



About Squirrels

- There are four types of tree squirrels found in California, two of which are native and two are introduced. The Eastern fox squirrel (*Sciurus niger*) and the Eastern gray squirrel (*Sciurus carolinensis*) were both introduced from the eastern part of the United States. The Western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) and the Douglas squirrel (*Tamiasciurus douglasii*) are both native.
- Tree squirrels are generally more active during the early morning and late afternoon, where they are often seen in trees, on utility lines, or on the ground foraging.

Squirrel Habitat and Food

- Tree squirrels eat a variety of foods including fruits, nuts, seeds, fungi, insects, bird eggs, and young birds.
- Depending on the species, tree squirrels can be found in agricultural areas, foothills, woodlands, valleys, pine-oak forests, conifer-forested areas, and cities.
- They nest in woodpecker holes, tree cavities, or in nests they build up high on a tree. Their nests are usually made out of shredded bark, twigs, and leaves.

Detection and Management

- It is easy to detect squirrels since they are highly visible during the daytime, but managing them can be fairly difficult, especially in urban settings due to the high food supply and shelter.
- Cut back trees that overhang roofs or are close to telephone lines to slow their movement around your yard.
- Bird feeders are highly attractive to squirrels and encourage their presence, but there are devices and methods available to deter them from feeding on the bird feeders.

Diseases

- Tree squirrels can carry diseases that can be transmitted to humans, such as:
 - Tularemia - can be transmitted through contact with an infected animal, contaminated drinking water, or inhaling contaminants.
 - Salmonellosis - usually transmitted through contact with feces and urine of infected animal.

Squirrel Damage

- Tree squirrels can cause damages around homes by gnawing on cables, invading attics, or by chewing on wooden buildings.
- They often cause damages to trees by stripping the bark to feed off of the inner bark.
- Gardens and turfs tend to also be damaged by squirrels when they dig holes to bury their food.

They Are Beneficial Too

- Although squirrels can cause damages to gardens and lawns and are often thought of as pests, they are part of our ecosystem and play an important role.
- Squirrels help disperse seeds for future plants and trees, and they also serve as a food source for other wildlife.