

Grey squirrels need a safe and secure place to build their nest (drey) where they can escape predators and take shelter from the bad weather. In most cases they choose a tree as the drey site but if they gain access to the roof spaces of houses they may cause problems. They can damage electrical installations and loft insulation.

The first reaction by most householders is to kill such a nuisance but, if the roof space is still accessible, other squirrels are likely to move into the vacated area. The only long-term solution is to prevent access to the roof space.

Any nest **MUST** be checked for young before starting any exclusion work. Grey squirrels can produce two litters a year, so the only months when dependent young are not about are October to January. If young are found then it is necessary to wait until the female takes them out foraging before blocking access. Selecting a period when the weather is fine will also allow the grey squirrels to seek alternative shelter before it becomes cold or wet.

Once the animals are away from the roof then undertake repairs and other preventative measures. Loose tiles or damaged bricks, soffits or barge boards must be repaired. Once 'structural' repairs are done, any remaining access points can be covered by 1 inch square 16 gauge (or bigger) welded mesh (chicken wire is just not strong enough). Repairs and exclusion work are best done during mid-morning or mid-afternoon when the animals are generally out foraging. Scent repellents approved for use with grey squirrels can also be used and may be available from garden centres but can smell unpleasant to humans! Please read the instructions and the conditions of use carefully.

As a last resort, details of other removal methods can be obtained from your Local Authority Environmental Health Department.

It is also important to remember that there are two species of squirrel in the UK; the red squirrel, *Sciurus vulgaris* and the grey squirrel *Sciurus carolensis*. If you think you have a problem with squirrels, it is important to ascertain which species you are dealing with as the red squirrel is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Please see our factsheet [Living withgrey squirrels](#) .