

Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Gremlins of the garden



A Kingsnake is a friend, not foe.

Photos Cynthia Brian

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Raccoons

If you are hearing scratching noises in your attic, it's not the walking dead. You could have rodents or raccoons. Raccoons will walk on a tree branch to access your roof and set up a den in the spaces above your ceiling. They also are attracted to garbage, pet food, bird feeders, bird nests, and they kill poultry. Raccoons are major hosts of rabies in the United States. Make sure to cut your tree branches back at least six to eight feet from your roof to protect yourself from these masked marauders as well as from fire laddering. Deter raccoons from setting up house with cayenne pepper sprinkled wherever needed and spray your shrubs and bushes with a solution of a bottle of hot sauce mixed with water.

Wild Boars

Wild boars destroy yards, damage fences, and are a danger to humans. The destruction of property by feral hogs costs agriculture over \$1.5 billion annually. They compete with wildlife for food and negatively impact our natural ecosystem, increasing soil erosion and decreasing water quality. Their trampling, rooting, and digging have devastated numerous lawns and gardens locally. Wild hogs are a horror show.

Pesky Players

Squirrels, deer, and turkeys are a nuisance to homeowners.

Squirrels

Bushy-tailed squirrels strip fruit and vegetables from trees and vines before it is harvest time and often take up residence in homes. I've witnessed squirrels scampering on my fence with an apple from my tree that was bigger than his head. They have denuded my pis-



The left-over cat food enticed this skunk to the patio.

tache trees of their unripe berries and stolen all the chestnuts from the trees. Nevertheless, I enjoy their aerial antics and circus acrobatics as well as their lively chatter.

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A chatty squirrel eats the berries at the top of a pistache tree.