

Thirteen-Lined Ground Squirrel (*Ictidomys tridecemlineatus*)



Identification

Thirteen-lined ground squirrels live in underground burrows in sunny open areas. The holes to their burrows are about 2 inches wide. They have 13 lines (some spotted) on their backs, running from head to rump. Eyes are large; ears are small and short. They survey their surroundings on hind legs. If they sense danger, they dive into their burrows. They may be seen with their nose poking out and giving a bird-like trill. They have one litter per year of six or so young usually in late May. They are also called striped gopher, leopard ground squirrel and squinney.

Damage

These squirrels will dig into planted containers and dig up newly planted plants, tulips and crocus. In spring they eat tender new green growth and grasses. Later in the season, they will eat seeds, grains, vegetables, fruits and nuts.

When Are They Active

They are active during the day and especially on warm days. They hibernate in winter.

Susceptible Plants

Any newly planted gardens that contain seeds and young plants are great locations for these squirrels to eat. They even eat vegetables, but they also eat weed seeds and harmful insects.

Prevention Methods

Placing chicken wire over newly planted tulips and crocus will prevent the digging of the bulbs. They are easily frightened so using scarecrows, plastic bags on sticks and other objects that move in the wind will work. The squirrels will grow used to these objects, so change the location or type of objects when they are not working.

Treatment Methods

Spray with a mixture of 1 gallon of water and 2 tablespoons of hot sauce or garlic puree to help deter. Solution will need to be reapplied after a heavy dew or rain. Commercial predator urine repellent like Shake Away (which contains fox urine), will help deter these squirrels.

Additional Information/Resources

- Wikipedia [Thirteen-lined ground squirrel](#)
- University of Illinois Extension [Ground squirrel](#)
- Forest Preserve District of DuPage County [13-Lined Ground Squirrel](#)
- 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