RABBIT CONTROL in North Dakota
All wild rabbits native to North Dakota are a menace to forest and fruit trees. These rabbits eat the bark of young trees, often girdling trees. With seedlings, they cut off the tops.

Rabbits can be controlled locally by one or more of the following methods: (1) Poisoning, (2) trapping, (3) snaring, (4) hunting and by drives, (5) repellents and (6) wrapping individual trees.

Poisoning

One of the most successful methods of controlling rabbits has been through the use of poisoned bait, placed where livestock, poultry and pets cannot get to it. WARNING: Poison baits are dangerous when improperly used.

Both strychnine-poisoned alfalfa meal and strychnine-poisoned oats (gopher poison) have been used successfully to kill rabbits. This poison is placed along the natural runways of the rabbit, where it becomes readily available.
Pour the oats loose on the
ground, about a tablespoonful to a
setting. Place the alfalfa meal,
in wafer form, in a bait block.

A bait block is made by bor­
ing a hole 1/4 inch in diameter and
3/4 inch deep in face of a 5 inch
2 by 4. This block is then nailed
to the top of a 12 inch stake which
is stuck in the ground along side
of the runway.

How to set a strychnine alfalfa meal bait
block.

These strychnine poisons are
available through your County Ex­
tension Agent.

The carcasses of poisoned
rabbits can be used as food for
hogs and chickens only after the
entrails are first removed. Bury
entrails so they can not be dug up.

Do not use carcasses for hog
or chicken feed unless entrails are
removed. Do not feed these car­
casses to dogs, cats or foxes as it
may kill these animals.

Killing rabbits with strychn­
ine poison does not affect the
quality of the rabbit pelt.
Repellents

Repellents, most of which are paints or smears, are designed to discourage the rabbits from eating trees or shrubs which have this material applied to them. A repellent to be successful must not only protect the tree or shrub from rabbits but also must not be harmful to the tree itself.

Repellents are either painted or sprayed on the tree to a height slightly greater than the expected rabbit damage.

Of all the repellents known to have been used in North Dakota, the one found to be most successful is that worked out by the Fish and Wildlife Service, and known as "Formula No. TP-96A". This repellent is obtainable at cost through your local County Extension Agent.

The Canadians have developed a repellent that shows considerable promise and which can easily be made at home.

It is made by dissolving 2 pounds of powdered rosin in a quart of denatured ethyl alcohol. The unused portion of this repellent can be stored in a tight container. If the mixture thickens, thin it out by the addition of more alcohol.

Hunting and Drives

This method of control is very effective when ammunition is plentiful.
Trapping

Cottontail rabbits are easily trapped. A trap, such as illustrated below, has been used successfully to control cottontail rabbits on the NDAC horticultural plots. Jack rabbits and snowshoe hares are difficult to control by trapping, and other means of control should be used.

![Drawing of the trap used at the NDAC.](image)

Snaring

Snaring is an effective means of controlling snowshoe hares in winter, but is not satisfactory for cottontails and jack rabbits.

When snow is on the ground, snowshoe hares travel chiefly along main trails. Set snares along these trails at points where they lead under brush piles, logs, or other obstructions. If an open trail site is selected, it is well to put a barrier at each side of the "set" to prevent the snowshoe hare from by-passing the snare.

The snare should be constructed of No. 2-12 strand picture cord wire. At one end make a slip loop as shown in the diagram. Fasten the other end to a stake, small tree, or anchor of some type.
Wrapping Trees

Individual trees can be protected from rabbits by wrapping the trees with burlap or heavy paper. This wrapping is put on the tree in the fall and must be removed early in the spring to prevent damage.

Placing a cylinder of 1-inch chicken mesh around the tree is another effective protector. Stakes or spreaders may be used to prevent rabbits from pressing the wire against the bark and doing injury through the meshes. This guard can be left on during the entire year.

Fencing an entire plantation of trees with rabbit proof fence where there is danger of considerable snow drifting is not considered effective. During the winter drifted snow packs into the fence line, permitting the rabbits to walk over the fence into the plantation.

For further information contact your County Extension Agent.

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