



**This news release from K-State Research and Extension is available online at <https://ksre-learn.com/mole-control>

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Moles on the move: Traps are most effective control method

K-State expert offers advice on protecting home lawn

K-State Research and Extension news service

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Considering they spend most of their time underground, it may seem surprising the damage that moles do above ground.

As they forage for food, moles are known to make travel lanes that cause meandering paths of upheaved soil in home lawns and farmsteads. Moles do not feed on plant matter, but they can still cause damage by disturbing roots and uprooting small plants.

Some tunnels may be abandoned soon after they're built, while others are used for a period of time.

Kansas State University horticulture expert Cynthia Domenghini said homeowners have come up with many remedies – chewing gum, noisemakers, broken glass, bleaches, windmills and human hair among them – but none have provided consistent or reliable control.

“Poison baits also fail to work because moles feed on earthworms and grubs, not vegetable matter,” Domenghini said. “Even grub control products are ineffective because they do not control earthworms,” which are the primary food source for moles.

Grim as it may sound, traps are the best control method for moles, according to Domenghini and wildlife experts at K-State who have researched safest methods for controlling the mole population.

“There are three types of traps: harpoon, choker and scissor-jawed,” she said. “Each can be effective but may take some time to master.”

She offered the following advice:

- Because moles use some tunnels more than others, use a broomstick or similar item to poke holes in a number of runs. Check a day later to see which runs have been repaired. These are the active runs.

- Place a trap in an active run by excavating soil, placing the trap and then replacing loose soil. Secure the trap so that the recoil will not lift the trap out of the ground. Make sure the triggering mechanism is not in the center of the run.
- Push down two holes, one on each side of the trap. Moles should be caught when they try to repair the tunnel. Move the traps if no moles are caught within three days.

Domenghini and her colleagues in K-State's Department of Horticulture and Natural Resources produce a weekly [Horticulture Newsletter](#) with tips for maintaining home landscapes and gardens. The newsletter is available to [view online](#) or can be delivered by email each week.

Interested persons can also send their garden and yard-related questions to Domenghini at cdom@ksu.edu, or contact your [local K-State Research and Extension office](#).

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FOR PRINT PUBLICATIONS: Links used in this story
K-State Horticulture Newsletter, <https://hnr.k-state.edu/extension/info-center/newsletters/index.html>

K-State Research and Extension local offices, <https://www.ksre.k-state.edu/about/statewide-locations.html>

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