

on the plant, or sprinkling baby powder on the plant. You may wish to visit a nursery or home center for commercial products.

### **ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS...**

- As a last resort, trapping can be an effective method of dealing with troublesome wildlife. The most commonly used device is a live-trap which captures the animal physically unharmed. Traps should be checked twice a day (morning and evening) to replenish bait or to humanely deal with captured animals. Raccoons, opossums, and skunks cannot be released off-site, they must be euthanized or released on the same property. Contact the ODNR Division of Wildlife (1-800-Wildlife) for additional trapping regulations.
- Do not use poisons. Poisons are illegal, inhumane and may result in secondary poisoning of raptors, wild scavengers and neighborhood pets.
- Native wildlife is legally protected. It is illegal for anyone to possess a native wild animal unless permitted by the ODNR Division of Wildlife. Wildlife rehabilitators have a permit to care for orphaned or injured wildlife

### **PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERNS**

Due to the large teeth typical of rodents, chipmunks and ground squirrels can inflict a nasty bite. As with all wild animals, they should never be hand-fed or encouraged to approach humans. If your pet gets into a fight with a squirrel, it should be checked carefully for bite wounds. Consult your veterinarian for further advice.

Chipmunks and 13-lined ground squirrels are not considered to be a significant source of any infectious disease transmittable to humans. They may be carriers of rabies, although there have not been any rabid chipmunks or ground squirrels in Miami County in recent years.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

*If you find a wild animal and are concerned, leave it alone and call Brukner Nature Center at 937-698-6493, seven days a week, 24 hours a day.*



5995 Horseshoe Bend Rd.  
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*Brukner Nature Center is a non-profit, privately funded organization promoting the appreciation and understanding of wildlife conservation through preservation, education, and rehabilitation.*

*The purpose of our wildlife rehabilitation program is to educate people regarding the natural history of Ohio's wildlife, to offer help and advice when wildlife and people conflict, and to care for, rehabilitate, and release native Ohio wildlife expected to survive in their natural environment.*

# Living with Chipmunks and Ground Squirrels

## in Miami County



# Brukner Nature Center

Chipmunks and ground squirrels are commonly mistaken for the same animal. However, they both have distinguishing marks and different habits. The chipmunk has five dark-brown, length-wise stripes from its head to its rump and runs with its tail straight up, looking like a zooming remote-controlled car. Chipmunks eat a variety of berries, nuts, and seeds and may occasionally climb a tree to find food. They may occasionally eat small animals, including insects, earthworms, slugs, young mice and birds, and small frogs or snakes. Some chipmunks may hibernate while others continue to be active throughout the winter.



The 13-lined ground squirrel has 13 lines on its back from the head to the rump. They prefer open grasslands where they feed on equal amounts of animal and plant foods. Their diet includes insects, grasshoppers, moths and butterflies, earthworms, young birds and mice, seeds, fruits, nuts, roots, and foliage. At the end of summer, the 13-lined ground squirrel will fatten up in preparation for hibernation.

### **LIVING IN YOUR YARD**

Chipmunks prefer timber borderlands but have adapted to suburban neighborhoods where they will dig tunnels under shrubs and trees, flowerbeds, rocks, woodpiles, stone walls, sidewalks, and porches. Neatly manicured lawns, golf courses and cemeteries are excellent habitats for 13-lined ground squirrels, which prefer open grasslands. The holes to the tunnels are ap-

proximately 2 inches in diameter. Both chipmunks and 13-lined ground squirrels will have multiple entrances to their burrows. (Chipmunks normally have one active entrance). These tunnels can be up to 20 to 30 feet long, making it difficult to evict the animals.

### **PREVENTING PROBLEMS**

Do not encourage chipmunks or ground squirrels by feeding them. Do not allow spillage to accumulate outside of bird feeders. Use welded wire to prevent animals from accessing openings under decks, elevated sheds, concrete slabs and porches. Secure outside access to crawl spaces.

### **RECOMMENDED DETERRENTS**

Chipmunks and ground squirrels are easily frightened. Leave inflated beach balls in the yard. The wind will blow them around and frighten the animals. Place plastic bags on sticks in various spots in your yard for the same effect. Scarecrows and objects that move in the wind are also effective. However, animals will grow used to these items, and their effectiveness will diminish.

Place lighting, such as bright flashlights, flood lamps or blinking strands of holiday lights in the den. It is best to leave the lights on 24 hours a day. If this is not possible, the lights must be on during the night to disturb the animal's sleep.

Play a radio, portable alarm clock, noisy children's toy or anything that makes noise repeatedly either in or near the den. It is best to have the sound on for 24 hours a day. If this is not possible, the sound must be on during the night to disturb the animal's sleep.

Place rags soaked in ammonia in the den for one week. Ammonia has an irritating smell over time; the ammonia will dissipate so it is important to re-soak the rags daily. *Very important:* do not use ammonia-soaked rags from March to August.

They may injure infant wildlife that are too young to escape.

It is important to use all the techniques at the same time in order for the deterrents to be successful. To determine if the animal has left a den site, wad up newspaper and pack it into the den entrance. This also helps to hold in ammonia fumes. If the chipmunk or ground squirrel is still using the den, the newspaper will be pulled out. If after a few days the newspaper has not been disturbed, securely repair any access openings. Failure to do so may result in the chipmunk, ground squirrel or another animal moving in.



### **EATING BULBS**

Daffodils, jonquils, grape hyacinths and crown imperial bulbs are known to be distasteful to chipmunks and ground squirrels. The crown imperial has a horrible smell, and below-ground diners are known to avoid it. Interplant crown imperials among tulips and other "tasty" bulbs. Use chicken wire as a barricade by placing it on the flowerbed surface, and then scatter a light layer of mulch or leaves over the chicken wire. Be sure to pick up bulb skins that flake off during planting and to spread a thick layer of mulch over the bulbs to remove signs of recent planting. The chicken wire should be pulled up in the spring so the bulbs can grow.

### **GARDENS**

Taste deterrents work; however, they need to be reapplied after a heavy dew or rain. Recommended deterrents include spraying a mixture of one gallon of water and two tablespoons of hot sauce onto the plant, spraying garlic puree