



Wildlife

Fact Sheet: Woodchucks

Woodchucks can also be referred to as groundhogs, gophers, and "whistle-pigs". They are shy, timid creatures who come into yards after a long winter's hibernation. The perfect habitat is in a suburban area, with houses, decks, lawns and gardens.

***FUN FACT:** Woodchucks have a unique body temperature range from about 99 degrees and can drop to as low as 37 degrees. Going that low helps them to hibernate in the long, cold winters.



- **Woodchucks seen in daytime:** This is normal behavior, and they are usually active during the day, particularly in the morning.

If a woodchuck is ACTING AGGRESSIVELY AND CHASING PEOPLE, keep people and pets inside and CONTACT THE PATERSON ANIMAL CONTROL

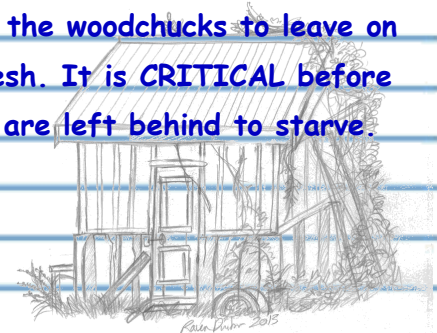
- **Woodchucks Circling or Falling Over:** Woodchucks can get the rabies virus, but they are more likely to get a parasite called roundworm (which creates rabies-like symptoms that affects the brain). This condition is fatal, and does resemble rabies.



KEEP PETS AND CHILDREN AWAY FROM THE ANIMAL AND THE PATERSON ANIMAL CONTROL SHOULD BE CONTACTED

- **Woodchucks under shed/decks:** Woodchucks take advantage of spaces where they can burrow to raise their young. In the spring and summer, mothers use this space to nurse her babies.

SELF-HELP OPTION: The simplest option is to wait for the woodchucks to leave on their own and then seal off their entry hole with galvanized mesh. It is **CRITICAL** before sealing it off to make sure no animals are entrapped or babies are left behind to starve.





- **Fear of Woodchucks Harming Children:** Woodchucks are shy creatures who scamper when they are scared. There is no cause for alarm as healthy woodchucks are not interested in children or pets. They are 100% vegetarian. When chased, they will just flee to their burrows in the ground.

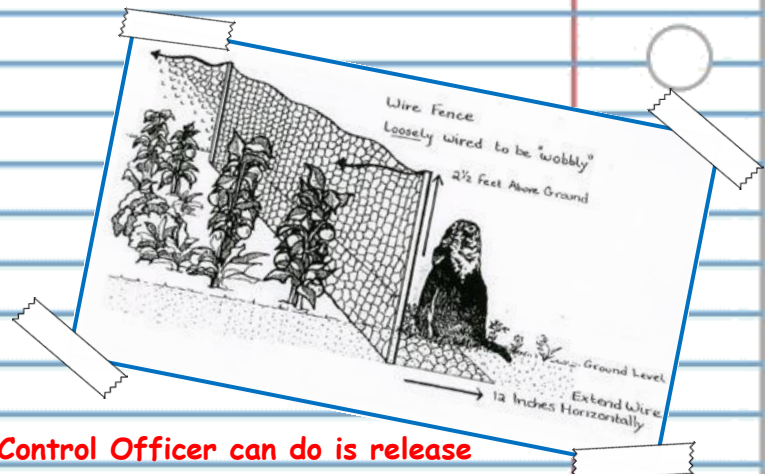
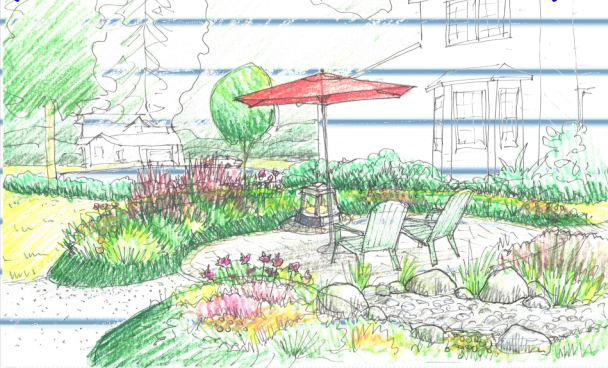


***FUN FACT:** A woodchuck's heartrate, when hibernating, can drop from about 80 beats per minute to about 5 beats per minute, and their breaths can drop from about 16 per minute to as low as about 2 per minute.

- **Woodchucks eating garden:** Woodchucks are vegetarian, and a garden would be their favorite place to get some food.

SELF-HELP OPTION: Make sure your garden is enclosed with secure fencing around the entire perimeter. With mesh fencing, once the fence goes up, a woodchuck won't be able to go into the yard again!

(Visit the link below for more information)

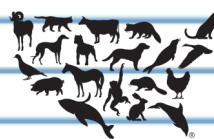


***If you trap a Woodchuck, the only thing an Animal Control Officer can do is release it back on your property depending on the situation. Make sure a wood board is placed underneath the trap. RESIDENTS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR AN ANIMAL THAT IS CONTAINED IN A TRAP. An outside wildlife service can help remove the woodchuck from the area humanely (A fee may be involved). ***

Any other questions?

Visit www.humanesociety.org/woodchucks for more information.

Or call the Paterson Animal Control at 973-881-3640.



THE HUMANE SOCIETY
OF THE UNITED STATES

