

Vertebrate Pests: There are mole holes in our brand new lawn! What do we do?

Discovering moles in your yard is a “Good News, Bad News” situation:

Good News: The moles are natural aerators, as their tunneling loosens soil and mixes the topsoil humus with the lower soil and subsoil.

Bad News: The moles’ tunnels result in lines of raised ridges in your lawn and unsightly mounds of dirt.

Good News: The moles eat white grubs and the larvae of pest insects, which can destroy grass roots.

Bad News: The moles also eat beneficial earthworms.

Good News: The main diet of moles consists of grubs, earthworms, beetles, and insect larvae so they’ll ignore your bulbs, roots, and young plants.

Bad News: The moles’ tunneling can disrupt bulbs and roots and expose them to the surface. Also voles, who *do* consume plant vegetation, will often use the moles’ tunnels to search for their food.

Good News: [There is a long list of home remedies](#) people have used in their attempts to get rid of moles including growing the poisonous “mole plant,” (*Euphorbia lathris*), *using electromagnetic devices or “repellers,” or placing materials such as broken bottles, moth balls, or chewing gum in the moles’ tunnels.*

Bad News: None of these methods has been scientifically proven to work.

Good News: There are commercial fumigants and poisons available for use on moles.

Bad News: Due to the moles’ long, extensive tunnels and multiple openings and the moles’ preference for live grubs and insects over bait-like poisons, neither method is foolproof.

Sadly, there are no easy, infallible solutions for how to get rid of moles, but there are options you can try depending on your situation:

- **Ignore them.** If their food supply is depleted, the mole will often move on. Tamp down

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the raised runways (if it's not too wet -- to avoid soil compaction), and as soon as you see any new dirt pushed up, spread it around so that it's no more than 1/2" thick on the grass, overseeding with grass seed in areas where necessary.

- **Reduce your grub-loving lawn area** and install pathways and native plantings.
- **Cut back on the frequency of watering your lawn** which may temporarily reduce the grubs from feeding on the moist grass roots, and thereby the moles from feeding on the grubs.
- **Dig a narrow trench and install barriers** of sheet metal or hardware cloth around areas you want to protect, such as flower beds or vegetable gardens.
- **Trap them.** In the end, and especially if the moles are doing extensive damage, trapping can be the most effective means of control. Trapping takes patience, practice, and persistence, especially if more than one mole or vole has discovered the bounty of grubs, worms, bulbs and roots in your yard. [There are a variety of lethal mole traps available](#) and also [information from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife regarding live-trapping \(p. 11\)](#).

Mole & Vole Sites:

Check out the following sites for more info on ways to control these unwelcome pests:

- [Controlling Nuisance Moles](#)
- [Moles](#)
- [Voles and Their Control](#)
- [Voles and Lemmings](#)

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