

Effective Mole Control



The two main species of moles that cause damage in Michigan are the Eastern and Star Nose Mole. Moles are about the size of chipmunks (6-8 inches in length) and can weigh three to six ounces. Each year these moles can have one litter of two to six young, depending on the health of the female. Gestation lasts about five to six weeks, which means that you can expect litters anywhere from mid-April through May. Believe it or not, young moles have less than a 50% chance of surviving long enough to reproduce. The Eastern Mole (*Scalopus aquaticus*) is most common.

Moles are insectivores (they eat insects), and they may control some insect outbreaks. However, mole activity can also cause considerable damage to lawns. This damage is usually in the form of tunnels and/or mounds in lawn that can be unsightly, disturb root systems, and provide cover or travel lanes for other small mammals. **MOLE ACTIVITY DOES NOT MEAN YOU HAVE GRUBS.**



Eastern moles create raised mounds just under the surface of the lawn, where Star Nose moles will burrow deep into the soil profile pushing soil to the surface. These are easily identified by large soil mounds in your yard. Damage is especially bad in the Spring and Fall when soils are moist. This is when the moles main food source (earthworms) is near the surface.

If you are like most homeowners, you are probably confused by all of the conflicting "advice" on mole control. You may believe that every rumor, home remedy, or control method is worth trying. A common example is when homeowners try to control lawn grubs and insects to reduce mole activity. However, this is often unsuccessful because the mole's primary food source is earthworms. In fact, many chemicals and home remedies (including castor oil derivatives and grub controls) are not only ineffective when dealing with moles, but they allow the animals time to establish and become real problems. Moles can quickly colonize and spread through adjacent residential properties if not handled properly. Because they need a well-established tunnel network to survive, control will be more difficult the longer they are allowed to tunnel and become settled in.

On large properties mole activity may move from one part of the lawn to another. This movement is affected by climate and ground moisture. Moles will respond to changes in food supply as different insects become available in different places and at different times throughout the year. If disturbed, moles may temporarily leave an area but will usually return when you least expect it. Even without disturbance mole activity may last only a week or two in a particular area. This here-today, gone-tomorrow behavior is probably the root of most of the misconceptions that make some home remedies and pesticides appear credible.

Scare tactics and repellents

Numerous home remedies have been used, but results are inconsistent and generally ineffective. Remedies such as pickle juice, broken glass, red pepper, razor blades, bleach, moth balls, rose branches, human hair balls, vibrators, ultrasonic devices, castor bean derivatives (Castor Oil), and explosives may relieve frustrations, but they have little value in controlling moles and may harm you or the environment. Furthermore, certain chemicals or explosives are illegal to use.

Control Method offered by ArborLawn

ArborLawn's technique for controlling moles is a method using underground mole bait (rather than a spray applied on the top of the lawn) and has been quite effective. We typically see results within a few days of the initial baiting. Please contact our office to speak to our trained professional staff who will educate you on the process and set an appointment to evaluate your lawn soon.



An example of mole damage.