Damage from

Vertebrate Pests

The chart below shows the period of the year (divided into half-month columns from January through December) during which each animal causes damage, and which plant parts are affected (indicated by color).

Columns (half-month periods): January 1–15, January 16–31, February 1–14, February 15–28, March 1–15, March 16–31, April 1–15, April 16–30, May 1–15, May 16–31, June 1–15, June 16–30, July 1–15, July 16–31, August 1–15, August 16–31, September 1–15, September 16–30, October 1–15, October 16–31, November 1–15, November 16–30, December 1–15, December 16–31

Animals	Plant parts damaged (by color)	Active period
Beaver	trunk, stems	Mar – Dec
Chipmunks	fruit, flower	May – Sep
Deer/Elk	fruit, flower, branches, leaves, trunk, stems	Year-round (varies)
Feral Hogs	fruit, flower, roots	Year-round
Mice, Deer & White-Footed	fruit, flower	May – Dec
Pocket Gophers	roots	Year-round
Porcupines	branches, stems	Mar – Sep
Rabbits	branches, trunk, stems	Year-round
Raccoons/Opossums	fruit, branches	May – Oct
Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrels	flower, stems	Apr – Sep
Tree Squirrels	fruit, flower, branches, leaves, trunk, stems	Mar – Oct
Voles	fruit, branches, trunk, crown, stems, roots	Year-round
Woodchucks	fruit, flower	May – Sep
Woodpeckers	branches, trunk	Year-round
Other Birds*	fruit, branches	Mar – Oct

KEY: 🔴 fruit   🩷 flower   🟢 branches   🟩 leaves   🟫 trunk   🟤 crown   ⬛ roots   🟧 stems

*Blue jays, crows, grackles, blackbirds, house sparrows, robins, starlings, turkeys

Animal/Damage	Signs/Symptoms	Treatment
Beaver	Damage easily identified by the downed trees, pointed stumps, branches in waterway, dams, and rising water levels.	Use plastic drain tiles or 1x2-inch rigid wire cylinders secured 1-inch from bark to protect individual trees from damage. To protect large areas, obtain permits to use trapping and/or shooting.
Chipmunks	Seeds and flowers will disappear. One-half inch holes in lawn or mulch piles. Frequently seen scampering around. High whistles. Tend to clip young trees or plants early in life.	Enclose young plants in ¼-inch mesh wire "tents" with edges buried 2-inches into the soil. Trap (snap, cage, or box).
Deer/Elk	Stems and branches clipped at ends when browsed. Bark on stems and branches on young trees and shrubs shredded when rubbed. Branches broken up to 6 feet.	Use wire or fabric cylinders around individual plants. Fence large area. Repellents dusted or sprayed on to drip-off. Two trained dogs can protect up to 30 acres. Shooting (permits needed).
Feral Hogs	Extensive disturbance of soil and plants ("rooting"). Damage can cover very large areas. Mud wallows. Tree trunks missing bark on one side.	Trapping or shooting. Contact Nebraska Game and Parks Commission for authorization.
Mice, Deer & White-Footed	Leaves gnawed into coarse sawdust. Tubular droppings ¼ inch. Small fruits plucked. Acorns and other mast crops gnawed from one end.	Place ¼-inch wire mesh cylinders around individual plants. Mouse traps, multi-catch, glueboards or toxicants.

© Paul Rezendes

Vertebrate Pests

Animal/Damage	Signs/Symptoms	Treatment
Pocket Gophers 	Kidney shaped mounds 12–24 inches in diameter. Some plants completely removed. Roots gnawed.	Bury ¼-inch galvanized wire mesh (2 feet below surface and 6 inches above ground). Toxicants or trapping.
Porcupines 	Gnawing on bark in the upper portions of larger trees, frequently next to a branch. Cut branches less than 9/16 inch in diameter. Branches will have rows of bite marks.	Place ¼-inch wire mesh cylinders around individual plants. Trapping or shooting.
Rabbits 	Clean 45-degree angle cut within 12 inches of ground. Pea-sized hard pellets may be found near gnawed stems.	Use 1-inch wire mesh cylinders,18 inches high around plants. Cage or box trapping (winter only) or shoot. Several commercial repellents are available.
Raccoons/Opossums 	Disappearing fruit. Claw marks on tree trunks.	Electric fencing. Trapping and shooting (permits needed).
Thirteen-lined Ground Squirrels 	Two-inch holes in ground. Clean with no dirt pile. Easily witnessed on warm summer days. Planted seeds will be dug up and flowers eaten.	Cover plants with ¼-inch wire mesh. Toxicants, fumigants, trapping, or shooting.

Animal/Damage	Signs/Symptoms	Treatment
Tree Squirrels 	Bark stripping of horizontal branches of smooth barked trees. Clipping of branch tips particularly in mid winter. Small fruit will disappear, large fruit will be gnawed. Acorns and mast crops split in half.	Baffles on vertical objects. Trapping and shooting (permits needed).
Voles 	Girdling of bark below the snow line. One-inch holes at the base of plants. Gnawed roots. Plant fails to thrive on side with gnawed roots. Surface runs in grass cut to soil.	Removal of grass and other vegetation around trees. Toxicants or trapping.
Woodchucks 	Six- to 10-inch diameter holes with large soil excavation. Plants evenly clipped like a lawnmower. Fruit taken.	Use 1x2 inch wire mesh, 3-feet high with an additional 6-inch overhang and 18-inch ground skirt to protect an area. Fumigant, trapping, or shooting.
Woodpeckers 	Tapping sounds. Holes hammered into the trunk. Wood remnants may be found on the ground.	Netting or frightening devices (distress calls and Mylar® tape). Trapping or shooting (permits needed).
Other Birds* 	Fruits may be plucked or speared with skins dropped to the ground. Seeds removed by spearing the surrounding soil.	Netting, frightening devices, or repellents. Trapping and shooting (permits needed).

*Blue jays, crows, grackles, blackbirds, house sparrows, robins, starlings, turkeys