

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT: GOPHERS



Pocket gophers, often just called gophers, are rodents that get their name from their cheek pockets, used for carrying food.

Why are gophers a problem?

Gophers often invade yards and gardens and feed on garden plants, vines, shrubs, and trees. One gopher can build up several mounds of soil in a day from its burrowing activities. These mounds are a tripping hazard for children.

What do gophers do?

Gophers live in a tunnel system that they dig. They're active year-round and at all hours of the day. They usually live alone in their tunnels, except when females are caring for their young or during the breeding season (late winter to early spring).

IPM Strategies

The sooner you detect gophers and do something about them, the better.

1 PROBE FOR BURROWS

Successful trapping or baiting depends on accurately locating the gopher's main burrow. To locate the main burrow, use a gopher probe. You can buy or make one using a pipe and metal rods. To find burrows, locate fresh mounds that are visible above ground. These are the plugged opening of cross tunnels.

You'll find the main burrow about 8 to 12 inches from the plug side of the mound, it's usually 6 to 12 inches deep. When the probe hits the gopher's burrow, you'll notice a sudden drop of about 2 inches. You may have to probe repeatedly to locate it.

2 USE TRAPS

Several types of gopher traps are available. The most common is a two-pronged, pincher trap. To set traps, first locate the main tunnel (see above). Then, use a shovel to open the tunnel wide enough to set traps in pairs facing opposite directions. Check traps often and reset as needed. If you haven't captured a gopher within two days, reset the trap in a different location.

3 PROTECT PLANTS WITH UNDERGROUND FENCING

Lay hardware cloth or 3/4-inch poultry wire under raised beds or lawns before planting.

4 MANAGE

Monitor regularly for re-infestation. If you need to use a rodenticide, contact a pest management professional.

ACTION PLAN FOR GOPHERS

WHEN TO TAKE ACTION	NONPESTICIDE PRACTICES		LAST RESORT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ When you notice gophers or mounds. Gopher mounds are horseshoe shaped and the entrance is usually off to the side. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Create buffer around perimeter of yard by removing weedy areas. ▶ Use traps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Underground hardware cloth or poultry wire, buried at least 2 feet deep. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Contact a pest management professional.

RESOURCES

- University of California Statewide IPM: *Gophers*
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/PMG/PESTNOTES/pn7433.html
www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/QT/gopherscard.html

- Gopher IPM at School Video
www.youtube.com/watch?v=pxezCNILIP8&index=8&list=PLgU4sA8HrUfrRUCWS-r1ZcXrZL9zXsrJ0e