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REDUCING NUISANCE CANADA GOOSE PROBLEMS THROUGH HABITAT MANIPULATION

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Abstract: Urban populations of Canada geese *(Branta canadensis)* cause considerable problems when large numbers congregate in parks, playing fields, and backyards. In most cases, geese are drawn to these sites to feed on the lawns. I tested whether geese have feeding preferences for different grass species. Captive Canada geese preferred Kentucky bluegrass *(Poa pratensis)* and disliked tall fescue *(Festuca arundinaceae)* over colonial bentgrass *(Agrostis tenuis* cv. Highland), perennial ryegrass *(Lolium perenne),* and red fescue *(Festuca rubra).* They refused to eat some other ground covers such as pachysandra *(Pachysandra terminalis)* and English ivy *(Hedera helix).* These results suggest that goose numbers at problem sites could be reduced by changing the ground cover. I also compared the characteristics of foraging sites used by geese to other foraging sites that geese avoided. Occupied sites were more open so that geese had clearer visibility and greater ease in taking off and landing. This suggests that goose numbers at problem sites also could be reduced by planting tall trees to make it harder for the geese to fly away, and planting bushes and hedges to obstruct a goose's visibility.

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