

## **Pest advice - Grey squirrel**

### **What do they look like?**

The adult grey squirrel weighs 500g and is approximately 25cm long, with a tail of similar length. The winter coat is grey with a white underside, whilst the summer coat is brownish grey and shorter.



### **Where do they live?**

Grey squirrels build their nests in the forks or hollows of trees, using twigs, leaves and grass. Occasionally nests are made in the roof spaces of houses. Squirrels retire to their nests during wet or cold weather, but remain active throughout the year.

### **What damage do they cause?**

#### **To buildings**

Squirrels usually enter the roof spaces of buildings by climbing or jumping from nearby trees. Once inside they will tear up insulating material to build their nests. They will gnaw woodwork, plastic piping and electric wiring, which could lead to floods or fires. They also contaminate water tanks with their droppings.

#### **In gardens**

Squirrels will often gnaw on the bark of trees causing considerable damage. Squirrels will also take cultivated fruit and vegetables, dig up plants and bulbs, and dig holes in lawns. Often they raid the nests of small birds to steal eggs and young.

### **How can I get rid of them?**

#### **Proofing**

The most effective control method is to physically prevent entry to the roof space by blocking up gaps and entrance holes. Loose or damaged soffits should be replaced, and any remaining gaps should be plugged with tightly wedged wire mesh. All proofing work should be carried out when squirrels are out of the roof space.

#### **Poisoning**

Warafin may be used to poison squirrels in roof spaces, providing the formulation used is approved for this specific purpose. Other poisons and Warfarin formulations for the control of rats and mice must not be used. If poisoned, squirrels may die in inaccessible corners of the roof space. This will make it very difficult to recover the body and may create a fly nuisance or unpleasant odours.

**Cage trapping**

Legislation is very specific regarding this subject. This is to prevent any unnecessary suffering to the squirrel. This method of dealing with squirrels should not be undertaken by inexperienced people.

**Removal of food sources**

Reposition bird tables and bird feeders or fit squirrel proof tables and feeders. Do not feed the squirrels and when using pesticides always follow the instructions on the label.

**Professional advice & treatment**

Powys County Council does not undertake treatment for grey squirrels. Commercial pest control companies are listed on the internet, in the Yellow Pages and Thompson's Local Directory.