

## PEST ADVICE - SQUIRRELS

### Grey squirrels

Grey squirrels were introduced into this country from America in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. They are mainly a woodland creature but are increasingly being found in urban environments such as parks and gardens.

Squirrels normally live in safe and secure dreys (nests high in trees). Most problems occur with squirrels when they take up residence in domestic buildings. They enter by climbing up walls and pipe work or by jumping from nearby trees.

### Life cycle

Grey squirrels have two litters per year, producing between one and seven young. They reach maturity in 10 to 12 months and the average life span is two years.

### Problems caused by squirrels

Once inside roof spaces squirrels can cause considerable damage. They gnaw timber and insulation materials and use to make nests. They can also gnaw through electrical cables, which can cause fires.

In gardens squirrels feed on fruits and also dig up and damage newly planted root trees and flower bulbs. Squirrels are attracted by bird feeders and will raid gardens for nuts and birdfeed.

### Control

Squirrels should be stopped from entering roof spaces by blocking gaps and entrance holes with tight fitting, wedged wire netting. Before carrying out such work you must check that there are no live squirrels present. By making as much noise as possible and doing the work mid-morning should ensure that no squirrels get trapped.

If proofing is not an option you will have to consider using a private pest Control Company who will either use warfarin poison or trap the squirrels. Authorised people can shoot squirrels in woodland areas only. Environmental measures, such as cutting back trees and fitting anti-squirrel collars to pipework, can also help. Animal repellents can also be used with some effect.

Although Islington Council does not offer a service for getting rid of squirrels, we can provide information and advice. Please contact our support team on:

**Tel: 020 7527 3190**

**Fax: 020 7527 3210**

**E-mail: [pest.control@islington.gov.uk](mailto:pest.control@islington.gov.uk)**