What is the Difference Between Moles and Voles by Harry Ross

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Most likely you have heard of both voles and moles, but do you know what is the differences are between these two-troublesome-to-your-yard animals?

The Mole

The mole is a small mammal that can cause gardeners a lot of headaches. However, this is not the pest responsible for munching on roots and stalks, thereby killing off the prized plant. Moles are carnivorous. They prefer the slinky, slimy earthworm over your garden delights. Technically, this removes them from the rodent family, though many will refer to them as such. So, why does a person with moles note frequent damage to their veggies? This is the number one complaint heard by New Jersey pest control companies. There are a couple of reasons for that.

The first is that a moleâ€™s burrowing through the earth can push the plant roots upward or disrupt their stability all together. Furthermore, actual rodents, being very resourceful, will use the tunnels created by the underground dwellers to gain invisible access to vegetation above.

The Vole

Looking much like a mouse, the vole is one of those rodents that would be happy to reuse the pathways already cut through the earth. This pest is a true rodent and it does love a good salad. This species thrives on all sorts of plant life including the bases of trees and shrubs, but also your garden treasures. Flower bulbs, potatoes and many plant roots combine to create the ideal vole diet.

They, too, dig pathways through the earth, but, because of their foods of choice, they may burrow directly through root systems, which can kill off young plants or cause dieback in small trees and shrubbery.

Getting Rid of Moles

Though they may not be after the fruits of your labor, they can wreak havoc on the lawn and given other pests direct access to your tasty treats, so moles must go. Their paths are most evident in the spring and fall, particularly if there is a lot of rain fall. They do not always travel near the surface of the earth.

Moles will use the shallow pathways for feeding only. Deeper tunnels, where they spend a lot of time, are also used to connect those feeding paths. There are other pests that tunnel through the ground, such as the vole, which can lead some gardening enthusiasts on a never-ending hunt for a non-existent mole. Paths that are open to the outside world generally belong to voles. Moles will push earth upward and deposit excavated dirt in mounds at the surface, but one cannot see the actual tunnel.

Due to the differences in dietary habits, using a mole trap will be ineffective at catching voles. So, one should be sure to understand the differences. There are a few traps designed to catch moles, including live traps (for those who like green pest control), scissor traps, choker traps, and harpoon traps. There can be found at most yard and garden stores and should be buried just beneath the surface within a known mole path. Being blind, moles wonâ€™t even detect the trap in the path until they have landed in it, so there is no need to bait.

Trapping Voles

As mentioned above, voles tunnel at the surface of the earth, leaving paths that are purely detectable. They will also nest at the surface, under debris. They can also build nests within piles of mulch laid too closely to the trees or shrubs that they like to munch on. Live traps can catch and dispose of the problematic pests, however, there is also the option to try repellants or exterminates to get rid of this pesky creature.

For advice on which method works best, it is wise to consult your local wildlife pest control company. Beware that the poison baits can be harmful to pets and children, if consumed. The bait is most effective when placed in burrow openings, which means that you might have to pay attention to the rodentsâ€™ behavior patterns for a few days to determine the best placement for the bait. Similarly, snap traps must be placed in active vole paths, perpendicular to the trail. The addition of a small dab of peanut butter as bait can increase their effectiveness. Consult a professional exterminator in NJ for more helpful tips and advice.

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