



TURFAX™

of the International Sports Turf Institute, Inc.

The International Newsletter about Current Developments in Turfgrass
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JB Comments: Ducks and Moles

To the right are comments on discouraging excessive populations of geese. At our northern Michigan summer place I have had a similar experience. In this case the problem is ducks on boat docks and the excrement problem. My desk is an office with a glass overlooking the dock area 100 feet away. Each time ducks appear on the dock, I immediately go out and chase them off. If this is done repeatedly for about two days the problems is solved. The ducks remain in the area but stay off of the dock. Again, they do not seem to like the disturbance.

On another wild life issue, a severe mole problem developed on my turfed lawn. The numbers were such that trapping is erratic. For years I have given the recommendation of killing off the food source, specifically the soil insects. Following my own advice, I found the majority of the mole problem has been solved. The exception is occasional short tunnel probes into the area for food. Now my neighbor has the mole problem. Failure to provide timely control of the insect food source results in a distinct rise in the mole damage.

The next step is to get the rabbits under control.

THE GEESE PROBLEM:

A few geese are a nice wildlife feature on turfed golf courses and parks. These few may attract more geese, until the numbers exceed the capacity of the site. Defoliation of the grass cover and coverage of the soil with excrement become serious problems. Practical experience in the field is now accumulating concerning relative successes and failures of various methods to discourage excessive numbers of geese on turfed areas such as golf courses and parks.

The irritant sprayers that have been developed require frequent reapplication, and are quite expensive. To date they have not been used to any significant extent. The method of using trip wires along the waters edge is quite costly and has some limitations.

The method that seems to be achieving the most success is the use of a dog to herd the geese off the turfed area onto adjacent water areas. Using this approach at 30 minute intervals continuously throughout consecutive days eventually results in significant success. The geese eventually get tired of the disturbance and move on to more quiet sites. It may take from 8 to 14 days of continuous disruption of their feeding pattern on the turfgrass areas until the geese depart. The procedure may need to be repeated occasionally as visiting geese test a potential new habitat site. The key to success is a properly trained dog and a persistent effort.

NOTE: As of May 10, 1997, the ISTI will operate from the summer office:

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