

Urban Fox Advice Leaflet

The fox is a resourceful and adaptable animal and over recent years there has been a sharp increase in the number of foxes living in urban areas. For foxes to thrive, they need somewhere to hide, particularly during the day. They also need a reliable supply of food and water. A foxhole is often constructed in open ground, though it has been known for foxes to locate themselves under a shed or outbuilding.

In urban areas foxes have become highly adaptable in terms of food. Foxes will take rats, mice, frogs, toads, and poultry, wherever available. However, they have become equally skilled at foraging and scavenging from dustbins, compost heaps, and bird tables.

1. Keeping foxes out of gardens

Controlling foxes in urban areas can prove to be very difficult. The following general advice may help to discourage them and reduce potential conflict:

- The most effective deterrent is a suitable perimeter fence, but fox proof fence can be expensive to install and unsightly. A wire fence constructed at the boundary of the property may prove to be the ultimate deterrent providing it is at least 2 metres high and deeply buried to a depth of at least 45cm with a sheet of smooth material at the top of at least 30 cm depth.
- Repellent products are widely available from garden centres or hardware stores. Take care to read the label and closely follow the instructions, as each product is prepared and approved for use against certain animals in the specified way. It is illegal to use any substance to deter foxes that has not been approved for such use.
- Store domestic rubbish, especially food waste (including composted waste), in fox-proof containers made of materials such as metal or plastic. Ensure dustbin lids are secure and bags of rubbish should not be left at night where foxes can rip them open.
- Do not use organic fertilisers such as bone meal, dried blood, hoof and horn, etc.
- Do not leave food overnight on bird tables and clean up any spillages on the ground as this can attract rodents which in turn can attract foxes.
- Make sure domestic animals, particularly rabbits and poultry, are securely locked away at night.
- To discourage foxes from digging shallow holes, lawns can be treated with products available from garden centres etc, which will destroy worms and insect larvae.

2. Removal of Foxes

The Pest Control Section does not provide a fox removal service. However, a number of private pest control companies will provide a service on a fee-paying basis. Details of companies appear in trade directories and members are listed on the BPCA website.

3. Further Advice

A range of leaflets on wildlife topics is available online at: www.naturalengland.org.uk