

# Moles

by Lyn Chimera

Every First Friday Cornell IPM (Integrated Pest Management) department has a Zoom program about garden pests. This month it was about moles by Nick Pallo, a specialist in nuisance wildlife from Rochester. We get calls on the Hotline about mole and vole damage. People usually don't know the difference, so his presentation began by describing the difference in a creative way.

- Moles - "M" make Mounds and eat Meat – grubs, worms etc.
- Voles - "V" make Valleys and eat Vegetation  
What a great way to remember the difference!

Moles live underground so are rarely seen. Their outward sign, mole mounds or hills, are volcano shaped mounds of soil above the ground. These are developed using the soil they excavate to make their underground tunnels, often called runs. There are 3 varieties of moles in NYS. Hairy tails are the most common. Star nose moles are the easiest to identify due to the 22 fleshy appendages around their nose which they use to detect vibrations underground. The Eastern mole is found in the NYC and Long Island area.

Moles breed in late winter and have a 2-3 year lifespan. They are active year-round, following worm trails down below the freeze line. Worms and grubs make up the bulk of their diet. The good news is they eat jumping worms. It was interesting that Nick recommended if you don't mind a few mounds in your yard, moles will help naturally control grubs and

jumping worms. Usually there are only 2 moles in one yard but given the right conditions there could be many more. You can tell by the number of mounds.

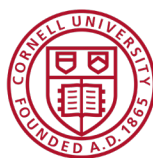
If you do want to rid your yard of moles, he suggested habitat modification is helpful. Moles prefer moist soil so keeping your lawn dry (no watering) is the first step. Cleaning up litter, debris and thick weedy patches is also helpful. Trapping is an effective method but it's important where and how you place the traps. He recommended underground traps are most effective and prefers the type that kills moles, so they don't suffer. Look for the run (an elevation in the soil) between mounds. There are also some environmentally suitable products available. Rolling with heavy duty rollers also discourages moles but will compact the lawn.

For more information on moles go to:

<https://extension.psu.edu/identifying-moles-voles-and-shrews>



Image Mole, Canva



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