



For more information on urban wildlife in Saskatoon visit www.saskatoon.ca/wildlifemanagement or contact City of Saskatoon Pest Management at 306-975-3300.

Pocket Gopher



Recognizing a Pocket Gopher

Appearance

- Fur is light brown to black and lighter on the underside
- Front claws modified for digging
- Eyes almost closed
- Body length is 17-25 cm (6.7-9.8 in) including the tail, weight is 90-100g (0.2-0.22 lb)

Behaviour & Habitat

- Named for the fur lined pockets on their cheeks that are used to store food.
- Northern pocket gophers are native to Saskatchewan and are common in Saskatoon.
- One pocket gopher is capable of constructing a large below ground network of tunnels (up to 75 square metres).
- Tunnels are used to find food and mates.
- Females have one litter of 4-6 young in May or June and the pups disperse in late summer or fall.
- Create distinct mounds of soil that do not appear to have an entrance. They use a soil plug to hide the burrow entrance.
- Pocket gophers will feed in gardens and fields and build mounds, which is a concern because of potential damage they can cause to crops and equipment.

Diet

These animals are herbivores and feed on many different plant species. Most of the feeding occurs below ground but pocket gophers will also feed on the surface. Pocket gophers feed in gardens and can damage vegetables, particularly plants with below ground tubers (e.g. carrots and potatoes).

Co-existing with Pocket Gophers

Advice for residents

There may be cases where pocket gophers are not problematic and co-existence is an option. If management is required, there are lethal and non-lethal control options. Consult home and garden centres for advice on managing pocket gophers on private property.



Since pocket gophers live below ground, they are commonly called moles in Saskatchewan and the term gopher is used to describe the Richardson's ground squirrel and other ground squirrels. True moles are members of the family Talpidae. There are no mole species in Saskatoon with the closest species, the star-nosed mole, occurring in southern Manitoba.

