

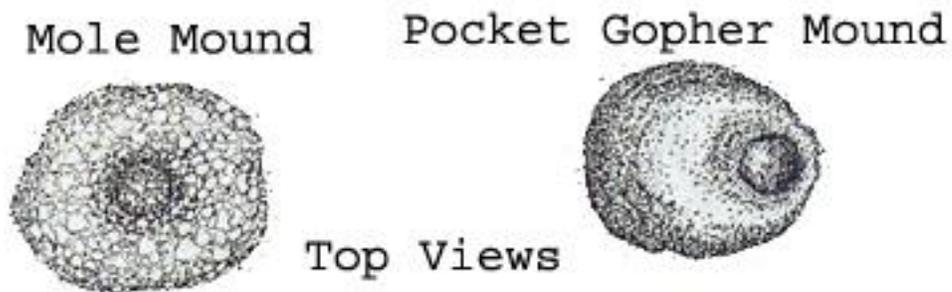
Moles and Gophers - Effective Control Techniques

Which one do I have?

Both Moles and Gophers create mounds. Mole mounds are circular and tend to be a smaller 6-8 inches in diameter. Pocket gopher mounds tend to be kidney, crescent or teardrop shaped and will be larger 10-15 inches in diameter.



Courtesy of the University of California, Davis



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Moles



In Oklahoma, the Eastern Mole is often more of a nuisance than a financial liability. Due to their limited jaw articulation, moles eat insects and worms only, not vegetation. Experts estimate 90% of a mole's diet is earthworms. But plants may be physically disturbed as moles tunnel in search of animal organisms in the soil.

Prevention of moles is difficult. Most often it is the best maintained yards that have the worst mole problems. Yards that attract moles are usually those that have what the mole needs, namely water, fertilizer and vigorously growing plant materials.

Before initiating a control program, be sure the mole you are after is truly out of place. Moles play an important role in the management of soil and of grubs that destroy lawns.

One of the most abundant small mammals, the mole works the soil and subsoil. This tunneling and shifting of soil particles permits better aeration of the soil and subsoil, carrying humus farther down and bringing the subsoil nearer the surface where the elements of plant food may be made available.

In addition, a portion of the mole's diet is made up of white grubs, which are insect pests of turf grasses and plant roots. Moles also eat the larvae and adults of numerous other insect pests, such as Japanese beetles.

If an individual mole is not out of place, consider it an asset and proceed accordingly.

Gophers



Gophers are underground bulldozers and can move one ton of soil in 12 months, eat your vegetation, bulbs, and chew through utility lines. Gophers usually live in rangeland, alfalfa fields, road sides, pastures, railroad rights-of-way but can also invade lawns and flowerbeds.

Gopher tunnels are excavated 4 to 18 inches below the ground so you will not see the tunnels, just the crescent-shaped mounds.

Pocket gophers can be valuable because they contribute to the formation and conditioning of soil, and they provide food for some of our large predators. In areas where these rodents are not of economic significance, they should not be destroyed. Their control may be necessary when they become pests by eating garden crops, roots of fruit trees, shrubs, alfalfa, or if their digging activities interfere with harvesting hay or grain.

Control

Many methods have been used to control moles, but the two most effective means are traps and poisoned gel worms. Traps can be dangerous and you must follow the specific instructions or you will not be successful. See this link from the University of Arkansas [“On Controlling the Eastern Mole.”](#)

Likewise the most effective Gopher control methods include using toxic baits and trapping. See this link from Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service on “Controlling Pocket Gophers.”

For Additional Reading:

<http://cesonoma.ucanr.edu/files/27701.pdf>

<http://pested.unl.edu/1ea7bb48-9a17-42d3-815f-6b8dc077110d.pdf>

<http://www.tulsamastergardeners.org/PDFs/2015%20Moles.pdf>

<http://www.tulsamastergardeners.org/lawngarden/insects/molevole.html>