



Keeping Unwanted Animals Out of Your Yard: **Skunks**

Because skunks are nomadic, their residence under your shed, porch or outbuilding will resolve itself in due time: They'll just move on.

1. **Under a building.** Try spraying a mixture of eight ounces of dish detergent, eight ounces of castor oil, and one gallon of water around the area where the skunks reside. To determine if the den has been vacated, stuff newspaper in the entry hole; if animals are still present, the paper will be pushed out within 24 hours. The only way to keep skunks permanently out from under a building is to seal the structure off with chicken wire or hardware cloth. It's important to sink the wire down a few inches into the ground, bend it at a 45° angle, and then run at least 12 inches of wire out away from the building in a reverse "L" shape, so a false bottom is created—foiling any skunk who tries to dig back in. A note of caution: Be sure that all animals are out from under a structure before sealing it off; otherwise, the remaining skunks will starve to death.
2. **If you don't know where the skunks are living,** they have a feeding range of about 2 miles in diameter, but you find them in your yard, chances are they're feasting on something. Garbage cans should be leashed to a wall and covered with a lid that is not easy to get off, while compost heaps should be transferred to into a proper container. This should get rid of skunks unless they've found another food source.
3. **If you're still finding skunks in your yard,** chances are they're feeding on grubs and worms that reach the surface after it rains. There are such things as skunk repellents in granule form that you can spread around your yard where you think they might be hiding or gaining entrance. Whether this is the best way to get rid of skunks remains a hot topic for debate on many gardening forums.
4. Persuading the skunk to find a different home is a good way to get rid of skunks. Do some searching and try to find out where exactly these skunks are holing up. If it's between April and September, there may be babies that can't get out of the hole on their own. If that's the case you'll have to wait until you know they're all out feeding. Otherwise, if you know they're gone, use a piece of fencing dug far enough into the earth to prevent them from burrowing their way back in
5. **Traps.** Havahart makes a good skunk trap. If you can't afford that much money, then your local Audubon society or university biology department may be able to fix you up with one of their skunk traps, Baits recommended: chicken entrails, fresh beetle larva, peanut butter on bread crust. Once it's trapped, carefully approach the trap with a large sheet in front of you, laying the sheet over the top of the trap. Then it's up to you to relocate your little friend.