

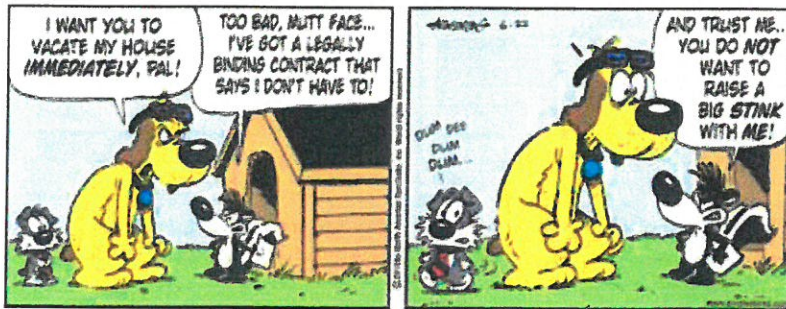
What's the Stink All About???



There's more to know about skunks than their unique appearance and smelly spray. It is more likely you will smell a skunk than see one. Persistent, faint musk smells under a building or woodpile may suggest that a skunk has taken up residence. Occasional skunk sightings in a neighborhood are not a cause for alarm. Skunks are generally easy-going, and will not intentionally bother people. In fact, skunks are beneficial by eating insects and rodents many regard as pests.

Warning Signs to Heed

Skunks use their powerful defense only when they or their young are threatened and cannot escape. Even then, they give ample warning —stamping front feet, a raised tail, hissing, short forward charges, and especially the twisting hind end in your direction. Move away slowly and quietly. By nature, dogs tend to ignore these warnings, so it is important they be restrained for their own good.



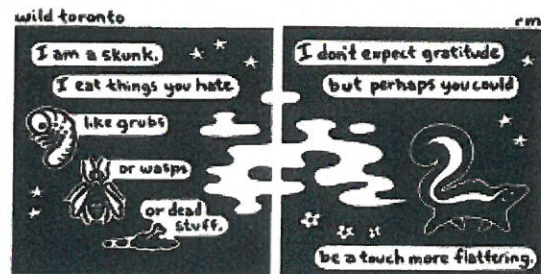
Tolerance

Because of the lingering odor, and fear of being sprayed it may be hard for some people to tolerate skunks living under a deck or old shed. But skunks need such shelter when they are most vulnerable (during

the coldest parts of the winter and when raising young). How many skunks are killed each year simply because of fear is not known, but it is surely a large number. This is unfortunate because it is common knowledge among those who work closely with these animals, that it actually takes a lot to get sprayed. The nocturnal habits of skunks, their unaggressive nature, and the generally beneficial role they play in nature by consuming insects and rodents are all good reasons to leave them alone until they have moved on their own accord (which they readily do) or can safely be harassed away from an area where they are not wanted.

Habitat Modification

Skunks are attracted to things like garbage and pet food left out at night and convenient denning sites, such as wood and rock piles, elevated sheds, openings under concrete slabs and porches, and access to crawl spaces under houses. Preventive measures, such as removing attractants around houses, will decrease the likelihood of an unpleasant skunk encounter. This includes securing trash, feeding pets indoors, or if fed outdoors, removing food immediately after pets eat. Skunks also dig for grubs in lawns when wet soil conditions push grubs close to the surface. When the soil dries, the grubs move deeper, so the problem can generally be stopped or prevented in the first place by not overwatering lawns.



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Contractual Health Agency for:
Bernards Township
Bernardsville Borough
Chester Borough
Long Hill Township
Mendham Borough
Mendham Township
Peapack and Gladstone Borough

Removal from a Window Well

It is not uncommon for a skunk, thanks to weak eyesight, to stumble into a window well and become trapped because of their poor climbing abilities. If a skunk becomes trapped in a window well or similar steep-sided pit, provide a means of escape. Place a rough board (or one with cleats, carpet, toweling, chicken wire, or other material to give the animal traction) that is long enough to serve as a ramp out of the well. Skunks are poor climbers, so the board should lean no steeper than a 45-degree angle. Trying to stay out of sight of the skunk and slowly and carefully lower the board. Regardless of how you end up getting the skunk out, prevent the situation from recurring by installing covers over window wells.

Behavior

Even though skunks are mostly active at night, they sometimes look for food by day particularly in the spring, when they have young and may be extra hungry. Don't be concerned if you see an adult skunk in the daytime unless she is also showing abnormal behaviors:

- Limb paralysis
- Circling
- Disorientation, staggering
- Uncharacteristic tameness
- Don't approach the skunk yourself. Call your local animal control officer or police department for assistance.
- Neutralizing odors



"MAYBE I SHOULD BUY IT ALL."

The traditional remedy for a "skunking" is a tomato juice bath. To neutralize the smell, however, the chemicals in the spray must be changed into a different type of molecule, and tomato juice does not do that. Tomato juice can, along with vinegar, and any other mildly acidic solution, will wash off the oily spray to at least reduce the smell. Odor neutralizers are also for sale on the market that works with amazing effectiveness to eliminate skunk smells.



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