

## **Vale of Glamorgan Council Pest Control Service – Advice Note**

### **Squirrels**

#### **Grey Squirrels**

The North American grey squirrel was introduced into Britain from 1876. Mainly a resident of woodland, where it has replaced the native red squirrel, it is common in parks and gardens.

#### **Breeding Habits – When And Where Do They Nest?**

Squirrels breed twice every year; the first litters are normally born in late February and March with a second litter between June and July. The average litter size is 3 or 4.

The nest is normally built in the fork of a tree at a height of 2 – 15 metres from the ground. It is also common for them to nest in roof-spaces. The nest is built from twigs and leaves, lined with grass, moss and animal fur, or, if in a roof space, often formed from insulation material.

#### **What Do Squirrels Eat?**

Although the squirrel is omnivorous, the diet is mainly vegetarian, eating the seeds of most broad-leaved and coniferous trees. When available, bird's eggs, young nestlings, grain, fungi, buds and young shoots and inner bark layers on trees are also eaten.

#### **Signs Of Damage**

The most common damage caused by grey squirrels is the gnawing of tree bark which occurs mainly during the months of May, June and July. They also cause damage by robbing bird's nests, taking fruit in gardens, digging holes in lawns, uprooting of bulbs and also causing damage occasionally to electrical wiring and insulation when they gain access into roof-spaces.

#### **What Can Be Done To Control Squirrels?**

Pest Control companies able to provide this service can be found in the Yellow Pages or The Thompson Directory.

#### **Prevention Of Squirrel Problems**

Squirrels most commonly gain access to roof-spaces by way of overhanging branches from trees and/or a missing or displaced roofing slate or tile. If overhanging branches are to blame, they should be cut back to a reasonable length from the building. Missing roofing slates or tiles should be replaced, but first make sure that the squirrels are out of the roof space.