

Mole Advice Sheet

What can you do to deter them?

Moles are woodland animals by choice but, as trees have been cleared for agriculture and development, they have adapted to a new environment – one that can sometimes bring them into conflict with people.

Moles are rarely seen but their molehills give them away. These earth mounds, which are formed as moles dig their way through their underground tunnels searching for worms, can upset those who want aesthetically perfect lawns and golf courses. Pest controllers will fumigate tunnels with poisonous gas or use scissor traps or poisoned bait to trap these little animals – all methods that cause terrible suffering.

There is no need to call in pest controllers if a couple of molehills appear in your garden. Many molehills are at the end of a blind tunnel and the mole may never visit that area again. Besides, when a mole has finished digging his territory, the tunnelling will stop, and no further molehills will be produced. Changes in weather can also affect moles and their digging behaviour through soil quality and availability of their food, so sometimes just waiting a short while will see the problem disappear.

While Animal Aid urges tolerance of all wild animals, we also advise on some practical steps you can take to deter moles.

Gardens

Moles have adapted well to gardens. Their diet of earthworms makes gardens a welcoming environment for them. Since they eat slugs as well, and produce beautifully fine soil that is perfect for potting plants, many gardeners welcome their presence. However, it is their tunnelling that can damage plant roots and throw up aesthetically displeasing mounds of soil that can cause some upset.

What you can do

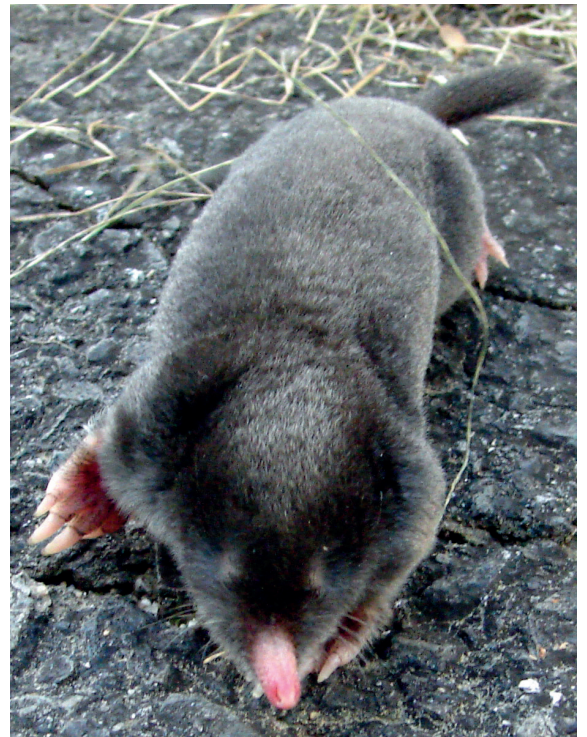
Simply remove the lovely soil that forms the molehill, use it for your potted plants, and flatten the area with a roller. Eventually, no more hills will be produced!

For those who can't wait, there are other options. Gardeners may be interested in two plants that can help deter moles. Caper Spurge – also known as Paper Spurge – is an attractive biennial that is said to exude a scent that moles dislike. Another plant that may encourage moles to move on is the castor bean plant. Since commercial mole repellents are made from castor oil, it's clear why this plant has a reputation for deterring moles organically. Both plants are poisonous, though, and should not be grown around small children or companion animals.

There are also chemical mole repellents on the market. These are inexpensive, non-toxic powders or granules that can be sprinkled directly onto the molehill. They are available online or from hardware stores.

Sports Pitches

Molehills on sports pitches can cause problems. Balls won't roll over them easily and players may be slowed by them or even twist an ankle if very unlucky. It's clear that a good pitch should be molehill-free.



'Moles mainly dig their burrows when the soil is damp and most easily worked. They spend far less time digging during the summer. So you can remove the molehills as they appear, or leave them during the winter and clear up in the spring. Thereafter, keeping the grass clear of molehills during the summer is very little work.' – *Mammal Society*

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What you can do

Groundsmen and women check sports pitches ahead of matches anyway to ensure that there is no litter or dog waste on the grass, and so it is simple just to take a shovel and flatten any molehills.

There are also deterrence devices that work well and can be employed. Sonic mole repellers can be found in some hardware stores or can be bought online. They are cheap, effective and easy to use. These are spikes that can simply be pushed into the ground where they emit deep frequency vibrations through the soil that moles don't like. The distance they reach depends on the soil type but one good quality deterrent device should be enough to cover an average sports pitch

SUMMARY

- Simply remove the soil and use it as potting compost
- Plant mole-detering plants in your garden
- Use non-toxic granules should recurring molehills cause you upset
- Buy a sonic deterrence device to encourage moles to move on
- Practice tolerance for these beautiful wild creatures
- Remember that the digging will end once the mole has finished creating his territory



'Come on, let's not get too worked up. That would be making a mountain out of a ... well, you know what I mean. The destruction won't go on forever because, once a mole has finished building its underground territory, it will stop digging. Hence, no more molehills. Then you can enjoy a more harmonious relationship with one of the UK's cutest little noses.' – Bill Oddie



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