

## Rodents

Not all small furry burrowing animals are rodents. The Order Rodentia includes prairie dogs, porcupine, marmots, squirrels, mice, rats, tree squirrels, pine squirrels, pocket gophers, beaver, chipmunks, mountain beaver aka aplodontia, muskrats, woodchuck, gophers or ground squirrels, lemmings, moles, voles, shrews. It is necessary to explain how the animals are classified so you can understand better. Science has a way of explaining itself in long drawn out ways. Take the Porcupine, its full 'name' would be Animalia, Chordata, Mammalia, Rodentia, Erithizontidae, Erethizon dorsatum. It can additionally be one as 1 of 7 known subspecies, this name would be placed behind dorsatum. For sake of sanity I have left out the names of the subphylum, subclass, suborder, and subfamily. In simple terms the full name explains that this animal belongs to the Erithizontidae family, the Rodent order, the Mammal class, the Vertebrate Phylum, and the Animal kingdom. When animals are in the same group it does not mean they are all the same. Prairie dogs eat grasses, Shrews diet is insects, the Beaver habitats where water is abundant, the squirrel lives mostly in trees, Moles live in burrows almost exclusively. *In a nutshell, a vole is not a shrew is not a mouse is not a gopher is not a squirrel is not a groundhog.* Each has their own habitat and specialized diet.

Moles – primary diet is earthworms, snails, centipedes, spiders, insects, grubs (the larval form of beetles (they kill the grass not the mole)). They have also been known to consume vegetation and the occasional baby mouse. Overwatering lawns keep the 'bugs' close to the surface, which makes the mole tunnels close to the surface which disturbs the root system of the lawn and makes dirt mounds. Bury wire mesh (1/4 inch hardware cloth) under the flower bed or garden plot. Castor bean or castor oil is a recommended repellent. Local garden centers can advise you about the effectiveness. Some people use pinwheels or other vibration sending devices. Battery and solar powered are available.

Mice – omnivores, eat almost anything. They do not need water if the food consumed has some moisture. Many diseases (salmonellosis, hantavirus, etc.) are possible to be transmitted to humans. The average mouse rarely wanders 50 feet from the home range. They can enter into a space less than 1/2 inch wide. One simple method to confirm if mice are present, simply sprinkle talcum powder along a wall or threshold. There are many exclusion techniques. One homemade humane mouse trap is take a smooth sided tall, make a wood ramp leading from the ground up to the lid of the bin. Place a bit of peanut butter on bread or cheese at the top of the ramp and more on the bottom of the bin. In the morning, take the can out and release the mice (please use tolerance when during the cold weather). Identify and close up the entry points with mesh, steel wool etc. Remove food items.

Woodchucks = true hibernators. They accumulate fat throughout the year and remain asleep all winter. This state of torpor means that their body temperature, metabolism, heart rate and respiration all slow. Hummingbirds have been known to go into torpor during cold evenings or limited food.

Tree Squirrels – are responsible for 'planting' countless trees, they just don't know it ☺.

The young are weaned at 8 to 12 weeks of age. Tree cavities and leaf nests are their shelter. They do not hibernate. They can harbor a variety of pathogens but it is rarely documented as transmitting. Squirrel to human rabies contraction has not been documented. To protect bulbs, place wire mesh over the ground. The bulbs will not be dug up. If one is trying to get into your home, simple aversion techniques work well: Capsaicin applied to the surface they are chewing on / water spray from a spray bottle while in the act of chewing... Keep the food items (bird seed & pet food in secure metal containers.

www.gardeners.com has Bulb cages/gopher baskets. Wire Mesh, Caulking, Foam sealants etc. = Websearch for Stuf-fit (a copper base mesh), Allen Special Products, or www.nixilite.com.

Additional removal methods are detailed on the Master List for Removal. We do not recommend many of the rodent removal products as they are inhumane or dangerous poisons.

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