



# VARMANT GUARD®

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Common Name: **Meadow vole; meadow mouse**  
Scientific Name: **Microtus pennsylvanicus**

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## MEADOW VOLE

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**Biology.** Adult body length (without tail): 3 to 5 inches

Adult body weight: 3/4 to 2 1/2 ounces

Gestation period: about 21 days

Litters per year: 1 to 5

Litter size: 1 to 11 young (usually 3 to 6)

Breeding season: year-round

Birthing season: year-round

Age at which young are weaned: 21 days

Activity period: mostly at night

Range: 1/2 to 1 1/2 acres

Primary foods: grasses, weeds, shoots, tender twigs, live bark

**Pest status.** Meadow voles are also known as meadow mice, orchard mice and field mice. They usually require dense grass cover and occasionally enter buildings at ground level. Being poor climbers, they cannot enter buildings via many of the routes used by house mice, deer mice, or rats, but blunder into the buildings more by



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accident. Meadow voles are always restricted to building areas near ground level. They are sometimes found in stables and barns, having entered as involuntary hitchhikers on bales of hay recently removed from the field.

Meadow voles may also move from farm or uncultivated land into adjacent home lawns, gardens and landscaped areas. Here they make their presence known by chewing unsightly, well-defined surface runway systems in lawns, digging shallow burrows in planting beds, girdling fruit trees, and feeding on a variety of ornamentals.

## CONTROL

### Physical / Mechanical Control

**Exclusion.** The best solution to the meadow vole problem is to rodent-proof buildings as one would to exclude house mice. Fine-mesh wire fencing or metal barriers (at least 12 inches high) will protect vegetable gardens and fruit tree trunks from meadow vole feeding damage and prevent voles from falling into swimming pools. To prevent the mice from digging under such fences, the bottom edge should be buried 6 to 12 inches deep. Meadow voles rarely climb even low wire-mesh fences.

**Live-trapping.** Sherman-type live-catch box traps (10" x 3" x 3" or similar) work quite well when placed next to walls. The vole's relatively large size makes ineffective some multiple-catch traps designed for the much smaller house mouse. If live-trapping is the goal, traps must be checked daily for captured voles. Live-trapped voles should not be released near residential areas.

**Lethal-trapping.** Occasionally, meadow voles enter buildings but almost never become established and reproduce there. Meadow voles are best captured indoors with mouse snap traps set in pairs at right angles to the wall. Expanded trigger models are most effective, and peanut butter often makes a good bait. Within buildings meadow voles may be attracted to baited traps but more often run into traps placed in their line of movement whether baited or not. Glue traps can be effectively used in some situations.

### Chemical Control

**Toxic baiting.** In landscaped areas or backyard gardens, rodenticide baits having a generalized label wording that lists mice and commensal rodents as target pests can be used with discretion to control meadow voles. Tamper-resistant bait stations should be used for application of anticoagulant baits at ground level, and these are

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best placed along vole runways or next to burrows. The same bait stations will also prove useful in controlling resident populations of house mice and deer mice. Alternatively, seed baits and small pellet baits can be placed deep into the meadow vole nest access burrows.



Meadow vole damage to turfgrass