

Rabbits in Urban Areas

Oryctolagus cuniculus

When a rabbit comes to town...

Rabbits are found in many urban areas and can damage trees, shrubs, vegetable and flower gardens and newly cultivated lawns.

Control methods

Sometimes getting rid of a pesky rabbit will be as simple as blocking access to the area used for nesting or feeding, for example fixing a gap in the fence or blocking a hole under a shed. However, if the problem persists there are 3 main options for rabbit control in urban areas: exclusion fencing, repellents, and Pindone poison bait.



- **Exclusion fencing**

Wire netting, placed appropriately, offers effective long-term protection against rabbits gaining entry to your garden. Make sure you use netting with sufficiently small gaps, and either bury the bottom edge or turn it out along the top of the ground in the direction the rabbits will try to enter.

Netting, corrugated iron or wooden paling fences about one metre high also provide good protection. A temporary fence can be made using black 'Sarlon' netting material which will protect plants from wind as well as rabbits. Attach the netting to an existing fence or to a series of stakes, ensuring it is stretched tight at ground level so rabbits can't get underneath.

Gates through fences should be close fitting, preferably with a concrete or timber sill under them so rabbits can't dig underneath. Also take care there are no gaps in fences or gates for rabbits to enter through.

Some ways to protect small, individual plants, shrubs and trees:

Surround the plant with a small circle of netting, 80cm high.

Wrap a piece of tin, aluminium, corrugated cardboard or newspaper around the trunk and secure.

Cut out the base of a container, 20 litre or larger, and place around the plant.

Stretch heavy plastic sheeting or netting around the plant, secure to stakes and either pin to the ground or bury it slightly.

Electric fencing might be suitable in some situations.

Wind twine or hemp, soaked in creosote or liquid tar, on stakes around the plant.

○ Repellents

Chemical repellents, when sprayed or painted on trees and shrubs can discourage rabbit browsing. Remember this will need to be done regularly as new growth appears.

Some effective repellents you can try are:

Egg powder mixed with acrylic paint. This is considered the most effective repellent. This mix is called Treepol and is available commercially.

Thiropel/Thiropsect, a weather resistant commercial repellent.

Lime sulphur. Spray on the lower parts of trees in the spring with a strong lime sulphur wash with a little lime added.

Jeyes fluid. A strong solution of Jeyes fluid will give temporary protection if sprayed evenly around plants.

Sprinkle the garden with naphthalene moth balls or blood and bone fertiliser.

○ Poisoning

Pindone is a slow-acting anti-coagulant poison bait available for public purchase from farming stores. Heavy dew or rain will affect the palatability of the bait. Purchase just enough Pindone to complete the job as the product has a shelf life of only 6-8 months.

This poison is safe to lay providing precautions are taken to keep children, pets and stock out of the area. Also make sure you let your neighbours and other people using the property know when you lay the poison. Read the instructions on the label carefully and if accidental poisoning occurs contact your doctor or vet immediately.

Contact us on free phone 0508 800 800 if you would like help or advice with rabbits on your property. We can provide free advice and information and if needed, user-pays assistance.