

OPOSSUM PREVENTION

- **Seal garbage cans tightly**

-Use bungee cords or heavy objects to keep the trash can lids closed.

- **Remove possible food sources**

-Garbage, bird feeders, pet bowls, fallen fruit from fruit trees

- **Block access to hiding places**

-Identify hidey holes and block with wire mesh, sheet metal, or other durable materials

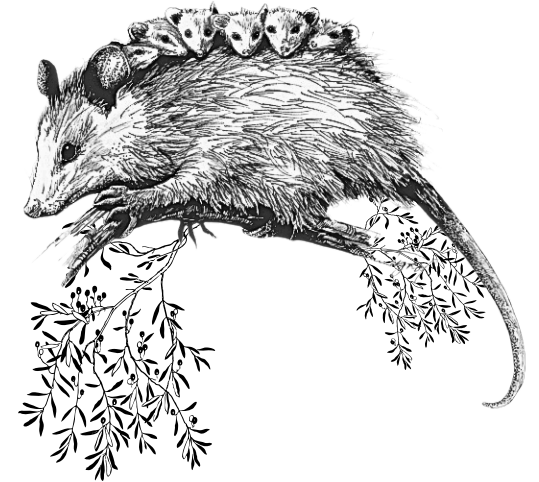
- **Scent repellents**

1. **Vinegar:** 50% vinegar, 50% water in a spray bottle.
2. **Ammonia:** Soak rags in ammonia and place them around where opossums tend to linger or 50% Ammonia, 50% water in a spray bottle.
3. **Peppermint Oil:** Essential oil with water to create a solution to use in a spray bottle.
4. **Epsom salt:** Generously sprinkle Epsom salt around your property.



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OPOSSUMS



**UNDERSTANDING THE NORTH
AMERICAN MARSUPIAL**

The Opossum

Opossums are nocturnal. Typically they are nighttime foragers but can also be seen during the day if food is scarce. They are omnivorous, feeding on almost anything. They will eat the fruit right off a tree or on the ground, garden plants, insects, bird eggs, or dead animals in the streets. In an urban/suburban environment they will eat pet food if left outside.

In rural areas, opossums build their nests in wooded areas, often near streams. They will use a hollow log, abandoned animal burrows, or dense cover. In urban areas they will build their nests under a deck, porch, sheds, attics, garages, crawl space, or any other undisturbed buildings.



Opossums belong to the marsupial family, just like kangaroos and koalas. After giving birth, the blind babies make their way up through their mother's abdominal hair and into her pouch. Opossums carry their babies in their cozy pouch until they are old enough to climb on moms back. Opossums are North America's only marsupial.

Gotta Possum?

The first thing to do is wait. Wait a few days to determine if the presence of the opossum is permanent or temporary. It's not uncommon for an opossum to live for a short time around an area that has food near by. After the food is gone the opossum will move on. The more attractive a location, the greater the likelihood that wild animals will visit.



The Truth About Opossums and Rabies

While any mammal can get rabies, the disease is more common in other mammals such as bats, raccoons, or skunks. The chance of encountering a rabid opossum is extremely low. Opossums have a very low body temperature which scientists believe blocks the contraction of the rabies virus and makes it difficult to survive.

Unfortunately, people usually assume opossums carry rabies due to their behavior. Opossums will drool, hiss, and bare their teeth as a defense mechanism. In general, opossums are gentle creatures and will only do this when threatened.

OPOSSUM FACTS



- Similar to Kangaroos, baby opossums are called joeys.
- Baby opossums are usually born between the months of February and June.
- Besides their natural predators in the wild, humans, cars, and cats are the biggest threat for this docile creature.
- Very few survive to adulthood, only living only 1-2 years if they do.
- Only joeys are known to hang upside down. Adult opossums use their tails to stabilize their position while climbing and walking.
- Opossums have 50 teeth.
- "Playing 'possum" is one of the most effective ways the opossum defends itself when its unable to flee, extreme fear places the opossum into an involuntary "coma".
- Opossums do not dig holes, as their paws are very soft and tender, much like a human hand.

Sharing The World Together

Please remember that most wild animals that visit our yards are just following their instinct for survival. As rational beings, we can learn to understand and live with our wild neighbors.