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ASK CYNTHIA: Reader Requests



Dear Cynthia

We are having a problem with skunks coming in the backyard and eating our plants and cat food. Sometimes they spray and it's awful. Any solution? Thanks for your help.
Susan, Orinda

Dear Susan:

Sounds like you have a smelly problem! Skunks are scavengers that invite themselves to dine wherever they smell food. They will dig in a garden for insects and they'll eat plants, too, but I believe they are coming for the cat food. First thing to do is to remove any pet food and batten down the garbage cans. Clients have used mothballs placed around the perimeter of a yard to keep the small critters away, but I personally have not had success with this method. Normally once you remove the food source, you control the problem unless they are truly attracted to your delicious garden.

The more urgent concern with skunks is the possibility of encountering a rabid animal. Vector control encourages homeowners with a skunk issue to contact them for trapping

and removal. They will lend a trap to you for a first visit. You place the trap with food inside at the place where the skunks are visiting. When you've captured the skunk you call them and they arrive within 24 hours to euthanize it. To contact Vector Control in Contra Costa County, call (925) 685-9301 or visit www.ccmvcd.dst.ca.us. If you have continued problems, it is recommended that you buy a trap. I ordered mine through The Snare Shop. They are called Super Tuff Trap #6, cost approximately \$50 each plus shipping and are humane ways to catch squirrels, cats, opossums, or any small critter. This company has snares for bears and mountain lions, too. Hope you don't need those! Go to www.snareshop.com.

Keep lots of tomato juice on hand until you've solved this stinky scenario.

Cynthia Brian

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Cynthia will answer questions when space permits.

Email your comments or questions to Cynthia@GoddessGardener.com

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