



California Ground Squirrel

California Ground Squirrels inhabit much of Southern California. They have an approximate body length of eleven inches, plus a six to eight inch tail. The coloration usually consists generally of gray, flecks with a lighter shade and a dark mantle over the shoulders. California Ground Squirrels are primarily herbivorous, foraging close to their burrows. These squirrels can be found in suburban and rural areas where they damage plants and create tunnels. Because their diet changes, depending on the season, so does the potential damage to many food-bearing and ornamental plants. Like the gopher, ground squirrels may damage irrigation lines and present hazards to machinery, pedestrians, and livestock with their burrowing activity. Ground squirrels are commonly seen along roadsides or other wide-open spaces. California Ground Squirrels have a gestation of a month, having one litter per year, with an average of 7 young per litter.

Control

Control efforts are highly dependent on seasonal changes in ground squirrels activity level and diet. Destroying old burrows &/ removing brush will help with re-infestation. Here are three essential methods to aid in eliminating infestation of the California Ground Squirrel. It is critical that these three methods be performed at/near the entrance to their den:

- Trapping (box traps, Conibear traps, tunnel traps, etc...)
- Fumigation (Be aware of non-target species inhabiting inactive burrows)
- Toxic baiting

available at county agricultural commissioner's offices or retail outlets...

Ground squirrels are capable of carrying fleas which can transmit a bacterium responsible for sylvatic plague in wild rodents and both bubonic and pneumonic plagues in humans so it's best not to feed or play with them. Health officials dust the openings of burrows with flea powder to cut the flea population and the possible spread of plague vectors.