

Continued from page 35
when the zinc phosphide is placed.

Use of bait stations also is a practical control method on golf courses. Place approved anticoagulant baits, such as Ramik Green, in containers and distribute them throughout the area to be controlled. Space bait stations about 65 yards apart along borders or fences. Ground squirrels are then able to eat the bait throughout the day.

Bait stations can be made from three, 24-inch-long pieces of three-inch PVC or drain field pipe. Connect the pieces with a tee and cover the upright part of the tee with a removable cap. Stand the station upright and attach it to a fence post or posts driven into the ground.

Remove the cap and fill the tube with bait labeled for bait stations. Ground squirrels enter the bait station through the horizontal pipes and eat the bait, which is made available as it drops down from the capped vertical pipe.

Remember, anticoagulant baits must be eaten continuously for a three- to five-day period in order to be effective. If the bait stations are allowed to go empty, the toxicant will not work. Be sure to keep the bait station filled and to follow all label directions on the rodenticides.

Live traps can sometimes be used to remove a very small number of ground squirrels. In golf course situations, this may be desirable when the ground squirrels are near the clubhouse or some other public place. The small 5x5x18-inch traps work well and are available online. I recommend baiting with peanut butter that is coated with rolled oats.

When an animal is live trapped, there is often a desire to release the animal at a distant location. Research has shown this may not be a desirable, nor a humane, option. If a ground squirrel is released, it will normally try to return to its home.

Ground squirrels often die of exposure, starvation or predation. Releasing a ground squirrel with an existing colony will not work, because the resident animals will drive it away.

Drowning is one humane way to dispose of live-trapped ground squirrels. But shooting ground squirrels is not usually safe or practical on golf courses and is seldom an effective method of control. Shooting is expensive and time consuming and causes the animals to quickly become cautious. At best, shooting reduces the population only until late summer, when juveniles repopulate the vacated burrows.

Propane-exploding devices have been advertised to control ground squirrels. They are intended to fill the burrow system with propane and then ignite it to kill the rodents. The resulting explosion is certainly satisfying and some operators have reported some degree of control. Because the devices are expensive, it is usually difficult to demonstrate they are an economically efficient method of ground squirrel control.

Other methods have been proposed to control ground squirrels. Ultrasonic devices have not proven to control, disturb or displace ground squirrels when tested in unbiased research trials. Flooding the tunnel system with water from a hose will sometimes force the squirrel from a burrow if the burrow system is not extensive and soils are heavy. Avoid flooding burrows that are adjacent to foundations or structures that may be damaged by water.

Gumballs have been reported to clog the intestinal track of ground squirrels. Most of the claims are anecdotal, and although individual ground squirrels may nibble on gumballs, there is no evidence populations will consume enough to result in reliable control.

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Ground squirrels, with an average litter size of 10 and a maturity age of about 10 months, are very productive. One female can have offspring resulting in over 100 progeny in just three years.

Ad Index

| Advertiser | Page |
|------------------------------|----------------|
| Amvac Environmental Products | 15 |
| The Andersons | 3, 23 |
| Bayer | 13 |
| Becker Underwood | 1 |
| BiodiversityGSP | 39 |
| Bunkerstamp | 27 |
| FMC Professional | 9 |
| John Deere | Cover tip, CV3 |
| Kocheck Co Inc | 4 |
| Rainbird | 5 |
| Syngenta | CV2 |
| Turfco | CV4 |

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