds have found your property appealing because they have not been bothered. They will not remain if there are alternative sites available. They consume young plant shoots and grass less than 6 inches in length. Geese prefer an open line of sight, this allows them to feel safe as they can see predators approaching from all sides. Take advantage of this behavior. Let the grass naturalize to 6 inches tall. Leave tall grass overwinter. Reduce fertilizer use and supplemental watering to limit young shoot growth. Plant natural plants such as cattails and bulrush to create a visual barrier along the shoreline. Plant shrubs and long grasses to create 30 inch high/ 20 foot wide ‘walls’. Fencing the porch will only stop the flightless young from entering. This is also true for pond areas. A retractable two strand fence can be purchased but make sure it cannot be walked under. Wires may be erected overhead – grid panels should be 25 feet apart (www.birdbarrier.com, birdbgone.com, birdbusters.com). Using scare devices works so long as you keep them fresh – Move the location, combine techniques, change the days of each item, etc. Common items: home-made flags, eyespot balloons, mylar tape, floating plastic alligator or snake figures, automated coyote figures, motion activated sprinklers(www.birdbgone.com, bird-x.com, scatmat.com, nixilite.com, petsafe-warehouse.com), noise makers, strobe lights (www.bird-x.com, squirrelvector.com, petsafe-warehouse.com). Night harassment is not condoned. Dogs are useful in many instances, however be aware if the dog harms the bird federal law protects the bird. Chemical repellents may be used when all else fails. Anthraquinone and Methyl Anthranilate are registered in the US for dispersing the birds. Remember the Migratory Bird Act protects the species. Nests shall not be disturbed.

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology is an excellent resource. <http://birds.cornell.edu>
Helpful information also found at Geese Peace, www.geesepeace.org.

Fencing available through: Aerators Aquatics 4 Lakes N Ponds www.virginialakemanagement.com, Green Touch www.greentouchirrigation.com, and Lake Restoration Inc. www.lakerestoration.com

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