



*Pictures by David Ward*

**Wash off and Get off:** A citronella scented spray or gel, which neutralises scent marking and urine smells. Can be used on hard surfaces.

As with all products, make sure you read the instructions for application. Other products are available. Ask at your local pet shop, garden centre or DIY store.

### *What else can I do?*

- Repair any broken fencing where foxes may be entering your garden.
- Raise the height of bird tables as foxes love nuts and fat.
- Keep your garden tidy and help your elderly or disabled neighbour in preventing their gardens becoming overgrown.
- Tie refuse sacks and keep them secure in a dustbin with a locking lid.
- Only put your refuse out on the collection day as dogs, cats, birds and foxes will tear them.
- Vulnerable pets kept in the garden must be protected by use of fox-proofed cages and pens.
- Vacated fox earths must be filled in securely using earth and rubble to prevent re-use.

The Council's Animal Welfare Service can offer further advice and deal with sick and injured foxes. The service does not trap or remove healthy foxes.

**Animal Welfare Officer:** Tel. 01992 564153  
**Animal Warden:** Tel. 01992 564077

**Additional help and advice can be obtained from the Fox Deterrence Helpline**

**Tel. 0906 272 4411**



This leaflet is produced to offer advice to local urban residents and is published by Epping Forest District Council Environmental Service Animal Welfare

[www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk)

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*Picture by Amy Ellice aged 6 yrs.*

### **Foxes and how to live with them**

The Red Fox is now a common sight throughout Epping Forest District, seen regularly in town gardens, the forest and country areas.

Foxes show how wildlife can live side by side with people. Most of the time they are hardly noticed, while many people enjoy seeing them around.

On occasions, the urban fox can become a nuisance by fouling, damage to plants or actual

residence in the garden. Here we look at ways to counter the presence of unwelcome foxes humanely realising that the urban fox is not a new phenomenon and is here to stay.

### The fox's year

Around mid-December the female fox (the vixen) and the male fox (the dog fox) will be pairing up to mate. At this time the vixen may start digging beneath garden sheds or in soil banks to establish a den or burrow (known as the earth).

During March or April the cubs are born, usually four or five to a litter.

Towards the end of April into May, the boisterous cubs will emerge from the earth. The more forward cubs may be quite adventurous with little regard for human audience. As the cubs develop there may be an increase in nuisances like fouling, leftover food and digging.

By mid-summer although still sociable, the cubs may be living separately and starting to travel further in search of food.

As autumn approaches the cubs start to go out and find their own territories leaving the area. Being territorial and with the need to find sufficient food, this naturally regulates fox numbers so an area does not get overrun.

By October, the new cubs' coats thicken up for winter making it hard to tell them apart from full adults.



Picture by David Ward

### What do urban foxes eat?

Foxes are opportunist feeders and whilst their diet will include scavenged food, largely their prey consists of rodents, rabbits, birds and insects. Seasonally they will take fallen apples, pears and blackberries.

Unfortunately, foxes will kill pets such as rabbits and guinea pigs if they can reach them. Generally cats and dogs are not at risk from the urban fox.

### If a fox becomes a nuisance

Normally a flighty animal generally fearful of people, on occasions a fox may appear quite bold, entering gardens in broad daylight with people nearby. Foxes

are sometimes noisy making loud howling noises at night but making a sudden noise yourself can scare the fox off.

Most fox nuisances consist of digging in flowerbeds or lawns, fouling, scent marking or creating an earth under a garden shed.

Trapping and relocation of healthy foxes is not viable on economic and practical grounds. For the majority of urban fox problems the answer is to attack the territory, not the animal. Removing a fox from the area creates a vacant territory for another fox to move into.

First, look at why the fox is attracted to your property and how this attraction can be removed. At this stage, advice from the Animal Welfare Officers can be sought.

If you cannot directly remove the attraction, the use of chemical repellents may help, although these should not be put into the fox's earth.

### Repellents

**Get off my garden:** A scented jelly granule. Good at preventing repeated digging in soil areas. A useful alternative to Renardine when a repellent is needed close to a domestic residence or office.

**Scout and Stay off:** A spray, which works well on lawns and vegetation, especially against fouling.