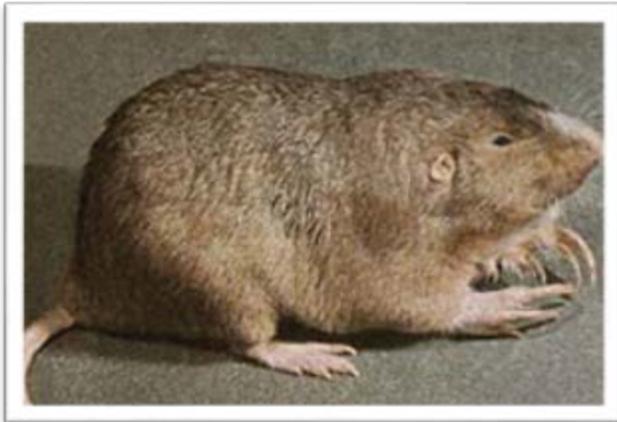


Garden pests from the “other” list

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The “other” list still drives people crazy. Typically creatures from the “other” list don’t particularly devour our ornamental plants. They create severe anxiety in ways other than those created by traditional garden pests. Identification and control of those on the “other” list often elude the Florida homeowner and cause excessive head shaking and foot stomping.



The **pocket gopher** is the first example of a pest I consider for this category. This creature is one Vegetarian that nobody likes. It is often called the sandy-mounder or salamander, because of the continued production of dirt piles it produces as it crosses back and forth across your property.

When will it just go away? The cute little creature has fur lined cheek pockets it uses to carry food. Its diet consists of plant roots, tubers, rhizomes and bulbs it collects when creating its vast system of tunnels. Its favorite food is thought to be bahia grass rhizomes, but some soil vegetables as well. Insecticides will not eliminate its food source; therefore not an effective control. This little ‘fella’ is a native non-game wildlife species. It is illegal to bait or fumigate without a poison permit from FWC. Trapping is the most preferred method. In order to be successful you must find an active tunnel. Fresher the better. Place the trap in the tunnel, attached to a stick for easy removal, cover the opening and hope for the best.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdf/files/uw/uw08100.pdf>

Imported **fire ants** make the “other” list and are often mistaken for the previous offender, due to the pile of sand they leave on the soil surface. Always be cautious when approaching this critter. It could be a painful experience. Wear shoes and socks and watch were you step. If you want to locate some fire ants just walk outside bare footed in the warm season. It shouldn’t take long to locate a colony.



Control strategies must include several measures of

control, not eradication. These methods include bait applications, mound treatments, a combination of both and barrier treatments for exclusion. Carefully read all labels prior to application of pesticides. Again, read the label for accurate control measures.

It may take a colony several months to establish. Once this occurs a queen can lay 2,000 eggs per day. The eggs hatch 20 to 45 days later and can survive with life spans up to 9 months. That's the good news. Queens live an average of 6-7 years, that's not so good. The least harmful or toxic methods of control should be considered - boiling water. This method may control the mound killing workers and queens as the water percolates through the mound. Boiling water may also damage surrounding plants and cautious application is suggested.

Granule application methods may be effective and should be complimented with other baiting and broadcasting methods to control infestations. Many ineffective methods may not eliminate the mound only causing relocation of the infestation. Foot stomping is not an effective method for control. Head shaking is still acceptable.

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/lh059>