

SQUIRRELS - Control Advice

Description

The most common species in the UK is now the grey squirrel, which was introduced into the country at the end of the 19th century. The red squirrel is now reasonably rare in England and is a protected species, thus the following control advice only applies to the common grey squirrel.

Squirrels build a nest where they can escape other animals and take shelter from bad weather, typically a tree. They are occasionally found in loft spaces after gaining entry through holes in the roof (where they can cause damage by chewing roof timbers and stripping electrical cables etc).

Control Measures

The eaves, soffits and rest of the roof should be kept in good repair to prevent access by squirrels. It is also advisable to cut back any tree branches that overhang a roof, which could provide squirrels with easy access to a property.

If the access hole is not repaired, it is likely that the problem will continue. If it is a single animal seeking shelter inside a loft, it will usually go outside to seek food during a dry day and this would be the best time to carry out any repair work to fix holes and prevent re-entry.

Before such repair work is attempted, care should be taken to make sure any nest does not have baby squirrels in it (they usually have two litters each year between February and July). Blocking a hole up with a live nest inside is not only cruel, but a trapped animal may cause more damage in their effort to escape, whilst the decomposition of a dead squirrel can attract insects and cause unpleasant smells. Thus it is recommended that a professional pest contractor is employed to remove squirrels from a loft.

Crawley Borough Council's pest control officer can deal with squirrels in lofts and garages, but will not deal with squirrels outside a property or carry out structural repairs. For a pest control appointment, please telephone 01293 438000.