

Moles



We have two species of moles in our area. The most common being the Eastern mole and the less common Star-nosed mole. Eastern moles dig extensive tunnel systems while Star-nosed make mounds. The Star-nosed mole will utilize the Eastern mole's tunnels when abandoned.

Moles are about the size of Chipmunks and live most of their lives underground, so it is unlikely that you'll ever see one. Moles eat insects and may even help to control some insect outbreaks. They eat from 25 to 75% of their body weight daily. Their primary food is earthworms and grubs, worms accounting for 85% of their diet. While foraging for food, moles will make tunnels close to the surface of the soil. Moles are generally more attracted to properties with established lawns, especially if an irrigation system exists. The moist soils encourage a large supply of earthworms, grubs & other insects. Too frequent watering can bring worms closer to the surface and therefore the mole also. A moles movement is affected by climate and ground moisture. Moles also respond to changes in food supply moving from one area to another as different insects become available. In other words, even an undisturbed mole will probably only be in one area for a short period of time.

Although most information refers to moles as a solitary animal except the spring mating period, the University of Michigan website says "These moles are not solitary. Their home ranges often overlap and several individuals have been found using the same tunnel systems." The range for a male is around two acres and for the female around 3/4 acre.

There have been many mole remedies over the years purporting to control mole populations but most of them are largely ineffective. From moth balls, human hair, cat hair, vibrators, ultrasonic devices and the like, none have provided consistent results. In fact, what positive results these are thought to have brought are probably just the fact that the mole would have moved on anyway.

The most effective way to control moles is by trapping. The trick is finding an active feeding run. To do this, cave in a section of the run; if it is dug out within 48 hours the mole is currently using the tunnel. Trapping is most successful in the spring and fall. During the summer the moles are deeper in the soil and will be more difficult to trap. Other remedies with varying amounts of success are **Mole Med**, a non poisonous method that taints their food supply & the ground with castor oil, driving the moles to a different area; **Mole Patrol & Mole Bait Gel**; both poisons; and **Milky Spore** which is a safe long term solution for controlling grubs.

- ◆ Moles can dig surface tunnels at approximately 18 feet per hour
- ◆ Moles travel through tunnels at about 80 feet per minute
- ◆ Moles contain twice as much blood and hemoglobin as other mammals of similar size. This allows moles to breathe more easily in underground environments



McGough's, Inc

501 Lake Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684
231-947-5900 mcgoughsinc.com