

Mole Control

If you haven't *seen* them already, it won't be long until you can *feel* them underneath you as you mow. Moles: one of a homeowner's biggest nuisances...

The soil upheaval is a result of the moles looking for food. With earthworms as their primary food source, moles burrow in the soil in search of them (and grubs), disturbing everything as they go. They can even uproot small plants and feed on flower bulbs.

Control is difficult. Almost everyone has a home remedy (chewing gum, broken glass, etc...), but most are inconsistent and unproven. Poison baits tend to fail because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not the vegetable matter typically the base of most baits. Grub control products might help with grub populations, but they aren't effective against earthworms, leaving the primary food source untouched. Traps are the best control method. They come in different forms (harpoon, choker, and scissor-jawed) and each are effective once their placement and setting is fine tuned.

For best trapping results, start by determining which runs are active. Some may be abandoned soon after construction while others are used for a longer time period. Determine active ones by using a broomstick or other object to poke holes in a number of runs. Come back a day later. If they've been repaired, they are active runs and should be used for trap placement.

Place traps in active runs by digging out a little soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap well so that the recoil will not lift it out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is in the center of the run.

Finish by pushing down two more holes, one on each side of the trap. The hope is that moles will be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. If you haven't caught a mole in three days, move the trap and start over!

For more information on mole control as well as "How-to" videos, see the K-State Research and Extension wildlife control page on moles located online at <http://www.wildlife.k-state.edu/species/moles/index.html> . Publications are also available from your District Office.