

## Foxes



Foxes living in urban areas can be welcome visitors in the garden but for some people, they are a nuisance. Foxes can cause damage to gardens and noise at night with barking and calling. The numbers of foxes in urban areas have achieved a natural balance which maintains itself.

As foxes have a territory, moving one to another place means another fox will take over the territory and is not a successful way to manage any problems

they may cause. The best way to manage foxes coming in to the garden is to remove the things they need to live happily.

### Discouraging foxes

Foxes are protected by law under **The Wild Mammal (Protection) Act 1996** which prevents them from being treated cruelly and stops acts meant to cause unnecessary suffering. There are no poisons that can be legally used against foxes.

It is important to remove the reason they visit your garden.

### Food

Foxes eat small animals and birds, leftover food from bins and if not properly protected, can eat pet rabbits, guinea pigs and chickens. They will also eat bird food. It is important to make sure any pets are in a secure hutch or pen with a solid base, a lock and that mesh is welded rather than chicken wire.

Rubbish should be put in a bin, not left outside in bin bags and avoid putting scraps and pet food out as foxes will scavenge. Also avoid using a bone meal fertiliser for the garden as foxes can think there is food buried.

### Shelter

Gardens provide a safe place for foxes to live. To discourage them, make sure the garden is not overgrown and remove things they can shelter under such as large items of rubbish (e.g. doors propped against a wall).

Foxes can also live under sheds if they have a gap at the ground. It is important to make sure the base is sealed which can be done with heavy duty mesh. When sealing a gap, make sure a fox is not living there by leaving a rag or light twigs for a few days. If they have not moved, it is probably clear but if in any doubt, wait until the end of breeding season in late summer before sealing.

## **Repellents**

There are a number of repellents that can be bought to discourage foxes from using the garden. They are designed to make the fox think it is not their territory. It is important to remove any faeces from the garden before applying the repellent and it must be applied regularly.

Approved repellents can be bought at garden centres and DIY stores. It is illegal to use other methods to discourage foxes (such as household or garden chemicals) and these can also be harmful to pets.

## **Further information**

[www.foxproject.org.uk](http://www.foxproject.org.uk)

[www.nfws.org.uk](http://www.nfws.org.uk)

[www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk](http://www.wildaboutgardens.org.uk)