

Why are grey squirrels a pest?

The grey squirrel was introduced into Britain in the late 1800's. Since then they have become widespread in both woodland and urban areas. As the name implies they are generally grey in colour with patches of redder fur on their feet and face.

Grey squirrels often live and breed in roof spaces where it is safe and warm. They use loft insulation and other materials to create large nests (dreys).

They can cause damage by gnawing fascia boarding and roof joists, stripping electrical wiring and damaging stored belongings. These destructive activities increase the risk of fires and repairing the damage can be costly.

Food left out for birds can attract grey squirrels to your garden. They can cause damage to the local environment by stripping bark from trees (which can kill them) and by raiding bird nests for their eggs and fledglings.



Signs of squirrels

Even if you do not see squirrels you may suspect you have them. The following are signs that squirrels may be present:

- * Noises in your loft space
- * Droppings shaped like a raisin and ¼ inch
- * Damaged bird feeders
- * Damaged fascia boards and electrical wiring from gnawing
- * Loft insulation dragged into piles



All rodents (rats, mice and squirrels) can cause damage in roof spaces. Therefore, if you are not sure what is causing the problem, you may require a survey by a professional pest controller.

How to prevent squirrels

Prevention is better than cure

There are many things you can do to avoid having a problem with grey squirrels, many of them are simple and things you can do in your day to day life.

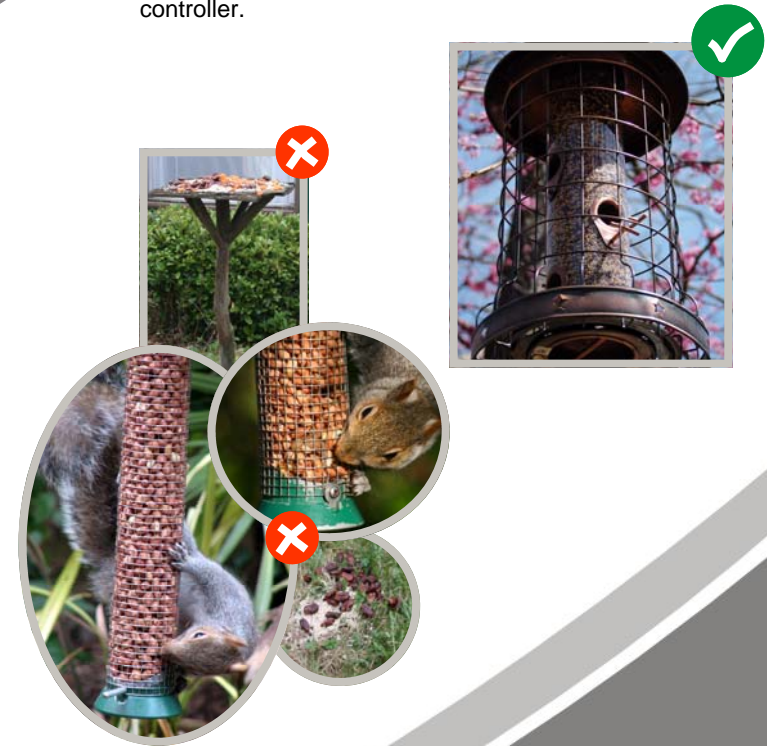
To reduce the attraction of your home and garden to squirrels you should:

- * Clear up and remove anything in your garden which might provide a food source for squirrels such as fallen fruit and spilt pet food
- * Not put bird food directly on the ground
- * Feed birds responsibly using mesh feeders or suspended tables
- * Use squirrel proof mesh bird feeders where possible
- * Cut back tree branches so they do not overhang your property
- * Trim wall climbing plants to prevent them reaching from ground to roof level. Squirrels are excellent climbers and will utilise anything to access your property
- * Place protective mesh on redundant chimneys

- * Repair any damaged fascia boards or roof tiles (if you can see daylight from inside your loft then you have a hole)

If your property is joined to another property (for example a terraced house) you should encourage your neighbours to follow the above steps too.

Leeds City Council recommends that active squirrel infestations are dealt with by a professional pest controller.



Control measures

Cage traps can be purchased from garden centres and if sited in a good location and baited with peanuts/maize will soon capture squirrels.

When choosing to use traps ensure you handle with care and always refer to the product label instruction **BEFORE USE** and follow these at all times.

Make sure traps are located away from children, pets and non target wildlife at all times.

When using cage traps it is important to remember that you then have the responsibility of disposing of the trapped squirrels. This must be done humanly or you could get prosecuted.

Please Note - Grey Squirrels are a recognised foreign pest species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This legislation requires that any live trapped squirrels are killed and not released.

For this reason we recommend that you hire professional pest controllers so that the works are carried out safely and in accordance with legal requirements.

Leeds City Council Services

The council offers competitive rates for the treatment of squirrels in domestic and commercial properties.

Our service will include:

- * Trapping squirrels in the loft – Cages or spring traps may be used (we do not use poison)
- * Daily visits to remove any catches, reset and re-bait traps
- * Advice and recommendations to help prevent future problems

For further information or to book a treatment please call us on 0113 2224406.



Squirrels

Pest information leaflet



Contact us

If you have any questions about the information in this leaflet or would like professional advice please contact

Leeds City Council Corporate Call Centre
0113 2224406
or email
pests@leeds.gov.uk

Further information and copies of this leaflet can be found on the council's website
www.leeds.gov.uk/pestcontrol