

VOLES

DESCRIPTION

- **Head and Body:** 89 – 127mm (3-1/4 - 5 inches)
- **Tail:** 45 – 66mm (1-2/5 – 2-3/5inches)
- **Colour:** Varies from gray to dark brown; belly lighter, silvery to gray; fur long and soft.
- **Habits:** Found in most areas, especially where there is sufficient grass cover, including orchards and nurseries. Feeds on grass, seeds, grain, bark and some insects. Nests above or below ground. Makes surface burrows. Populations fluctuate greatly with peaks at three to four year intervals.
- **Young:** Usually 3 – 5; several litters a year.

Meadow Voles damage trees by girdling roots and stripping bark. Most damage occurs during the winter months, but young thin-barked trees may be gnawed even in summer. Where natural control by predators is not sufficient, artificial methods must be used to control population upswings. Control measures should be applied before snowfall to be effective. One or more of the following methods may be used to protect trees from damage.

HABITAT MANAGEMENT

Eliminate high grass cover and maintain a three foot grass-free radius around the base of trees. Snowfall may limit the usefulness of cultural practices.

MOUSE GUARDS

Encircle tree trunks with 6 mm (1/4 inch) mesh hardware cloth. This should be set 76 mm (3 inches) into the ground and extend beyond normal snow levels. There is other commercial material available which will also protect against rabbits. Examine guards annually although if properly installed they will last for several years.

TRAPPING

Snap traps may be used to eliminate a problem in a small area. Place traps around trees or at right angles and flush to the ground in runways. They may be baited with peanut butter and oatmeal or apple.

BAITS

If all methods are inadequate and baiting becomes absolutely necessary, use small amounts of a commercial product which is registered for controlling field rodents. Use according to label instructions and minimize the damage to other wildlife.