



How To Get Rid of Squirrels

By DoMyOwn staff

The complaints of homeowners in reference to squirrels usually have to do with causing damage to wires, siding, insulation, and household items when they establish their nests in attics or other buildings. Squirrels also damage bird feeders, flowers and vegetable gardens in the process of foraging for food. There is no magic spray or repellent when it comes to getting rid of nuisance squirrels. The only proven way to get rid of a squirrel is through preventing access, limiting food sources, and trapping.

Step 1) Prevent Access

Squirrels gain access to homes, and especially attics, through small openings and other structural weaknesses. While it is not always possible to locate and seal off every point of entry, you will do a great deal to discourage entry by practicing the following methods:

- Trim trees and other shrubbery away from the house and roof
- Secure a cap of sheet metal over the chimney outlet
- Repair openings and holes on exterior walls with heavy wire cloth or wood secured into solid substrate with screws
- Repair cracks in foundation walls with a heavy duty caulk
- Move stacked firewood away from the side of the structure
- Use guards over your gutters and cover all down spouts

Step 2) Limit Food Sources

Squirrels are not going to stick around long or make your home their home unless there are enough food sources to sustain them.

- Keep all trash in metal cans or bins with tight fitting lids
- When throwing away meat or other foods with a strong odor, double-bag them to reduce smells
- Eliminate as many sources of water as possible in your yard and near your home
- Regularly clean up fallen fruit such as berries in your garden
- If possible, cover garden crops with a cage of wire netting.
- Don't leave pet food out at night
- Keep bird feeders up to 20 feet away from the home or structure

Step 3) Bait and Trap

Two traps that we recommend for safe and effective squirrel capture are the [Havahart Cage Trap Model 0745](#), and [Havahart Cage Trap Model 1078](#). Havahart recommends contacting the Humane Society, or the local or state game commission before setting a trap to determine the lawful method of releasing a captured wild or nuisance animal. Many species are protected by law in various states.

Follow these guidelines when trapping with Havahart:

- **Read the instructions** completely.
- **Test the trap.** Spring it a few times by touching the trip plate to make sure that it works properly. If you feel the doors do not work fast enough, placing a small stone on top of the door will cause it to drop faster.
- **Bait the trap.** The following are good bait suggestions for squirrels: cereals, grains, nuts, sunflower seed, anise oil, shelled corn, apples, peanut butter mixed with oatmeal or molasses, popcorn, or bread doused in almond extract
- **Camouflage the trap** by placing twigs or leaves all over it to reduce the glare of the metal. You can also slather mud on the metal to give it a more conditioned look.
- **Place the baited trap**, without setting it, where you intend to catch the squirrel and fasten the doors open with a stick or wire. Do not set the trap at this point
- **Set the trap.** After several days, if the bait has been disturbed or taken, it is time to refresh the bait and set the trap.

Other Trapping Tips:

- Be aware of weather conditions. Trapped animals should not be left out in the elements as they can die from prolonged exposure to heat and cold.
- Check traps **FREQUENTLY**. Wild animals stress easily and may seriously injure themselves as they attempt to escape.
- Other animals besides the target animal may get caught in the trap. If this happens, advice on releasing it safely can be obtained from a licensed wildlife rehabilitator in your state.
- Depending on the time of year, you may trap a nursing mother and if you relocate only her, her babies will not survive. To see if you've trapped a nursing female, stand the trap on one end to observe the belly.
- Traps should be washed, disinfected with a bleach solution (1 part bleach to 9 parts of water and let it remain on for 20 minutes), and thoroughly rinsed after each capture to stop the spread of any potential disease. Animals frequently

defecate and urinate when captured and it is unhealthy to put bait down unless trap is cleaned thoroughly.

Step 4) Release

Once you have successfully trapped your squirrel, you may want to call the Humane Society or the local or state game commission to either direct or assist you in releasing the animal, especially if you suspect it may be rabid.

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