

## RABBITS



### BASIC INFORMATION

Rabbits are prolific breeders. A female (doe) rabbit can have 3 to 5 litters between March and September. A litter can consist of 5 to 6 kits. Even though rabbits are born blind, inactive, and with a thin covering of fur, they are capable of breeding at three and a half months of age.

Rabbits are viewed as pests when they cause damage to ornamental plants, trees, and vegetable gardens.

### CONTROL

Overgrown ditches, bushy fencerows or brush piles within or near your yard or garden may be major factors contributing to the presence of rabbits. Mowing, brush cutting and general cleanup of over-grown areas and brush piles may be all that is needed for rabbit control.

The best protection from rabbit damage in a garden is a tight chicken wire fence 2 ½ to 3 feet above ground, held firmly upright by stakes, and 1 foot in the ground, with the bottom 6 inches turned outward and buried 6 inches deep.

Chemical repellents that render plants distasteful are commercially available for reducing rabbit damage to trees and shrubs. To be effective, repellents must be applied thoroughly, before snowfall, and require re-application following heavy rains. Chemical repellent treatment should extend 2 feet above the average snow depth.

Trees can also be protected from damage by making guards of hardware cloth. These guards should be formed into cylinders about 2 inches larger than the diameter of the tree trunk, and long enough to protect the tree above the depth of the deepest snow expected. They should also be anchored in the soil at the base.

Rabbits can be live trapped, using carrots or apples as bait, and then released in a more appropriate area. A rabbit trap should measure 10 inches X 12 inches X 30 inches. The trap should be set in a sheltered area near where the rabbit has been spotted.

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