**Your Squirrels**

Have you watched the squirrels in your yard? If so, you’ve seen them run head-first down a tree trunk. Have you wondered how they can do that? A squirrel’s back ankles can rotate 180°, turning their paws all the way around to grip the tree trunk as they descend. Pretty amazing!

You’ve surely seen them bury nuts or seeds in your yard. Have you noticed that squirrels “sort” their nuts that they bury in different places? Either by the species of the nut or by size.

There are many squirrel species. Have you looked up the species in your yard? Your squirrels may be native or have been brought from elsewhere. If you have more than one species of squirrels in your yard, you might try to see if your native species is competitively “losing out” in gathering food for the winter.

Squirrels will take advantage of accessible attics, chimneys, basements and crawlspaces both to raise young and escape the winter cold. Many problems can be avoided by sealing entryways before squirrels take up residence. Half-inch mesh is effective for preventing squirrel entry.

**Do you have a problem with squirrels? If so, the Audubon Society of Portland OR suggests these eco-choices .** **. .**

“If a squirrel does take up residence in your home, it is important to determine whether she is raising young before attempting removal. Please remember that the squirrel breeding season in Portland can begin as early as February and extend all the way to November. If you determine the squirrel is raising young, it is best to wait until the young are able to fend for themselves before attempting removal. If you must remove squirrels sooner, use one of the repellent methods listed below that will allow squirrels the opportunity to leave on their own and take their young with them.

“Portland Audubon generally opposes the relocation of wildlife as a solution to human-wildlife conflict situations. In the case of squirrels, relocation is usually only a temporary solution, as the relocated animal will quickly be replaced by another of the same species.

“Relocation of squirrels has contributed to the proliferation of non-native species into new habitat. It is also important to note that different squirrel species have very different habitat needs. For example, the Fox and Eastern Gray Squirrels that do very well in our urban and suburban neighborhoods cannot survive in the dense forest of Forest Park.

“Finally, squirrels are territorial. Squirrels relocated into new habitat will inevitably have to fight with squirrels that are already established in that location. It is far better to look for local solutions when conflicts between humans and squirrels arise.”

<https://audubonportland.org/our-work/rehabilitate-wildlife/having-a-wildlife-problem/urban-squirrels/>