

Chipmunk - Eastern (*Tamias striatus*)



Chipmunks have five dark brown stripes that run from their head to their rump. They keep their tails straight up when they run. They live in underground burrows and do not hibernate. They have two litters, one in spring and the other in late summer, with 6 or so young per litter.

Damage

Chipmunks uproot plants by their tunneling. They eat nuts, berries, seeds, plants' buds, flowers and leaves. They will dig up and eat spring flowering bulbs.

When Are They Active

They are active during the day and year around. They prefer the edge of wooded areas and particularly sloped areas with woody underbrush. They will climb trees to find food.

Susceptible Plants

Newly planted seeds can be eaten and plants can be uprooted by chipmunks. They will dig up newly planted spring bulbs. They will not bother squills, grape hyacinths, alliums, daffodils and crown imperial bulbs.

Prevention Methods

Placing fine gravel or chicken grit in newly dug holes for spring bulbs can help deter burrowing up to get the bulbs. Chicken wire over newly planted bulb areas will prevent digging. To prevent chipmunks from burrowing into the garden install 18 inch high, one-quarter to one-half inch mesh screen buried six inches into the ground. Remove wood and rock piles and trim back plantings that provide cover for the chipmunks. They are easily frightened so using scarecrows, plastic bags on sticks and other objects that move in the wind will work. Chipmunks will grow used to these objects, so change the location or type of objects periodically.

Treatment Methods

Products with the active ingredient of capsaicin or oil of mustard can be sprayed on plants or areas that the chipmunk is damaging. A mixture of 1 gallon of water and 2 tablespoons of hot sauce or garlic puree will help deter. Applying commercial predator urine repellent like Shake Away (which contains fox urine) will help deter also. Any spray needs to be reapplied after heavy dew and rain.

Additional Information/Resources

- Wikipedia [Chipmunk](#)
- Forest Preserve District of DuPage County [Chipmunk](#)
- Dane County UW Extension Horticulture Hotline [608-224-3721](tel:608-224-3721) (M-F, 9 am-12 noon, April 15 – October 31) or horticulture@countyofdane.com