



"Your Outdoor Source"

2442 State Route 27 – North Brunswick, NJ 08902 – (732) 297-1244 – Open Seven Days

## Mole Control and Management

### Scientific Name

- Eastern Mole *Scalopus aquaticus*
- Star nosed Mole



Eastern mole emerging from the ground. Note the teeth and the enlarged front feet. Photographer Unknown.

### Biology

- Moles do not hibernate
- Moles are insectivores, eating insects and earthworms
- Live a subterranean life

### Signs

- Raised ridges of turf or bare soil 3 in. wide X 2 in. high that run erratic. Density of three moles per acre; usually one per tunnel system.
- Mole hills indicate deeper tunnel below it.

### Damage

- **Tree Damage**-- Mole tunnels may serve as runways for voles, field mic, and others that may feed on roots.
- Moles produce erratic and extensive feeding ridges in turf with occasional, fist-sized conical mounds.
- Rarely moles feed on bulbs and roots of flowers and garden crops.
- Insect-foraging activity and tunnels may cause drying of roots.
- **Lawn Damage**-- Raised ridges may cause temporary drying to death of turf and impede lawn care operations.
- **Structural Damage**-- extremely rare. Water diversion through mole tunnels may occur.
- **Agricultural Damage**-- Little or local effects on root crops

Mole hills are signs of deep tunnels.





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A mole ridge or surface feeding tunnel Description: Opened to show one to two-inch wide burrow. Photo Credits: Dallas Virchow



Mole run of an eastern mole. Note how the ground is pushed up.

### Solutions

#### Habitat Modification

- Moles eat earthworms, insects, and invertebrates. Reducing prey populations may reduce mole populations.
- **Controlling Grubs**--Moles do eat grubs. But your lawn can be grub free and you could still have grubs. Nevertheless, if your lawn lacks other food sources, control of grubs MAY resolve your mole problem. If you decide on controlling grubs, the following advice may be helpful: White grubs overwinter as larvae. In spring, they move closer to the soil surface to pupate. White grubs found during spring are not a concern and applying insecticides to kill the grubs - larvae - of masked chafers, Japanese beetles, or even May/June bugs is not justified. For insecticide applications targeting only white grubs, the ideal window for applying products such as Merit, Arena or Meridian is between the 3rd week of June and mid-July. If insecticides are applied earlier in the season, such as in mid-May for bluegrass billbugs; some of these products can provide effective control of white grubs. However, this does not always work well. Lawn care services and homeowners need to closely monitor lawns in August for white grubs when insecticides are applied earlier than mid-June.
- Exclusion by metal barriers; rarely flooding. Metal perimeter barriers buried at least 4 inches may lower mole foraging activity; buried to 30 inches may eliminate mole travel.

#### Repellents

- Frightening Agents, such as vibrators of ground and sonic devices are unproven.
- Repellent castor oil-based repellents may be registered;
- Home-remedies of chewing gum, broken glass, repelling plants, and others are unproven.



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### Traps

- Traps (many types) and waiting with shovel at active tunnels. Occasionally cats and dogs take but seldom eat moles. Victor (harpoon), Nash (choker loop) and Out-of-Sight grip are most common. Pit fall traps of baited glass quart jars buried with lip at bottom of covered feeding tunnel.
- Traps placed in feeding tunnel ridges are NOT as successful as traps placed in travel tunnels.

Description: Designed and set into the mole's surface travel tunnels. Univ. of Nebraska



A scissors-type mole kill trap.

### Toxicants

- Talpirid
- Kaput
- fumigants, not generally recommended as the tunnel systems are too long and often too porous for gas to be effective.
- Do Not Use grain-based baits. Moles don't eat grain.