

## Bats

Bats usually resemble a sharp-toothed, big-eared, tail-less mouse with leathery wings. They are nocturnal and emit high-pitched squeaks as they fly, locating obstacles by the echoes that come back to them. Despite their appearance, bats are beneficial because they feed on nocturnal flying insects, chief of which are mosquitoes.

Bats will live in buildings and may enter through vents, chimneys or holes in roofs or siding. They can squeeze through a hole that is less than an inch in diameter. If there are poorly fitting doors or other openings between their original entry point and the main house, bats may get into bedrooms or other rooms.

The best way to control bats is to keep them out in the first place. Screen all vents and caulk all holes.

If bats have already moved in, find their point of entry and block it up after they have left for the night. There are two ways to find the holes. One is to put a bright light in the area after dark. Then go outside to see where the light shines through. Another method is to enter the roosting area on a bright day and look for the holes where light shines into the room. Mark the holes with tape or marker and then return at night to caulk them.

Wear heavy clothes and a hat in case you disturb sleeping bats. Bats rarely bite, but if cornered and frightened they may react aggressively. Rabid bats are rare in Michigan but if you are bitten and the bat escapes, you will have to undergo treatment for rabies.

If bats enter the main house, open the windows turn on the lights and vacate the room. If the bat does not leave, shoo it out the window with a tennis racket or broom.

The **Master Gardener Hotline** is open from April to October, Monday through Friday. Lines are available 9:00 am to noon and 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm at 888-678-3464

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