

Town Gardener

Rodent control should start in the fall

By TOM CAVAN
Herald Special
PEST PROBLEMS

Every spring I field questions on how to control rodents in the garden. The usual statements like "My lawn looks like the Paris railway map!" or "Is there anything I can do for my fruit tree, it has been girdled by mice?" come in the door as steady as the cluster fly in fall. The hardest part about helping these poor souls is that prevention takes place in the fall not spring.

There are many ways you can clean your garden of these pests but you will never eradicate them permanently. Mice, rats, moles, voles, rabbits and deer can be controlled but you never give up the battle to be successful at overwintering your garden. It really is discouraging to plant a specimen only to wake up in spring and discover that you served a delicacy to some little vermin.

SANITATION: Sanitation is the first place you must concentrate your efforts in order to root their nesting areas. With mulches you pull the material away from the stem and paint the bark with rodent repellent. Obvious nesting areas like the compost must be over turned regularly and keep the grass cut down near these areas. Keep all pet foods and livestock feed in metal con-

tainers. Piles of prunings can also provide nesting areas for rodents so clean and rotate these so you don't become the hot spot for your local garden variety pests. Rake leaves an burn them (with a permit) then spread the ashes around plants you wish to protect. They don't like fire or the smell of it. My grandfather told me farmers used to catch them and torch them on a stick and prop them up to ward of any rodent relatives seeking out refuge in their barns. I guess back in those days one became resourceful, in order to survive.

TRAPS AND POISONS: By disturbing the nesting areas or runs they travel they will become disorientated and be more likely to take poison bait. Pre-baiting is a good way of luring them to eating the poison bait. I have tried this method with traps to rid my kitchen of a tough mouse we nick-named Maytag, since it was identified sneaking around the dishwasher. The little mouse wouldn't touch the trap so placed cream cheese on a cracker to fat-

ten him up, then one day I replaced the ritz with a typical mouse trap and Maytag was history.

Alternatives to poisons are deterrents like Scoot which is a paint you put on bark. When a mouse or rabbit take a bite they dislike the taste and move on to neighbors house for their mid-winter snack. Scoot can also be

applied by spraying it on the foliage of yews, a favorite of deer. Tree collars and wraps will physically keep them out providing the snow line doesn't exceed the area you are protecting.

Bloodmeal is an organic source of nitrogen that has repeatedly proven itself effective at repell-

ing rodents because it has the scent of death and they will back down no matter what. There is one downfall to bloodmeal, you must apply it regularly to be effective. Organic controls tend to work that way thus the reason why they aren't harmful to the environment these dissipate readily.

Job Finding Club to start in Georgetown

On November 4, the Georgetown Canada Employment Centre and Information Dufferin will jointly open a JOB FINDING CLUB, funded through the Canadian Jobs Strategy.

The JOB FINDING CLUB will develop the job search techniques of those clients who are motivated, job ready and have a definite career goal. In addition, the program will reinforce the

oral, written and presentation skills of the members of the Club.

The JOB FINDING CLUB is a structured three week program that allows clients to devote the full effort required for a successful job search. During the sessions, clients will learn how to search for jobs by such means as networking, use of trade journals, developing a winning resume, and by developing an ac-

tion plan that will succeed. These skills will be taught in such a manner that they will be useful in lifelong learning.

The first JOB FINDING CLUB was located in Peterborough in 1982 and since then approximately 200 agencies have set up Clubs in co-operation with local Employment Centres.

If you are currently unemployed and receiving UI benefits, please contact 877-0963.

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