

Skunk Prevention Measures

Though skunks can be relatively harmless, they can be an incredible nuisance by stinking up the entire neighborhood. Skunks typically spray when they are scared. Beyond the smell, they can cause damage to your lawns while they scavenge for food. The following are some effective measures that can be taken at home to help eliminate opportunities for skunk populations to thrive in your neighborhood.

1. Remove Food Sources

Please make sure that your trash can lid remains closed so that skunks cannot feed off of your garbage. It is also helpful to make sure that all leftover pet food and birdseed is cleaned up around the outside of your home and to fence in gardens. Lawns should also be treated for grubs which are a favorite source of protein for skunks.

2. Identify and Remove Potential Habitats

Beyond looking for food, skunks are also looking for a place to live by creating dens. Please be mindful of potential den sites such as wood and rock piles, elevated sheds, openings under concrete slabs, porches, and small crawl spaces.

3. Mitigate Skunk Encounters

Many times, you are unaware of how close you are to a skunk, which is why spraying can be so common. Noise and light are two ways that you can dissuade skunks from coming onto your property. Installation of motion detection lights can be effective. Additionally, you may want to consider jingling keys or turning on a flashlight to chase away the skunks.

Understanding Body Language

Skunks typically spray because they are scared. Spraying is a last resort when they feel they cannot escape or if they are defending their young. Skunks will stomp their feet, hiss, and raise their tails prior to spraying.

What to Do If You Have Been Sprayed

We have all been told to bathe in tomato juice to remove the smell of skunk spray. Some even combine the tomato juice with vinegar to remove the smell. Though these methods will lessen the smell, they will not neutralize it. To neutralize the smell, you can combine one quart of 3 percent hydrogen peroxide, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of baking soda, and one teaspoon of liquid dish soap. Scrub the mixture onto the sprayed surface and then thoroughly rinse the mixture off. Please note that this mixture should not be made in advance or stored after as it does pose a risk of explosion if left in a bottle.