

## The Mole

Imagine the scenario; you wake up one morning, take a look out of the window and, horror upon horrors, a couple of molehills have appeared on your beautifully manicured lawn. What are you going to do? It's an event that is increasingly more common across England, Scotland and Wales as the mole population continues to rise with latest estimates reckoning that there are around 35 million moles in the UK. The European mole is around 15 centimetres long and weighs in at a mere 110 grammes. In order to survive it must eat two-thirds of its bodyweight in worms and bugs every day. It does this by digging an extensive network of tunnels into which its prey unwittingly enters only to be detected by the mole and promptly consumed. The mole creates its tunnel structure at various depths depending on where the worms are at the time. In the warmer months the worms inhabit the upper layers of the soil and so the moles tunnels will be near to the surface and in the colder months, the worms move down to escape the cold and the mole must follow. So, the mole can be at the surface of your lawn creating ridges or "scribbles" as it tunnels through the grass roots or it can be up to a metre down, unseen apart from the inevitable molehills.



The molehills are the waste product of the moles tunnelling activities. As the mole moves through the unbroken soil it uses its immensely powerful front legs and claws to push the soil aside and compact it against the sides of the tunnel. This helps ensure the integrity of the tunnel and also lessens the amount of waste that the mole has to eject. It is not uncommon for a single mole to be responsible for dozens of molehills and it is reckoned that, pound-for-pound, a mole can shift more earth than a JCB.

Moles are highly territorial but their territories do touch at their extremes and they will share a tunnel that becomes a sort of super-highway for the moles. They will do their utmost to avoid each other though and they are always very aware of the whereabouts of their neighbours through use of their highly acute senses.

The one time when a mole must enter another mole's territory is, of course, the mating season. In late Spring each year the male moles leave their territories and go off in search of females. The moles mate and the male leaves to find other females – he takes no further part in the rearing of the young that are born around four weeks later. Whilst the female is pregnant she starts to create larders that contain worms that she has bitten into, her paralysing saliva prevents them from escaping. She will give birth to a litter of two to seven kits in a nest which is a tunnel lined with grass. Here the young will stay, being fed by their mother largely from her larders until they are five or six weeks old when they will leave the nest in search of territories of their own.



So, there you are, at your bedroom window with a look o dismay on your face. What are you to do? Well, your first decision is “will you tolerate the mole or must it go?” To tolerate it is to accept that it will likely create many, many molehills and scribbles as it tunnels through your lawns and borders and it will undermine your plants be they ornamental or for eating. Of course, if the mole is in a patch of woodland, wasteland or field then it may well be causing you no harm or inconvenience and therefore it can be left alone.

If you decide that the mole must go then you should decide whether to try to remove it yourself or call upon the experience of a Molecatcher. There are many types of mole deterrents on the market and also several types of mole trap to choose from. Each has its own merits (although actually some have no merits whatsoever) and you should perhaps read up on each before deciding your choice of weaponry. Be advised that catching moles is not always as simple as the trap manufacturers might have you believe; that some of the traps available on certain auction sites are illegal for use in the UK and that some of the deterrent devices available may actually attract moles!!! Also you should be very much aware that using “live” traps is far from humane since a mole caught alive will be incredibly stressed, hungry and dehydrated and, when released into a new territory, will likely die of starvation as it will be unable to feed itself without its tunnel structure. You may also be breaking the law by releasing a wild animal onto land without the landowner’s permission.

If you decide on using the services of a Molecatcher then you can rest assured that your mole will be removed from your property with the minimum of fuss and mess and the mole will not suffer. The Molecatcher will set two or three traps in what he considers to be the optimum places. He then will return the next day to check the traps and, hopefully, to remove your mole.

Once the mole has gone you can rid your lawns of the molehills and scribbles, maybe reseed a little and relax; for a while anyway; because having had a mole there’s a fair chance that you will get another. Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but one day...

Tel: 01795 664 392 / 07595 020 442  
Email: [info@birdandpestsolutions.co.uk](mailto:info@birdandpestsolutions.co.uk)  
Visit: [www.birdandpestsolutions.co.uk](http://www.birdandpestsolutions.co.uk)

