

# Nesting Skunk Facts

Michigan State University Extension-Oakland County



**Habitat**– In early to mid-May, female skunks look for nesting areas to give birth to their young. They will burrow under mounds of trash, under patios, under houses, under garages or any place that will give them protection from invaders. Skunks have an innate ability to know when open space exists under objects. By burrowing a short distance they seem to find their way into those larger openings where they have protection for nesting. People don't usually know that skunks have taken up a nesting area until a dog or cat encounters them. It takes about three months for the young to grow to full-size and leave the original nesting area. Approximately a month and a half after birth the mother will take her young out after nightfall on walks and return to the nesting area for security during the daytime. As development continues the skunks will slowly devel-

op their own defenses and feeding patterns, until a certain time when they leave the nest area all together.

**Eradication**– Skunks can be discouraged from entering human living quarters by building at least one foot deep perimeter of concrete around buildings and patios which will discourage burrowing and nest building. Once the skunks have made their nest, one should not attempt to fill their burrow with the young enclosed. The female skunk will only tear everything apart trying to free her young. Some alternatives for encouraging their departure are:

1. Wait until the skunks grow full-size and they depart on their own, or;
2. Place some cat food in the yard when the young are about two months of age; after dark the family will be attracted by the food out of their nesting area. While they are away, the opening to the burrow can be filled either by solidly tamping clay into the hole, or better yet, fill the burrow with cement. When the skunks return they will usually be discouraged and seek other locations for safety.



**Repellents**– Paradichlorbenzene mothballs (not naphthaline mothballs) will usually repel skunks if the mothballs are placed directly into the nesting area. If mothballs are placed directly in the opening and not into the nesting area the skunks will be discouraged into leaving. It may be necessary to take a plastic tube and force it down into the hole and then pour the mothballs into the plastic tube causing them to roll as near the nesting as possible. Mothballs will be effective in twenty-four hours to three days. (*Warning: If the burrow goes back under the house the mothball odors will likely come up through the house.*) Don't use flakes or cakes. Skunks have been known to pick up the cakes and carry them out of the burrow.

Another remedy for skunks is a smoke cartridge which can be purchased in most garden stores and in some drug stores. Simply tie two of them together, light them and force them into the burrow. Then seal the opening of the burrow. (*Warning: If the burrow goes back under the house the smoke will likely come up through the house.*)

Still another remedy that is quick and effective is to take two or three sanitary napkins, soak them in strong ammonia and, by using plastic tubing or a wire, force them as far as possible into the opening. Ammonia is very offensive to the skunk and will encourage their relocation to a new nesting area.

**Odor Removal**– Most home deodorants will not touch skunk odor. Rexall "CD Deodorant" is effective in oxidizing the oil that contains the odor. Also, 'Skunk-Off' is effective.

The following formula can be used on pets that have come in contact with skunk spray:

1 quart of 3% hydrogen peroxide

1/4 cup baking soda

1 teaspoon liquid soap

Because of the instability of these ingredients, **do not pre-mix**, and make only as needed. The formula defies normal marketing techniques because the chemicals become unstable when mixed and release oxygen in such quantity that a container or bottle would be ruptured.

## Would you like additional information?

Additional information is available on-line. Please see [MSU Extension-Oakland County's publications](#) as well as the [MSU Extension Bookstore](#) on campus.

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