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EC1543 Control of Moles

O. S. Bare

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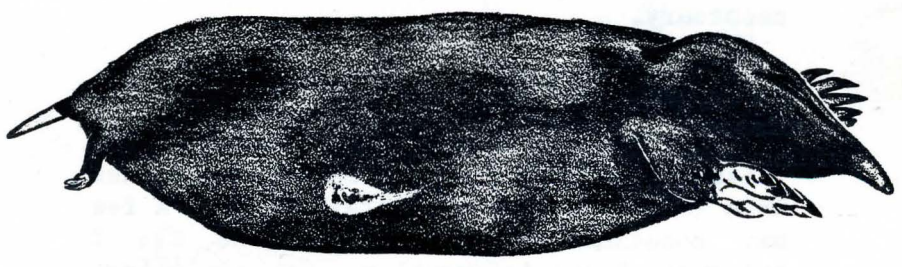
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Control of Moles



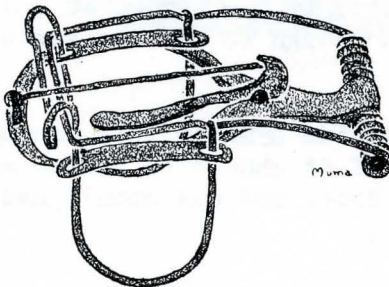
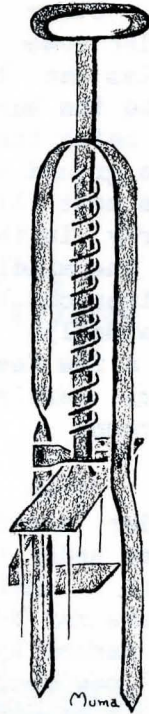
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CONTROL OF MOLES

A mole's food consists mainly of angle-worms, grubs, beetles, snails, and other live animals. Under natural conditions moles are considered to be beneficial even though they may feed to some extent on plant parts and softened seeds that they find while burrowing. Unfortunately, they destroy many plant roots and seeds by their burrowing and make unsightly ridges through lawns and gardens. The burrows also cause the soil to dry out in hot dry weather, or sometimes wash badly when heavy rains come on sloping ground. Therefore, these animals must often be considered pests and control measures are necessary.

Control of moles is not easy. Poisoned baits are not consistently successful as it is difficult or impossible to successfully imitate in a bait the live animals that make up a large part of the mole's food. A few may sometimes be poisoned, but the use of poisoned baits is usually disappointing. Although it is slow, trapping moles by means of special mole traps is the only really dependable method of control. Traps of the harpoon and choker loop types are most commonly used. Possibly more of the harpoon type traps are used than of all others combined. Most dealers sell a mole trap of this type. This trap should be set astride the ridge that marks the mole's burrow. First, press the ridge down just enough to close

the burrow for 5 or 6 inches, but not enough to pack the soil tightly. If the soil is packed, the mole will not try to go through it, but will burrow around the trap. Set the trap so that the trigger or pan rests on the surface of the pressed-down soil. In forcing his way through the closed burrow, the mole springs the trap and is pierced by the harpoon spikes. Full directions for setting accompany such traps.



Other methods of control may succeed under some circumstances. In some cases, moles can be drowned out by turning a hose into the burrows, and some gardeners watch to catch them working and throw them out of the ground with a pitchfork or spade. They are most likely to be found working fairly early in the morning or from 11:00 to 1:00 in the middle of the day. They may often be driven out by dropping moth balls or concentrated lye into their burrows at intervals of a few feet. In many such cases, however, they merely move into a neighbor's yard or garden.

Often a mole's nest can be located under a sidewalk or clump of shrubbery or even under the base of a tree. By prodding with a small iron rod, the burrow or nest there may be found. In such cases they can be gassed by running a heaping tablespoonful of powdered calcium cyanide or a few tablespoonfuls of liquid carbon disulphide into the nest and then closing the hole. When the ground is quite moist, calcium cyanide often gives good control if blown into the runways with a foot pump or hand-type duster. It usually is useless if the ground is quite dry or is cracked enough to let the gas escape.

CAUTION -- Calcium cyanide is a dangerous poison. Cans of it should be opened and used only out of doors and one should avoid inhaling the fumes.