

Squirrels

What to do if you have a problem

Food source

- If squirrels are visiting your garden, don't encourage them by putting food or other titbits out. If you have a bird table, keep it well clear of the fence or wall, as squirrels will jump or climb on these to feed from the table. It is possible to buy squirrel proof bird feeders
- Compost heaps will also provide a good source of food for squirrels, so make sure not to put meat or household food waste on the compost and always cover the heap with a plastic sheet
- If you have cats, dogs, or other pets, then refrain from feeding them outside, as this will encourage squirrels to remain in the area.

Breeding period

- Squirrels have two breeding seasons during the year, the first from February to March, and then June and July

Preventing entry

- It will be virtually impossible to prevent squirrels gaining access to your garden, as they are extremely good at climbing over fences or walls, or moving through trees.
- When squirrels are entering property they should be excluded physically by blocking gaps and entrance holes using tightly wedged wire netting, welded mesh or aluminium panels. Check for broken or missing roof tiles/slates, defective flashing, broken air bricks, and gaps between the roof guttering soffit board and tiles/slates required for ventilation to the roof space.
- Individual mature trees may be protected by a metal sleeve at least 0.75m deep and at least 1.5m from the ground. It is important that the tree will not grow any more and is at least 3m from any other tree from which the squirrel might jump

Other treatment

- It is an offence to put poison down for squirrels outside unless it is approved for that purpose and is in specially designed hopper to prevent access by other animals. But note, there is no product approved for use by members of the public

But remember many town dwellers regard grey squirrels as an attractive part of urban wildlife and will vigorously oppose any control measures.

Should you require any further advice or help, contact the Environmental Community Services unit in **writing** at Technical Services Department, PO BOX 47095, London, SW18 9AQ