



TOWN OF BROOKLINE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CRITTER PROOFING YOUR HOME AND YARD

SECURING YOUR HOME

- **Chimneys:** Make sure your chimneys are securely capped with hardware cloth that has been bolted down. Remember, raccoons have little "hands" that can easily dislodge loose screens or covers.
 - If an animal is already living in your chimney **DO NOT TRY TO SMOKE IT OUT!** Lighting a fire in your fireplace may overcome the animal and cause it to drop into the fire. Instead, place a dish of ammonia inside the base of the chimney and open the damper 1/2 inch. The ammonia vapors will force the occupants of your chimney to leave.
- **Attics:** Check vents, gables and eaves to be sure screens have not been torn away. To repair holes in walls or torn screens use mortar or metal hardware cloth at least 26 gauge in thickness. Tack down hardware cloth securely.
 - If the animal has gained entry into your attic repair the opening where the animal gained entry to your home. Make sure all young animals are out of your attic before you close the entry way. Ammonia will induce the animals to leave but are not a permanent solution to the problem.
- **Dryer vents and exhaust fans:** Make sure screening is securely fastened around these areas. Use heavy screen or metal hardware cloth of at least 26 gauge in thickness. Clear out any nests prior to screening to prevent fires.
- **Pipes entering homes:** Check areas where pipes enter homes. If there is any space between the pipe and wall, stuff with coarse copper wool. This will also work in bat proofing your home as bats can enter through very small openings.
- **Outside of home:** Eliminate access to your home by pruning tree branches that overhang roofs. Tacking sheet metal around areas where animals tend to climb will prevent the animals from getting footing they need to go up walls and trees.

SECURING YOUR YARD

Garbage cans: Never place plastic bags in your yard. They can easily be shredded by dogs, cats, raccoons, skunks and opossums. **Town of Brookline** By Laws require that garbage must be placed in watertight, rodent and insect proof containers with tight fitting lids. It is recommended that garbage not be placed on the curb until the day of pickup. Tie lids of garbage cans down with straps or chains and attach them to the handles of the cans.

To further discourage animals such as raccoons and opossums from entering garbage cans, try the following suggestions:

1. Add a rag soaked with ammonia to the garbage each time you add a load of trash to the can.
2. Sprinkle the contents of the can with cayenne pepper.

GARDENS

Gardens: For the serious gardener who has invested a lot of time, money and energy in his/her garden we suggest an electrified fence. String ordinary 2mm galvanized wire along insulator posts around the perimeter of the garden approximately 8 inches from the ground. Connect the wire to a 110 volt commercial fence charger with alternating current. The amperage is so low that no physical harm is done to any animal that comes into contact with the wire but the shock is enough to prevent return raids on the garden.

If electrified fencing is not an option for you, try the following suggestion:

- Sprinkle your plants with Epsom salts. Animals find it distasteful as it causes them to have a stomach ache or diarrhea. It also adds magnesium to the soil and will make your plants greener.

IMPORTANT TIPS

1. Don't feed any wild animals except birds. Only feed birds in the proper feeders.
2. Keep food supplies protected. Tie down garbage cans and lids if necessary to keep out raccoons, opossums and rats.
3. If you see a normally nocturnal animal, such as a raccoon, out during the day and acting abnormally, moving slowly and erratically, appearing overly friendly or lethargic, or exhibiting obvious signs of illness call the Brookline Police Department immediately. Make sure someone stays in visual contact with the animal at all times.
4. If you are bitten by an animal, wash the wound in warm water and soap for at least 10 minutes and then contact your physician immediately.
5. Keep your pets indoors as much as possible. Walk your dog on a leash. Make sure dog and cat rabies vaccinations are current.



PROTECTING YOUR PET

1. Never feed your pet outdoors. Food left in dishes in the yard attracts all sorts of wild animals and insects. If you cannot feed your pet indoors, make sure all uneaten food is removed. Feed only during daylight hours and supervise your pet while it eats.
2. Make sure your pet is current on its rabies shots.
3. Try to keep your pet indoors at night. Since raccoons are nocturnal and roam for food in the evening, your pet stands a greater chance of encountering wildlife in the evening than during the day.
4. Don't scatter food for birds or squirrels in your yard. This will attract many pests. Place bird food in proper receptacles.

