



Ask A Master Gardener Q & A

Rabbit Holes Ruin Gardens

- Q. We have noticed some large holes, about 8—12 inches across, in our yard. I don't have the courage to stick my hand down there but they seem to be some kind of animal burrow. Any ideas about what has taken up residence in our yard? I am hoping we don't twist an ankle stepping into one of these pits. How can we encourage these critters to move to my neighbor's yard?
- A. Whoa! We don't want to make enemies of your neighbors, so we'll step aside from answering the last question.

Based on your description of the holes in your yard and the fact you have not observed any animals we think you have a population of rabbits. Rabbits dig holes about the size you describe and they are usually out and around in the early morning and in the evening. In addition to the holes in the ground they are very destructive to plants in the garden and young trees. The reproductive rate of rabbits is high and they can produce several litters per year. Each litter may have four to seven young.

Various treatments have been recommended but there is nothing that will be guaranteed to drive them away. Some gardeners suggest using dried blood meal around the holes and others suggest buying a dog. Since the rabbits are just about everywhere these days the chances are they will come back when the blood meal washes off.

If you build a rabbit-proof fence about your garden they won't get anything to eat and they may move on. The fence should be made of 1 ½ inch wire mesh and must be at least two feet high. It is helpful to bury part of it under the ground about three to four inches because they are able to dig under the fence.

For more home, yard, garden and insect related information, visit our website at www.extension.uiuc.edu/cooknorth/mg or call the Cook County/North Suburban Extension Master Gardeners at (847) 818-2901 or (847) 298-3502. Office Hours are reduced during the fall and winter months.