

Badgers



Great Britain has one of the highest number of badgers in Europe. Many people enjoy seeing badgers visiting their gardens, but they can occasionally cause problems.

Badgers live in a group within an area they consider to be their territory. It is possible that your garden may have once formed part of that territory, which is why they are visiting.

They are also creatures of habit, and will often use the same routes.

New developments can often be near an area where there are already badgers. As a result, badgers may begin entering new gardens in search of food.

Badger related damage

Lawns

Badgers can sometimes scratch shallow pits into lawns when looking for insect larvae and their favourite food – earthworms. They may also dig holes in your garden for their dung. (This behaviour is usually short-term and tends to be more common during early spring and late autumn).

Fruit and vegetables

Badgers enjoy soft fruits, particularly raspberries and strawberries. They may also eat apples, pears, plums and vegetables such as carrots, potatoes, and sweetcorn.

Dustbins

When food is scarce, such as during very dry weather or icy conditions, badgers may overturn dustbins and scavenge for food.

Structures

Badgers are quite strong, determined creatures, and can cause damage to fences when trying to get into gardens looking for food.

Their system of tunnels beneath the ground may cause the land to cave in or sink, damaging buildings, roads and fences.

Preventing damage

The first thing you should do is get advice, as soon as possible, from the various organisations that specialise in providing information on badgers (see the back of this leaflet for contact details).

If your bins are being raided, we recommend that you secure the bin lids with clips or 'bungee' straps.

Keeping your grass short may reduce the need for badgers to dig, as the earthworms and insect larvae will be closer to the surface.

Putting out water during very dry spells of weather may prevent badgers from digging into lawns in search of wet food such as earthworms.

Some people like to leave food out for badgers to distract them from scavenging dustbins or digging up bulbs. However, this could increase the number of badgers visiting, and make the situation worse.

If you want to feed badgers, get advice on whether to feed, how often, and what types of food are suitable.

If you are suffering from badgers digging up bulbs, you could put a thick wire grid over the soil your bulbs are planted in. However, you should only do this on small areas and as a last resort.

Strong fencing is effective but expensive. There are other types of fence available, such as heavy-duty chain link, or welded mesh. Again, you should get advice first.

There are currently no repellents specifically approved for use against badgers.

Badgers and the law

Badgers and their homes (setts) are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. That act makes it illegal to kill, injure, or take badgers, or to interfere with their setts (for example, blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way).

Rochford District Council

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Phone: **01702 318111**

Email: **customerservices@rochford.gov.uk**

Website: **www.rochford.gov.uk/pest control**

The law does allow badgers to be moved under a licence issued by the Natural England Wildlife Management and Licensing Service. However, this is only for extreme situations such as to prevent severe damage to property, or serious economic harm. Even then, professional research has to be carried out to check that there are no other alternatives.

(Damage from badgers looking for food in gardens is not normally considered to be serious enough to issue a licence for the badgers to be moved).

Further Information

Natural England Wildlife and Management Licensing

(formally the Wildlife Administration Unit at DEFRA).

Phone: 0845 6014523 (local rate)

Email: enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk

Website: www.naturalengland.org.uk

The websites listed below provide listings for local badger groups, as well as advice and information on all badger related topics.

The Badger Trust

www.badger.org.uk

Phone: 08458 287878

Badger Land

www.badgerland.co.uk

Phone: 01422 846846

If you would like this information in large print, Braille or another language phone us on

01702 318111