

A New Method of Vole Control

by Linda Edwards

Voles (short tailed mice) can cause a great deal of damage in many crops. Unlike their long tailed relatives (who feed mainly on seeds), voles will girdle trees and shrubs especially in the winter and will feed on root crops of all kinds. They build, nest and live in shallow, underground tunnels. The main control of course is keeping the vegetation clear or very short around your plants or trees. These pests are hard wired to avoid open areas because that makes them vulnerable to predators. Doing that before winter is especially important.

This fall, when we noticed that the vole population was noticeably higher than usual, we tried something else as well. We filled a spray tank with water and went out into our orchard. One of the family dogs is particularly enthusiastic about sniffing out voles. Someone would follow with the sprayer as she sniffed along the rows. When she appeared to have scented something,

we would blast the area with water; this would expose and fill up the voles' holes and they would come to the surface. They were incapacitated enough by the water that either the dog would get them or someone could kill them. There were those who preferred stomping to clubbing but both were effective. Sometimes our human/dog combination would get 30 or 40 voles in a couple of hours. Considering where we were finding them (in the tree rows) and that each was capable of killing several trees over the winter, it was time well spent.

Having a mouser type dog helps but is not necessary. This method has also worked with someone going ahead of the sprayer, raking vegetation away from the base of the trees to expose the tunnels. In some situations I think a pressure washer could even be used. I shall probably try this in my sweet potato and parsnip patches next to the garage later this summer if damage starts occurring. ✓

Liquid 

Fresh Fish Fertilizer

After-harvest ground application of our product is highly recommended!

This completely natural, organic fertilizer

- is a natural biostimulant
- does not leach into watertable
- provides time-release effect in soil
- can be used as a root feeder, soil conditioner, foliar spray and composting agent

PACIFIC NATURAL BRAND

Pacific Natural is a cold processed, enzymatically hydrolyzed fresh fish fertilizer.

APPLICATION RATE:
5-10 gallons of undiluted Pacific Natural per acre (diluted at least 10:1, 3 times per year)

 **GREAT PACIFIC BIOPRODUCTS LTD**

7963 Webster Road, Delta, BC V4G 1E4
T - (604) 952 4333 F - (604) 952 4334
W - www.geatpacificbio.com

Environmental Farm Planning through COABC

On Vancouver Island and the Islands:
Derek Masselink
(250) 629-6934
dmasselink@cablelan.net

On the mainland:
Elaine Spearing
(250) 747-3237
elaines@quesnelbc.com

Sponsored by:
BC Agriculture Council
Investment Agriculture
Government of Canada
Government of BC