

Cohabiting with wild animals

Tips and advice from the Green Line

Trapping animals is prohibited

In accordance with section 39 of the Wildlife Conservation and Development Act (C-61.1): *“No person may set traps unless they hold a licence issued for that purpose.”*

Trapping without a licence is punishable by fines. Further information at : legisquebec.gouv.qc.ca

Feeding animals is prohibited

In accordance with section 30 of the Wildlife Conservation and Enhancement Act (C-61.1): *“No person shall feed or attempt to feed an animal or a category of animals, except under the conditions laid down by regulation of the Minister.”*

Raccoons

Raccoons are intelligent and curious mammals that many people find adorable, but in urban areas they can sometimes cause a nuisance. Although they may appear bold, raccoons are actually timid animals. When confronted by a human, they tend to freeze and watch, rather than attack. If the raccoons in your neighbourhood seem particularly bold, it may be that a neighbour is feeding them — intentionally or not — by leaving pet food, rubbish or compost within their reach.

According to the Toronto Wildlife Centre, any raccoon spotted under a patio or in a shed between January and September should be assumed to be a female with her young. Raccoon mothers are very protective and caring. Forcibly removing them can separate them from their babies and lead to the young being abandoned. Fortunately, they are excellent mothers and will move their young themselves if they feel threatened. To encourage them to leave, you can use light, smells, noise, water or the presence of other animals.



Preventative measures:

Light

Raccoons are nocturnal and can be disturbed by light, which may disrupt their natural behaviour. You can install motion-activated lights or shine a spotlight on their shelter to encourage them to leave the area. This may make the area less attractive to them.

Dog hair

The presence of a dog (or even just dog hair around your property) can deter them, as they may perceive dogs as a threat.

Noises

Loud or unexpected noises can frighten them:

- Bang on some pans, clap your hands or speak loudly near their hiding place.
- Leave a radio playing a talk programme rather than music, as human voices are likely to disturb them more.

Odours

Raccoons can be put off by certain strong smells. Here is a list of smells that might keep them away:

- Peppermint oil or ammonia: soak some cotton balls in the liquid and place them near the shelter
- Garlic or onion: crush the bulbs and place them near vegetable patches or bin bins
- Vinegar: spray a mixture of vinegar and water around your property or on the bin bins
- Cayenne pepper: dilute in water and spray the problem area (not safe; may cause irritation)

Ready-to-use products sold in shops

- Scram Repellent – Coyote urine
- Black pepper oil, piperine and capsaicin



Groundhogs



Preventative measures:

Eliminating food sources

Groundhogs are herbivores and are attracted to vegetable gardens, fruit trees and clover.

Repellents

Repellents must be reapplied regularly, especially after rain. Don't forget to vary the scents to achieve better results, as groundhogs eventually get used to them:

- Cider vinegar: mix 50 per cent water and 50 per cent cider vinegar in a spray bottle. Spray near the entrances to the burrow or around the garden.
- Irish Spring soap: Grate the soap and scatter it in areas where they are active. The strong smell discourages groundhogs from digging.
- Dog hair: Scatter it in the garden or near the burrow to signal the potential presence of a predator.

Other methods

Blocking the burrow

- Do not block a burrow whilst the young are present, between April and July.
- Wait until the marmot has left the burrow, then fill in the hole and block it off with wire mesh or a slab.

Garden fence

- Install a metal mesh fence around the vegetable patch (L-shaped, at least 90 cm high and buried 30 cm underground, with the top folded outwards). This will discourage groundhogs from digging and climbing.

Trim the vegetation around the structures

- Clear back the vegetation around sheds, patios and foundations to minimise potential hiding places.

Motion-activated sprinklers

- Scare away ground squirrels without harming them (a method considered effective).

Ultrasonic repellents

- Emit high-frequency sounds that may affect the behaviour or hearing of pets (not recommended if cats or dogs are present).

Capsaicin-based sprays

- Contain hot chilli extract which may irritate the skin or eyes of children or animals.

Garlic and cayenne pepper mixture

- A homemade repellent made from crushed garlic, cayenne pepper and water. May irritate animals' paws, eyes or stomachs.

Ready-to-use products sold in shops

- Scram Repellent – Coyote urine
- Black pepper oil, piperine and capsaicin
- Critter Rider repellent granules



Squirrels



Preventative measures:

Remove bird feeders

Bird feeders are a major attraction for squirrels. It is best to remove them completely.

Avoid leaving food outside

Take out organic waste on the morning of collection

Deterrents

Certain smells repel squirrels and are safe for children and pets. Please note that these repellents must be reapplied regularly, especially after rain.

Don't forget to vary the smells when their effectiveness starts to wane.

Cider vinegar

- Mix equal parts water and cider vinegar in a spray bottle, then apply to the affected areas.

Peppermint and lavender essential oils

- Soak cotton balls in essential oil and place them in areas frequented by squirrels. Replace them regularly. The scent may deter them.

Irish Spring soap

- Grate bars of Irish Spring soap and scatter the shavings around gardens or entry points.

Dog or cat hair

- Scatter the hair collected whilst brushing your dog or cat across the lawn and in the garden. Squirrels detect the scent of a predator and will avoid the area.
Bonus: a natural, chemical-free repellent.



Granulated fertiliser made from chicken manure

- Apply to vegetable patches, flowerbeds and lawns.

Other methods

Seal entry points

- Inspect openings, roofs and walls and ensure there are no animals present.
- Seal them using metal sheets or wire mesh to prevent nesting.

Prune tree branches

- Squirrels use branches as walkways to reach roofs. Prune them so that they are at least 2.5 to 3 metres (8 to 10 feet) away from the house.

Motion-activated sprinklers

- Install sprinklers that are triggered by movement. The element of surprise deters squirrels without harming them (the most effective method).

Ultrasonic repellents

- These devices emit high-pitched sounds to repel rodents but may affect the behaviour or hearing of pets (not recommended if you have a dog or cat).

Capsaicin-based sprays

- Contain hot chilli extract. Irritating to children and animals if touched or swallowed. Wear gloves and keep out of reach.

Garlic and cayenne pepper mixture

- A homemade repellent made from crushed garlic, cayenne pepper and water. May irritate animals' paws, eyes or digestive system.

Ready-to-use products sold in shops

- Critter Ridder repellent: not safe for animals or children
- Scram repellent: coyote urine: Safe for animals and children
- Black pepper oil, piperine and capsaicin