



LIVING WITH RACCOONS

Given the raccoon's superb ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions, it's not surprising that conflicts with humans often occur. Raccoons aren't averse to raiding gardens, garbage cans, bird feeders, fish ponds, or even your kitchen pantry (a pet door is an open invitation). Likewise, chimneys, attics, and porches are all attractive den sites from the raccoon perspective. Cities and suburbs also provide extensive "subway systems" for these intelligent and opportunistic animals, who are quite comfortable using storm sewers as underground roadways.

If raccoons are coming to your home and causing problems there are a number of ways of dealing with them without harming them.



- First, try to determine what has attracted them to your home. A raccoon's primary activity is searching for food and water and if you have inadvertently made these available, **simply restricting access to them may solve the problem.** Do not leave pet food and water dishes outside overnight and keep trash cans tightly covered (very tightly), or, better still, keep them in the garage.
- If raccoons are digging up your lawn or raiding your garden, an application or two of predator urine, available at lawn and garden centers or a mixture of cayenne pepper and water in a lawn sprayer, may do the trick. You can also place ammonia-soaked rags in the area to deter them from using specific areas. Also, try keeping problem areas brightly lit at night as raccoons prefer to do their mischief under cover of darkness whenever possible.
- If a raccoon has entered or taken up residence in some part of your home during the months of March-August, you probably have a nesting mother and her young. **The absolute best approach is to allow the mother to raise her kits until they are able to fend for themselves (6 - 8 weeks).** When they are ready, they will leave of their own accord.
- If waiting for them to leave is absolutely not an option, you may contact a licensed pest control company in your area to trap and relocate the entire family.

Waiting things out is often the best option -- many raccoon problems, such as occupation of a building, resolve themselves within a few days or weeks.

If you have further questions or require assistance with a nuisance animal, please call Irvine Animal Services at 949-724-7092.