NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA 58102

snake control

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3 0109 00666 3622 Most people have a great fear of snakes even though nearly all species of snakes found in North Dakota are harmless and beneficial. The PRAIRIE

RATTLESNAKE is the only poisonous snake found in the state and its range is generally limited to an area south and west and immediately adjacent to

both sides of the Missouri river.

To control snakes, it is important to know the species causing the trouble and to learn something about its habits. If extensive control measures are deemed necessary, consult a wildlife authority who can help you decide on the most practical approach to the problem. Persistent searching and killing of a few snakes may eliminate the problem, if the snakes are found only in a limited area.

FOOD AND SHELTER

Snakes can be discouraged from inhabiting a yard or home by removing the food supply and shelter that attract them.

Rats, mice, frogs, toads, insects and birds are snake foods. Closely moved lawns and fields are less favorable to snakes than tall grass, weeds and brush.

Snakes like to hide under boards, flat rocks and trash piles. Along shore lines of lakes, rivers and ponds they will be found hiding under driftwood, rocks and old boats. Snakes like to sun themselves on logs, old jetties, or on brush hanging over the water. They are seldom found in clean, open areas around water.

There are no chemicals that can be applied effectively or safely to open areas. Elimination of

110. 225 food and shelter must be the first step in controlling snakes.

DOMESTIC ANIMALS AS SNAKEGUARDS

Turkeys are effective snakeguards. They gather around any moving object and their gobbling quickly attracts attention. Geese, ducks, and chickens will kill and eat the smaller snakes. For best results, poultry should be fenced in the area that is to be protected. Some dogs become expert snake killers, while others will give warnings when snakes are present. Hogs, also, have been known to be excellent snake killers.

SNAKE PROOF FENCES

A snake proof fence will keep out rattlesnakes and many---but not all-harmless snakes. Fencing the entire yard may be too costly. However, a small enclosure to protect certain areas of the yard or to provide a small space for children to play without danger of being bitten by a rattlesnake is worth consideration.

The fence is made of heavy galvanized (1/4 inch mesh) screen, 36 inches wide with the lower edge buried a few inches below ground level. The fence should be slanted from the bottom at a 30° angle with supporting stakes placed inside the fence. Gates must be tightly fitted and hinged to open inward.

SNAKES IN HOMES

Snakes usually enter a home while searching for food or places to hibernate -- these snakes are usually the harmless species.

To keep snakes from getting into the home, all points where they can enter must be blocked. Snakes will enter a home near or below the ground level and it doesn't require a large opening in the foundation



for them to pass through. Basement doors, windows and screens should fit tightly. Foundations, fire-places and chimneys should be checked for cracks or small openings. These must be filled or coated with cement. Spaces around pipes that pass through the outside walls must be plugged. Galvanized screen (1/4 inch mesh) or smaller can be placed over drains or ventilators, or even over large areas of loose construction that otherwise could be made snakeproof only at great expense to the owner.

When snakes get into a home, they will not breed in the basement. The job is to remove them and this must be done by physical means. Place some wet cloths on the floor where the snakes are likely to hide. Cover the wet cloths with dry cloths or burlap bags. They like moisture and shelter, so they tend to crawl under or between the cloths. The snakes that are caught can be disposed of easily.

In the event, many snakes invade the home, fumigation may be the only answer. Call a local exterminator to do the job. Don't try to do it yourself.

CONTROLLING SNAKES IN DENS

Snakes hibernate in many different places, singly or in large groups. Rattlesnakes may travel many miles to hibernate in small caves or rocky crevices. Den locations are often known by local people and other dens can be located by searching in places where they are likely to sun themselves before hibernating in the fall or before leaving the den in the spring.

Rattlesnakes often rest or hibernate in burrows made by other animals. "Rattlers" caught sunning themselves should be clubbed or shot. Those in a den can be trapped or gassed. To gas a den, place 2 tablespoonsful of calcium cyanide in a single heap, deep in the den by means of a long handled ladle. Seal all entrances to the den with rock and sod. Avoid loose soil as it may cover the cyanide. Larger amounts of cyanide must be used in very large burrows or small caves. It takes about 2 tablespoonsful of cyanide to each 5 cubic feet of den area. This method of gassing snakes will work under a wide variety of conditions, although the results may be unsatisfactory in rainy weather or when snakes are hibernating.

CAUTION: Cyanide is a deadly gas to man and domestic animals. It must be used out of doors and the user must avoid inhaling the fumes. Always store the poison in a safe place and keep the cover on the container sealed tightly. Extensive gassing of burrows should not be done unless snakes are known to be present as many furbearers and other wildlife will also be killed.

