

Identifying Common Garden Vertebrate Pests from Their Signs—Burrows, Mounds, and Tracks



Burrows and Mounds

The size and shape of holes, mounds, and other digging evidence in the ground often can help identify the animal present. Use other signs to verify the diagnosis.



LARRY L. STRAND

Mole mound



ROGER A. BALDWIN

Pocket gopher mound



JACK KELLY CLARK

Pocket gopher mound



ROGER A. BALDWIN

Pocket gopher feeding hole



NIAMH QUINN

Ground squirrel burrow under building



JACK KELLY CLARK

Ground squirrel burrow under tree



BRAMMER

Rabbit burrow

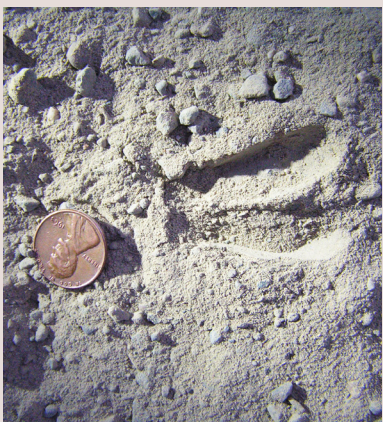


JACK KELLY CLARK

Vole burrow

Tracks

When animals are present, their tracks can often be spotted in mud, sand, and garden soil. Since many of these animals are nocturnal, spotting and identifying tracks is a good way to discover which animal pests are present although other signs are needed for confirmation. Photos by Kim Cabrera.



Blacktailed deer track



Ground squirrel tracks



Scrub jay tracks



Jackrabbit tracks



Vole tracks



Roof rat tracks



Raccoon tracks



Opossum tracks

These photos are examples. Actual signs can vary greatly.



Identifying Common Garden Vertebrate Pests from Their Signs—Damage and Droppings



Damage

Damage to fruit, leaves, and whole plants by an animal will help identify the pest since the mouth and teeth of each animal species differ. Other signs are needed to confirm the identification.



LARRY STRAND

Deer damage to strawberries



NIAMH QUINN

Ground squirrel damage to avocado



RICHARD SMITH

Bird damage to pepper



JACK KELLY CLARK

Jackrabbit damage to bean



BELINDA MESSENGER-SIKES

Rat damage to tomato



JACK KELLY CLARK

Gopher damage to wheat



JACK KELLY CLARK

Vole damage to artichoke



WHITNEY CRANSHAW

Raccoon damage to watermelon

Droppings

Animal droppings, or scat, can help identify the animal present and even determine what it's eating. This sign can vary greatly and should be only part of the diagnosis. Photos by Kim Cabrera except where noted.



W PAUL GORENZEL

Mule deer droppings



BELINDA MESSENGER-SIKES

Ground squirrel droppings



Sparrow droppings



Blacktailed jackrabbit droppings



Rat droppings



Raccoon droppings



Vole droppings



Wild turkey droppings

These photos are examples. Actual signs can vary greatly.

