



Wildlife NOTES

Living with Woodchucks (Groundhogs)

To know woodchucks is to love them, but many of us still seek preventive measures and humane solutions to live peacefully with these fascinating members of the urban wildlife community.

Scare away Woodchucks are fearful of humans and generally cautious. Add something to your garden that will blow around in the wind, such as a beachball or low windsock.

Lure away Lure woodchucks away by planting wildflowers and grasses a distance from your garden. They prefer to feed at the safer distance from humans anyway. You can also plant some species of flowers that appeal to you, but not to woodchucks. Lobelia, gaillardia, daylilies, and columbine do not appeal to the woodchuck's palate.

Install fencing The fence should be 3 to 4 feet above ground and extend 1 foot below ground for best results. Use wire mesh with openings that are 2 inches by 4 inches. Leave the top portion of the wire mesh unattached to fence posts. A woodchuck does not like to climb an unstable fence. Finally, fold 6 inches of the underground portion outward to discourage persistent diggers.



Use humane harassment To exclude a woodchuck from a burrow, wait until late summer, after any young have been weaned. Partially dig out the entrances and clear away surrounding vegetation. Or place used kitty litter inside all burrow entrances. Or place a one-way door at the entrance; this lets the animal safely leave but not return.

Block burrows After the animal has left the burrow, pack the entrance lightly with hay. If it remains undisturbed for five days, the burrow is unoccupied. Excavate the entrance area and bury a 3-foot-square section of heavy-gauge welded wire fencing 1 foot deep across the entrance.

How to Make a Windsock

Getting children involved in nature projects is not only time well-spent together but also provides the opportunity to pass on your values of care and compassion for all living creatures.

You'll need:

- Cleaned out can (soup, vegetables, or coffee can)
- Paint, glitter and decorations
- Sheet of light-weight plastic or plastic grocery bags
- Glue, scissors
- Yarn, string or wire

Remove both ends from the can.

Carefully make two holes in top of can. The holes should be directly across from each other.

Paint, draw, color, and add stickers to the can.

Cut long strips of plastic and glue around the bottom inside of the windsock.

Feed yarn, wire or string through the punched holes, and tie a knot at the end.

Hang and enjoy!

Check your local library or the internet for other fun projects.