

Porcupines

Stretching up to about 90 cm in length with a coat covered in around 30,000 hardened barbed quills, the porcupine can be referred to as Alberta's second largest rodent. Despite its threatening look, its quills are not the biggest problem. Dogs and domestic stock tend to nuzzle porcupines without learning from the experience and this can be a considerable medical problem if not treated immediately.



This rodent's tendency to gnaw at wood is even more problematic. Tree stands are threatened when severe girdling affects them. Buildings that a porcupine gains access to may be damaged due to chewing on beams and supports. In the summer, fruits, vegetables and other succulent plants are also targeted by porcupine.

Damage prevention can be accomplished by simply removing the animal and relocating it. Normally nearby porcupines do not reinvade the area for some time, often several months. RO-PEL[®] and Thiram are the only successful repellants that may be used in Canada and can be sprayed on any plants not meant for human or animal consumption (it makes them inedible).

Electric fences are also popular for excluding any porcupine from certain areas, as well as wide bands of sheet metal wrapped around individual trees to prevent this excellent climber from scaling the tree.

For more information about porcupines and methods of control or removal, please contact the Brazeau Country Agricultural Department at 542-7777.

