

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SKUNKS.

While skunks are generally harmless, it's best not to get too close to them. You risk receiving a dose of their noxious spray, or worse, a bite from a skunk carrying rabies.

Skunks are omnivores that can live off of human waste, so they often take up residence in yards and under decks. Learn how to make your yard less enticing to skunks who need a home and to remove skunks that have already moved in.

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES

Remove the skunk's food and shelter sources

- If you have trees that produce nuts, berries or other fruits, clean them up by raking your yard often.
- Harvest ripe fruits and vegetables from your garden as soon as you can.
- Use a tray under your bird feeder to catch most of the seeds, and clean up stray seeds often.

Secure your waste

- Keep your trash can properly sealed, or store it in a shed/garage during the night.
- Use an enclosed compost bin.

Close off hiding places

- Close off spaces that may be appealing to skunks (such as under desks, porches or other sheltered areas) using rocks, fencing or plywood.
- Thick vegetation can be used by skunks as shelter, so be sure to trim back long branches.
- Log piles and piles of lumber or building materials can also serve as shelter for skunks. Store the materials in a shed or bin to prevent skunks from moving in.

USING DETERRENTS

Install lights in your yard

Skunks are nocturnal and shy away from bright lights. Lighting your yard at night will make it less appealing to skunks (though it will likely attract moths and crickets).

- If lighting your yard, consider using outdoor solar-powered lights to avoid costly electrical bills.
- Install a motion sensor light, which would turn on any time a skunk (or other creature) comes close.

Use chemicals that repel skunks

Place chemicals around the edges of your yard to deter skunks. Chemical repellents usually have to be reapplied every few days, especially after a heavy rain.

- Pepper sprays are effective skunk repellents. Spray them on trees or areas where you've seen skunks.
- Fox and dog urine deters skunks, since they are their natural predators. You can purchase products that contain dog/fox urine at most hardware stores.
- Citrus peels have natural repellent qualities. Scatter orange or lemon peels around your property and under your deck or porch.

Install motion-activated sprinklers

These automatically turn on when an animal wanders too close, and are a safe and natural way to keep skunks off your property.

- Place the sprinklers close to areas you suspect skunks might want to shelter.



REMOVING SKUNKS THAT HAVE ALREADY MADE A HOME ON YOUR PROPERTY.

Set a trap

Skunk traps are available for rent at the Town of Strathmore office for (phone 403-934-3133 for more information). These traps require bait to lure the skunk in, and do not harm them.

- Bait the trap with peanut butter, canned sardines, cat food or another strong-smelling food. Set it near the skunk's den or its route of access to your property.
- Once trapped, carry the skunk away from your property and set it free in the woods.
- Wear heavy clothes and gloves, and make sure your face is positioned well away from the trap door. Most of the time skunks leave the traps calmly, but you should always take precautions.
- Be patient when releasing a skunk. It may take a few minutes for the skunk to come to its senses and leave the trap.

****If possible, avoid trapping skunks during their breeding season in the spring and early summer. You may end up trapping an adult female skunk with a den full of baby skunks who will starve to death.***



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT SKUNKS

They only spray as a last resort

- Skunks will usually only attack when cornered or defending their young.
- Spraying is not the first method of defense. Skunks will growl, spit, fluff their fur, shake their tail, and stomp on the ground. If the intruder does not leave, they will then lift their tail and spray their famous skunk odor.

Skunk Deodorizer Recipe

If you or a pet is sprayed by a skunk, immediately mix the following ingredients together (**do not rinse yourself or your pet off first**).

- 4 cups hydrogen peroxide (3%)
- 1/4 cup baking soda
- 1 tsp liquid hand soap

Using a wash rag, wet the sprayed area thoroughly with the above mixture (if you or your pet was sprayed in the face, take care not to get the mixture into the eyes or nose as it will sting).

After the area is thoroughly wetted with the mixture, and every trace of the scent is gone, then rinse yourself or your pet with water (you can also use shampoo at this point if you wish).

What is the secret to this recipe?

Skunk spray contains a substance known as a “thiol” , an organosulfur compound that contains a sulfur-hydrogen bond. Many thiols have a repulsive and potent odor and are said to be detectable by the human nose at concentrations of only 10 parts per billion. However, these compounds can be immediately altered into odor-free neutral substances by making oxygen molecules (provided by the fresh hydrogen peroxide and baking soda mix) bond with and chemically alter the thiols.

Please note: Hydrogen peroxide may infuse dark hair or fur with rust-coloured highlights.

SKUNKS

HOW TO PREVENT SKUNKS FROM MAKING A HOME IN YOUR YARD.

