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Controlling Tree Squirrels

Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service

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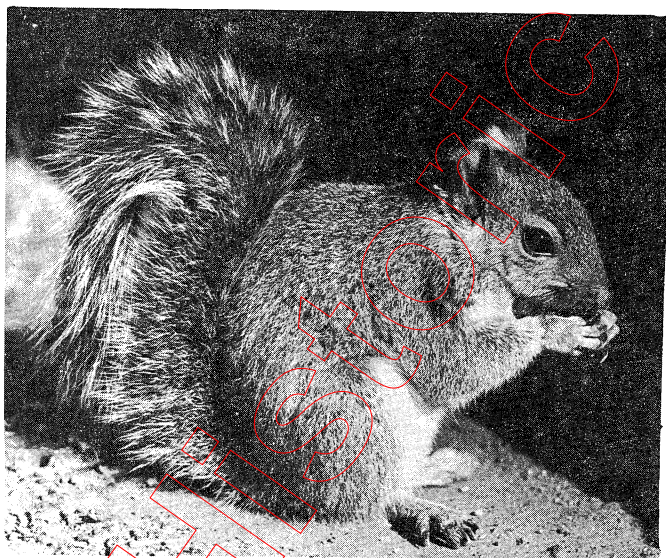


controlling **Tree Squirrels**

Prepared by U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service in cooperation with Purdue University and Indiana agricultural, conservation and health agencies.

Tree squirrels are among the most interesting wild animals commonly encountered by the general public. However, these small rodents at times can be quite destructive. They will dig up garden bulbs; raid fruit and nut trees; damage standing corn as well as corn stored in isolated cribs; kill or deform ornamental and forest trees by cutting buds and debarking; and their sharp teeth can cause considerable damage to buildings and lead cables.

There are four different groups of tree squirrels in the North Central States -- gray, fox, red, and flying squirrels. Black squirrels are a color phase of the other squirrels.



Gray Squirrels are most common in urban or heavily-wooded areas. They are about 16-20 inches long with gray fur, white belly and gray bushy tail fringed with white-tipped hairs.

Fox Squirrels are 19-29 inches long. They are farm woodlot animals, sometimes wandering away from the shelter of trees. Their fur is a rusty yellow, with pale yellow-orange belly and bushy tail fringed with reddish hairs.

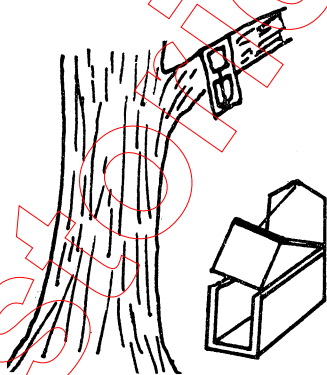
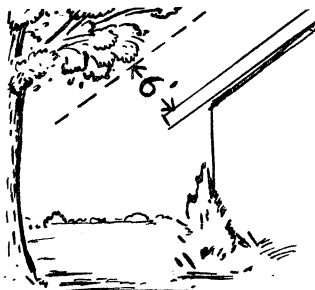
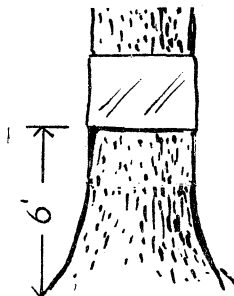
Red Squirrels or "pineys" are 11-14 inches long, slightly larger than chipmunks. They prefer wooded areas, particularly the conifer forests of the north. The fur is reddish with white belly hairs.

Flying Squirrels, being nocturnal, are rarely seen, and prefer heavily-wooded areas. They have thick, glossy olive-brown fur with a white belly. The layer of loose skin along the sides of the body permit flying squirrels to glide for great distances. They do not fly in the common sense of the word.

CONTROL OF SQUIRRELS

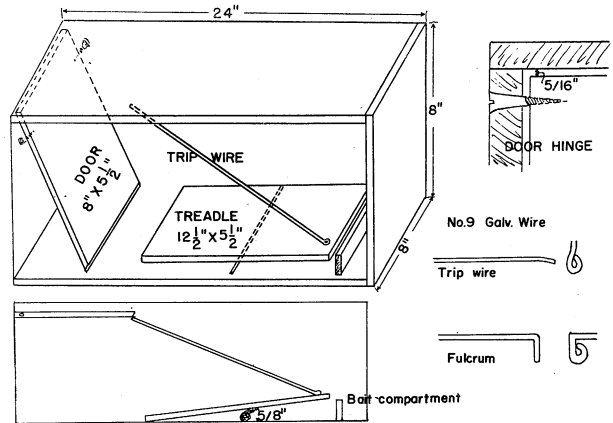
Observe the routes taken by squirrels to find the places where they are entering and leaving a house. Close the holes with 1/2-inch mesh or 26 gauge or heavier metal. Check for openings under the eaves and where wires enter the house. Look for loose knots that have fallen out. Inspect for loose chimney flashings. Place meshed wire screen over chimney openings, particularly if the building is to remain unoccupied for a period of time.

Squirrels can be kept out of isolated trees by encircling them with a 2-foot wide band of metal 6 feet off the ground. Overhanging branches within 6 feet of the ground or roof line should be trimmed. Winter damage to shrubs and trees can be minimized by feeding squirrels as well as birds.



Where local regulations or game laws permit the use of firearms, shooting is the best method of eliminating troublesome individuals. Hunting is most successful in early morning or late afternoon when the animals are most active.

Where shooting is not permissible, trapping should be considered. Permission should be obtained to take gray and fox squirrels in Nos. 0 or 1 steel traps. If live traps are used, the animals should be released unharmed at least 5 miles from the area of capture. Rat traps can be used for red squirrels, but are usually too small for gray or fox squirrels. Set traps along paths frequently used by the animals -- tree bases, feeding stations, roof tops, etc. Bait traps with nut meats, pumpkin and sunflower seeds, peanut butter, rolled oats, or dried prunes.



HIGHTS