



Identifying which critter is causing the damage helps homeowners develop the most effective solutions to issues involving wildlife.

## Summer pests

### How burrowing wildlife can damage your lawn and garden

**S**oft, spongy lawns may be indicative of various problems underfoot that occur relatively sight unseen. Barring a septic system backup or considerable flooding, insects or animals may be to blame.

In many areas, burrowing wildlife can wreak havoc on landscapes. Identifying which critter is causing the damage helps homeowners develop the most effective solutions to issues involving wildlife.

#### MOLES

Moles will spend much of their lives underground, rarely coming up to the surface. They spend their days digging long tunnels from their dens in search of grubs, earthworms and tuber plants all year long. Moles can be gray, black, brown, or gold and will be between six and eight inches in length. Their wide front feet are designed for excavating, and moles have very small eyes and angular snouts.

Many times moles are to blame for zig-zagging lines across a yard. Channels are typically dug between five to eight inches below the surface of the soil, according to the home and garden resource site Hunker. The tunnels are only about 1.5 inches in diameter and one may see small molehills of excavated soil in areas around the yard. Mole tunnels can be followed through the yard thanks to the appearance of elevated ridges on the surface of the soil.

#### VOLES

Even though their name is similar, voles look nothing like moles. They are also known by the name meadow mice and look more like mice than they do moles or gophers. Voles are small as well and primarily feed on foliage and plant roots. It can take a trained eye to differentiate between holes created by moles and voles, but foliage eaten around an entry or exit hole suggests

## How to banish mosquitoes from your yard



**T**ime spent in the backyard on spring and summer afternoons and evenings contributes heavily to the popularity of these times of year. Many homeowners go to great lengths to make their outdoor living spaces as luxurious as possible, only to be bothered by uninvited and bothersome guests: mosquitoes.

Mosquitoes are not just pesky nuisances, but they're also harmful. According to the American Mosquito Control Association, more than one million people across the globe die from mosquito-borne diseases every year. Such diseases include malaria, dengue, yellow fever, West Nile virus, and the Zika virus.

The AMCA notes that many of the diseases transmitted by mosquitoes can be linked

to travel to endemic areas. But mosquitoes in North America can still be harmful, and bites may result in severe skin irritation through an allergic reaction to mosquito saliva.

Homeowners can employ several measures to prevent mosquitoes from invading their backyards this spring and summer.

- **Remove standing water.** Stagnant water is an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes, so homeowners must be diligent in their efforts to remove standing water around their properties. Mosquitoes can breed in bird baths, pets' water bowls and empty plant pots that collect rain water. Routinely tipping these items and refilling them with fresh water can prevent mosquito infestations, protecting both humans and pets alike.

- **Inspect property for hidden pockets of water.** While bird baths, pet bowls and kiddie pools are easy to find, homeowners may be unknowingly hosting mosquito breeding grounds elsewhere on their properties. For example, tarps used to cover pools, automobiles or grills that are not tightly secured can fold up, creating pockets where rain water can collect and give mosquitoes somewhere to breed. Mosquitoes also may use gutters to breed, so homeowners should routinely inspect and clean their gutters during spring and summer.

- **Keep a well-manicured lawn.** Well-manicured lawns are less likely to be breeding grounds for mosquitoes. Because water plays such a crucial role in the mosquito breeding process, it's necessary that all potential water

sources in a yard be removed. Fallen leaves that are not removed and pockets of soil beneath trees and plants can collect rain water or water from lawn sprinklers, which can be just enough for mosquitoes to breed.

- **Use fans.** Consumer Reports tested the efficacy of oscillating pedestal fans to keep mosquitoes from invading decks and patios and found that such fans cut mosquito landings by 45 to 65 percent for those sitting closest to the fans. When hosting backyard barbecues, homeowners can set up several such fans on their decks and patios to keep mosquitoes at bay.

Mosquitoes are unwelcome guests come spring and summer. But homeowners can take steps to increase the likelihood that their properties stay mosquito-free.

the presence of voles. Unlike moles, voles don't create soil mounds on the surfaces of landscapes, which can make recognizing infestations more difficult.

#### GROUNDHOGS, GOPHERS, PRAIRIE DOGS

Groundhogs, gophers and prairie dogs also are burrowing rodents. These rodents are larger than moles and voles. Groundhogs, also known as woodchucks, are the largest of the group, followed by prairie dogs and gophers.

Prairie dogs tend to be more social than groundhogs and gophers and may be seen congregating together. Gophers tend to stay below ground and will pull food into their burrows, says the

Florida-based A Wildlife Whisperer. Groundhogs often stretch their subterranean tunnels to dens, which they may like to set up under backyard sheds or other protected areas. Groundhogs' size and desire to forage and eat their fill above-ground often make them easy to spot.

Once the animal doing the burrowing has been identified, homeowners can begin

removing food sources and altering conditions to make their yards less critter-friendly. In the instance of moles, using a grub-killer can diminish their numbers. Wire mesh fences buried underground can deter digging into garden beds. Homeowners who are vigilant about disrupting burrows and tunnels may encourage rodents to relocate.

If burrowing wildlife prove problematic, homeowners can

work with professional exterminators to assess the situation.



### SAYBROOK FEED & GARDEN

- Garden Seeds
- Onion Sets
- Vegetable Plants
- Flowers

8023 South Depot Road  
Saybrook | Ashtabula  
440-969-1312

Sat 8:30-3 • Mon-Fri 8:30-5:30 • Sun 10-3



**LOCALLY GROWN**  
**MIDDLE RIDGE**  
*gardens*  
**FAMILY OWNED**

**GIFT CERTIFICATES AVAILABLE**

• • • •

6559 Middle Ridge Rd.  
Madison, OH 44057  
**440-428-3857**

• • • •

1/4 mile west of  
Route 528 on  
Middle Ridge Rd.  
Look for the  
Big Blue Barn and  
Greenhouse

**JUNE HOURS**  
Mon.-Sat. 8-8  
Sun. 8-6

**IT'S TIME FOR VEGETABLES**

Tomatoes, Peppers, Cabbage and so many more!

**100's of Perennials**  
**100's of VEGETABLES**  
**1000's of HANGING BASKETS**

**Customer Appreciation Days**  
**June 2nd & 3rd!**

www.middleridgegardens.com

