



DO YOU HAVE BATS IN OR AROUND YOUR HOME? – GREAT!

Bats are an excellent helping hand for gardeners and those who enjoy time spent in their backyards.

FACTS:

- All bats found in Saskatchewan are insectivores (insect-eating).
- Bats eat 30-50% of their weight in insects – that's the equivalent of a 60 kg person eating 20-30- kg of food!
- Bats can eat up to 600 insects in one hour!
- Bats are not blind, blood sucking, flying mice.
- Bats are very clean and groom themselves regularly – you are more likely to contract rabies from a cat or dog than from a bat.

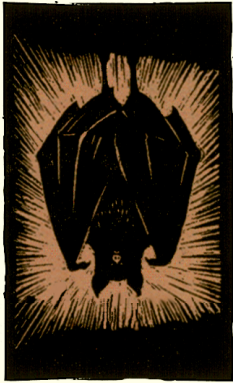
Be Careful

Bats are only known to bite in self-defense. If a bat is lying on the ground it may be sick or injured, so **don't touch it!** You certainly don't want to get bitten by a sick bat. If a child discovers a bat on the ground, he or she should immediately inform a parent so that they can observe the bat together from a safe distance (make sure that all pets are kept inside). If the bat does not crawl away (bats cannot take off from the ground), it may just need to be put in a higher location. If this is the case, an adult wearing leather gloves, could cover it with a plastic container and slide a piece of cardboard underneath it. Then place the container against a tree or brick wall and slide the cardboard out, allowing the bat to cling to the tree or wall, and then gently pull the container away.

It is important that we view bats as friends rather than vermin; after all they do keep insect populations in check. Insect populations are free to multiply without any natural predators when bats are exterminated. People may get fed up with the increase in pesky insects and choose to spray insecticides to get rid of them. This solution, although it may show immediate results, is harmful to all species in the long run, including bats and humans.

Bats are the safer choice

Insecticides do not simply disappear after they have killed the targeted pest. Birds, bats, fish, amphibians and reptiles eat dead insects. These insect-eaters are, in turn, eaten by something larger, and then something larger until at the top of the food chain the small amounts of insecticides sprayed collect in very concentrated amounts. Humans are at the top of the food chain. When insecticides are dropped over entire cities rather than targeted spraying, the chemicals contaminate a greater quantity of species faster, for example if a rain follows one of these mass sprayings, the insecticides will wash into our water system through street drains and eventually reach the river. Even without a rain, houses, streets, grass, shrubs and trees will still be covered in chemicals.



Can we really, expect when spraying, that children won't climb trees, or crawl around on the lawn? We are affecting ourselves by spraying these insecticides.

How can I tell if I have bats in my home, and where they get in?

The easiest way to find out if bats call your house home and how they get in is to look for their droppings or a urine stain on the wall. Bats do not make nests like rodents or birds (bats are actually mammals with body structures closer to humans than birds or rodents). Bats always defecate before reentering the building, so if you discover some rice sized black droppings on the ground or clinging to the side of the house, the bat entryway to your house is likely directly above it. This may also be a summer roosting site. Did you know that bat droppings make excellent natural fertilizers?

What should I do once I find an entryway currently in use?

First of all, bat control techniques should be avoided between May and August, because this is when bat babies are born, and are still unable to fly. Secondly, using light, noise, garlic or mothballs in or around their roost will not scare them away. The best way to move bats from your home is to cover the bat entryways during the day with nylon netting (from the outside). Make sure to only staple or tape down the top and the side, leaving the netting loosely hanging down a foot below the hole. This simple application acts as a harmless one-way door for the bats. When the bats try to leave in the evening to hunt they will have to search and fumble around a bit to get out the bottom, but when they try to return in the morning they will not be able to find their way in by pushing against the netting. Moving the bats from your house requires patience because bats often have several entryways, which will require a watchful eye and possibly extra hole coverings. Leave the netting up for a few weeks to make sure that all the bats have left, and then fill the holes with caulk to ensure that they can't return.

How do I keep bats near my yard once I have blocked them out of my house?

The best way to keep bats in the area gobbling up insects for you is to have a bat house set up in your yard before you remove the bats so that they will easily find their new home. It is important that the bat house be placed in direct sunlight for warmth, and fairly near a water source for them to drink from and hunt over (3 to 4 meters high east or south facing). Bats also like to hunt the bugs that swarm around street lamps. Bats are like electricity free bug-zappers!

Need help with a bat issue? The Wildlife Rehabilitation Society of Saskatchewan has volunteers ready to answer your questions from 9:00 AM to 9:00 PM.

Wildlife hotline: (306) 242-7177

www.wrsos.org