

General Information

There are over 100 types of this rodent in the United States. Gophers are easily identified by their long, hard front teeth, tiny ears, small eyes and short tails.

Size	5-10" long	Common Name	Gopher
Shape	Gopher	Kingdom	Animalia
Color	Brown with soft, fine fur	Phylum	Chordata
Legs	4	Class	Mammalia
Wings	No	Order	Rodentia
Antenna	No	Family	Geomyidae
		Genus Species	Geomys

Diet

Gophers are vegetarians. They only eat roots, trees, shrubs, grass and plants.

Habitat

Gophers are known for building complex underground tunnel systems. They use their front legs and long teeth to push dirt out of their tunnels and onto the grass above. Gophers like to be alone and only one gopher will be found in a tunnel system.

Impact

As a result of all their digging, Gophers can be responsible for ruining lawns, killing trees and destroying gardens, but they can also be an important part of the local ecosystem. They increase soil fertility by mixing plant material and fecal wastes into the soil. Their burrowing aerates or tills the soil. They can help speed up the formation of new soil by bringing minerals to the surface and they also serve as food for a variety of animals including owls, coyotes, weasels, and snakes.

Prevention

- *Use underground netting or screen fencing to protect gardens.
- *Build gardens in raised plant boxes to prevent gophers from being able to dig into the garden.
- *Gophers don't thrive on annual grains because the roots of these plants don't provide them with enough food, so try planting annual grains as a buffer strip to protect other crops that are preferred by gophers.
- *If you don't want to plant grains, you could try a buffer of bare ground or a barrier of six inches of coarse gravel.

To learn more about this and other pests, visit <http://www.pestworldforkids.org/research.html>