

## **RESIDENT MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR MONKEYS**

Guide for residents when monkeys show unwanted behavior

### **Why are monkeys in your garden??**

**FOOD!!** Vervets are opportunistic feeders, which means they will eat food (artificial or not) whenever it becomes available. Unfortunately, the artificial food they develop a taste for is usually from the hands of humans. Once this association between human and monkey transpires, it can cause huge amounts of stress for residents who don't want their rubbish bins raided, dog food eaten, or even their dinner stolen from these primates. Even those monkeys not fed by hand, can quickly associate artificial food with people's homes; especially if access to food is easy, like...rubbish bins, bird seed, veggie gardens and pet food left out.

**Pressure from surrounding areas.** This could mean pressure from other troops, farmers, communities and predators. Any of these would encourage the monkeys to seek shelter and food from residential areas.

**Transient males.** When male vervets reach sexual maturity (around 4-5 years of age), they are either pushed out of the troop they were born in, or naturally leave to find another troop somewhere else. Often these young males are alone, but sometimes they travel with other male relatives. If residents see a lone male or a few males together, most likely they are in transit. As long as access to artificial food is denied, they will soon move on to find troops of their own.

### **Problem areas for residents**

Most residents, especially those who normally do not encounter troops of vervets, do not understand why the monkeys are all of the sudden in their area, and more importantly, want them gone, and gone as soon as possible. Here is a list of the variables that would attract monkeys to your home and simple, yet effective ways to deter them. **(Please note that this is a management plan when monkeys have become a nuisance in your area--it is generally a temporary, cooperative plan and not something that will need to be practiced indefinitely--minus #1...you should NEVER FEED A MONKEY!)**

### **Here's what residents need to do.....**

- Stop feeding the monkeys! Those who deliberately feed monkeys are encouraging them to associate humans with food, which will lessen their fear of humans.
- Do not allow access to rubbish bins. Try to keep your rubbish inside a garage or shed until the time it is collected. If that's not possible, then there are a few monkey proofing things we can try. Please contact me for more suggestions.
- Do not display food on kitchen counters, tables or anywhere in your home and garden. If they see it, they will want it. Be extra vigilant during daytime

entertaining (birthday parties, braais, etc) and make sure food is never left unattended.

- For those who have pets, please try to feed them inside your home and take any food away if left unfinished.
- If you feed wild birds, I would suggest you stop for a short while. If you insist on still feeding them, then try to change the feeding times on a daily basis. And remove or clean out any left over food. You may also try to smear Vaseline on the top of the feeders where the monkeys need to touch to gain access, but not where the birds can reach.
- If possible, keep all doors and windows closed when not at home. I know this is a difficult one, but it really is the best way to keep them out. We don't want them having any access to any artificial food. The best way to distinguish an unwanted behavior is to never allow the subject the opportunity to display it. If you need air flow, I can suggest putting in screens on a few windows and perhaps doors, to allow the best air-flow through your home. You can contact me for more details on screens and where to purchase them. Otherwise, keeping the top window opened to only the first notch, could also allow air-flow. Please note though that this isn't fool-proof ....so please be aware that they still may be able to get in. Vervets do not like the taste or feel of Vaseline, so you can try smearing some on the latch handle. If you are home, but moving around from room to room and want your windows open, then you can also try placing soda cans filled with coins or bolts alongside a window sill. Try even placing them on top of one another if it isn't too windy, so if they attempt to enter your home, they will get a fright and run away or if nothing else, you will be aware of their presence to chase them away. Artificial snakes have been used in the past to deter monkeys, however they quickly catch on that they are not a threat. You can try them, but I think snake sheds are a better deterrent to try.
- If you see vervets or baboons crossing over into your yard, chase them away! Water pistols or any gun-like object are good deterrents. They recognize these and automatically associate death and suffering to them. Water hoses work well, especially for those hard to reach spots, like your roof. Vervets love to swim...but hate to be sprayed. Loud noise makers, brooms, flags, towels, basically anything you can grab that makes you more confident and assertive, will soon send the message that they are not wanted on your territory. Please remind children that **ONLY** parents or adults are supposed to chase the monkeys! I know this part of the plan can be difficult for some. So please contact me if you have any reservations on doing this. This is a **VERY** important part of the plan, as it shows us as primates ourselves...we will **NOT** tolerate them trespassing on our territory!
- Never shoot a monkey! Even shooting with a pellet gun is illegal. The pellets get lodged in their bodies and they suffer excruciating pain which most often leads to a slow and agonizing death. It is an offense to discharge a firearm or pellet gun without a permit in a residential area in terms of the Firearm Control Act no. 60 of 2000 and it is an offence to shoot an animal with a pellet gun in terms of the Animal Protection Act no. 71 of 1962.
- If a vervet is in your house, make sure it has an exit and very calmly with no direct eye contact or showing of teeth, move away from the exit. If after a few minutes it still hasn't left, then calmly go in with a towel lowered to the ground and slowly and calmly walk behind it leading it toward the exit. Once inside

your house, they become disorientated and feel threatened...so it's very important for everyone to remain calm. Monkeys are extremely good at reading you and assessing the situation.

- If you have fruit trees in your garden, please try to pick them before they ripen. Otherwise, try covering the tree with netting. Chili powder is said to work, so you can try mixing it with water and spraying it around the fruit.
- Please pass this information to your domestic workers, as well as visitors, so they are fully aware on how to manage the situations with the monkeys.

If there are specific problems where some of these measures are not applicable, please do not hesitate to contact me. I am available free of charge to any resident, farm, office, school or place of business to assist. If required, I can do an assessment specified to stopping unwanted monkey behavior on individual properties.

I truly believe that if all neighbors work together, the unwanted behaviors will soon disappear. Keep in mind that most, if not all of these measures, will only need to be in place for a short while. Just until they realize that there is no reason to hang around anymore. The most important aspect of any monkey management plan (especially if close neighbors are involved), is cooperation. Once all the variables are in place and food is taken away, the monkeys will soon move on to find the available food that they need elsewhere.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your cooperation!!

Kind regards

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