

## Pocket Gophers: Biology and Damage Management

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### Gopher Biology

- Live in the soil, spending a small amount of time above ground to feed, find new territory, or get around obstacles
- 3 species in Arizona
- 5-7 inches long (without tail)
- Large head
- Long, sharp, chisel-like teeth
- Powerful front legs with long claws



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### Gopher Biology (cont.)

- Short tail with tactile hairs
- Pouches on both sides of head to hold food and soil
- Have one or two litters per year (usually 3-4 per litter)
- Soon after weaning, the young leave the nest and disperse above ground
- Adults live solitarily (except when mating)



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### Feeding

- Plant Feeders
  - Roots encountered underground
  - Surface feeding a body length or so away from burrow openings
  - Pulling plants into burrow from below



- Preferred Foods Include:  
alfalfa, grasses, root crops, tap rooted weeds, shrub roots, tree roots, garden crops



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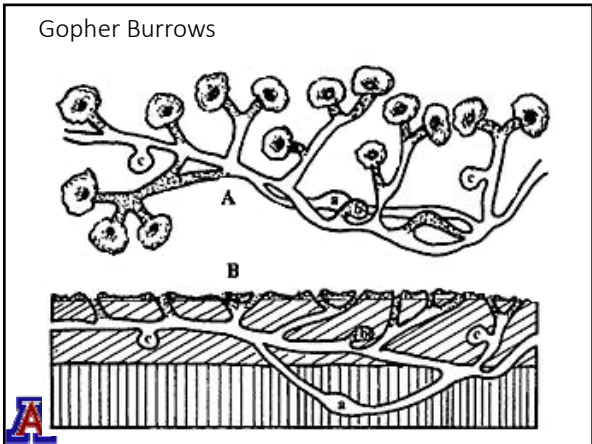
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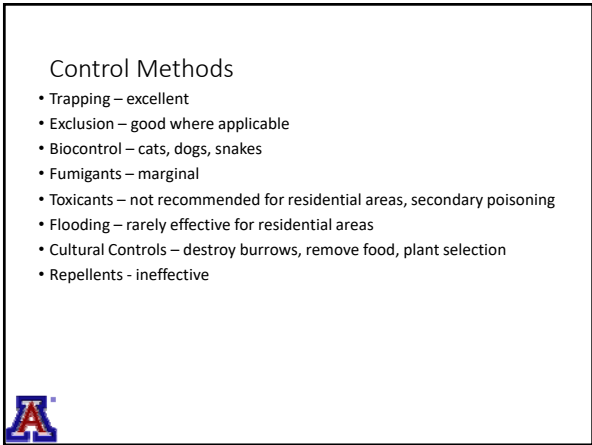
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### Sonic Devices Are Not Effective



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### Trapping

- Lethal traps are the only effective method



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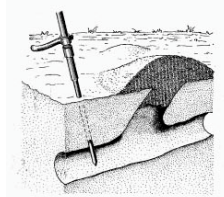
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### How To Set A Trap

- Two traps wired to a stake
- Locate main tunnel using probe
- Set one trap in each direction
- Cover the hole
- Obliterate fresh mounds
- Check the following day
- Reset as needed



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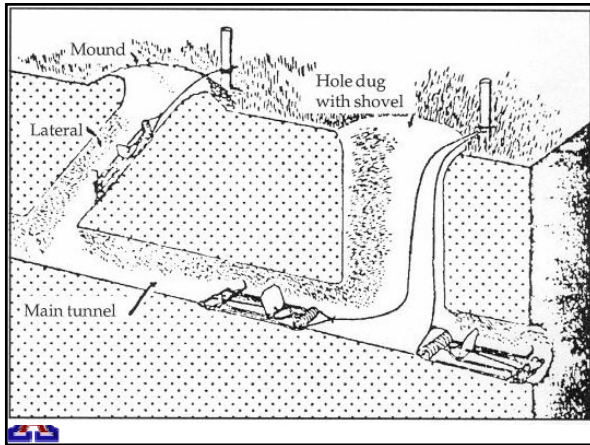
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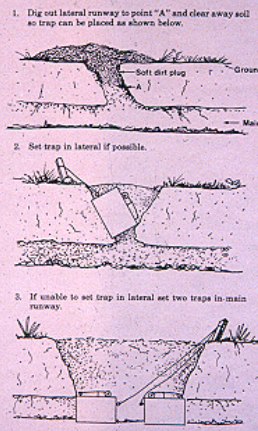
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### Box Traps



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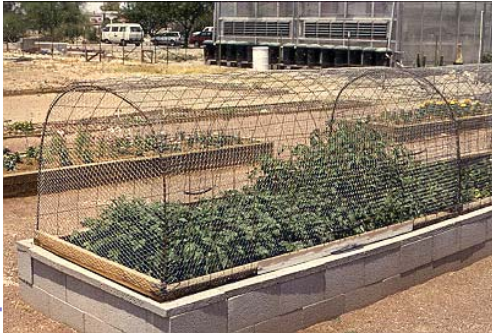
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### Exclusion



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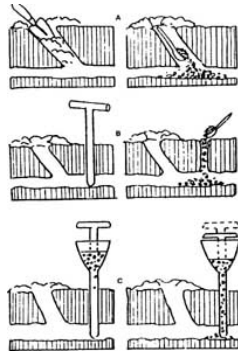
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### Toxicants

- Strychnine on grain
- Other products too
- Can be dangerous to non-target organisms if not used correctly



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### Cultural Controls

- Weed Control
- Flooding only works when:
  - The entire field is flooded
  - Soils are porous
  - Gophers are below the high water mark



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Biocontrol

- Dogs/Cats
- Coyotes
- Owls
- Snakes



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Experimental Device



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Experimental Device



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Repellents are Ineffective

- Gopher Purge (*Euphorbia lathyris*)
- Human Hair
- Juicy Fruit Gum
- Irish Spring Soap
- Chocolate Ex-Lax
- ???



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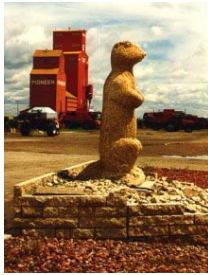
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