

How to keep rabbit nests safe from pets in your backyard

Where do rabbits make nests?

Open areas like a backyard, near your back door, or even in your dog yard. Under bushes, in flower pots, in a garden bed. Rabbits like to be around human dwellings possibly because their scent keeps predators away.

What are ways to keep nests safe from pets in my yard?

- Do not leave pets unattended in the yard
- Take dogs on leashed walks until the babies independently leave the nest (usually 3-4 weeks)
- Place a laundry basket with a few bricks on top over the nest while pets are outside
- Use wire fencing to wrap around the nest so mom can get through but pets can't



How can I keep nests safe from dogs and cats outdoors?

- Take dogs on leashed walks
- Keep cats indoors. It is safer for the cat and wildlife
- Build a "Catio" so your cat can still enjoy the great outdoors without harming wildlife

What do I do if my pet digs up a nest?

Check to see if the babies have any injuries. If your cat or dog has a baby bunny in its mouth and it is injured, or if you cannot tell if it is injured but it is covered in saliva, it will need to come to Wild Care.

Do not handle them unless necessary. Rabbits can die from handling and stress. Also, the more you handle them and get your scent on them, the less likely we are to get them reunited with their mom.

If they are uninjured just cover the nest back up and leave it alone. Newborns with eyes closed need mom and will not survive in a rehabbing situation. A bunny that is bright-eyed, and 4-5 inches long is fully independent and does not need to be rescued.

How can I tell if the mother is coming back?

A mother cottontail rabbit feeds her young at dusk and dawn. She does not stay in the nest. Never relocate a rabbit nest. Mom won't find it!

Use the string test and allow mom the chance to come back overnight: Place string or twigs across the nest in a tic-tac-toe shape. Check the nest the next morning. If the string is disturbed, the mother has returned. If not, please call our Helpline at 508-240-2255.

What do rabbit nests look like?

Small depression in dead, pulled grass sometimes with rabbit fur the mom has pulled from her breast to line the nest.



Relocation is often fatal for the adult animal that is trapped. During the spring and summer season, a trapped adult animal may be leaving babies behind.

Do not rehabilitate wildlife in the State of MA unless you hold a MA Licensed Wildlife Rehabilitation Permit.



10 Smith Lane, Eastham, MA 02642

Call Wild Care
508-240-2255
We're here to help.
EVERYDAY 9AM-5PM

