Q: Can I stop the foxes stealing objects from my garden?
A: Foxes are inquisitive and playful and may scent mark or chew objects like leather, balls, dog chews and clothes hanging on washing lines. These may also be taken back to the earth for the cubs to play with. Avoid this by removing such items from your garden, particularly overnight.

Q: Why do foxes dig burrows in my garden?
A: Foxes dig shallow holes in lawns, bowling greens or similar area, surround it with a 10 cm square and scale a fence or wall with ease. Any measures taken are best carried out during late summer and autumn when family groups are starting to break up and foxes are exploring new territory.

Q: Why do foxes foul my garden?
A: Foxes use faeces to mark their territory. Fox faeces are smelly, but pose little disease risk. Foxes are prone to many of the same diseases and parasites as dogs, including the roundworm Toxocara Canis, which can cause blindness in children. However, the chance of catching this from foxes is remote. It can be very difficult to prevent a fox taking a route through your garden with an adult able to pass through a hole (10 cm) square and scale a fence or wall with ease. Any measures taken are best carried out during late summer and autumn when family groups are starting to break up and foxes are exploring new territory.

Q: How can I stop fox cubs trampling my garden?
A: Sometimes fox cubs may play in your garden trampling flower beds, stealing washing off lines or breaking garden objects. Invariably their earth will be only a few metres away. If they are living in a neighbour’s garden, you can ask your neighbour to encourage the foxes to move on. But if your neighbour welcomes the foxes, there is little that you can do apart from block the access points to your garden.

Q: What can I do about the foxes living under my shed or garage?
A: Garden sheds provide an ideal place for foxes to live and breed in. Foxes do not like sheds that have draughts under them or ones that are in the corner of the garden with a wall on three sides. Therefore to deter foxes you can open up the area around the shed so that it is exposed and draughty and consequently less attractive. To prevent foxes from returning, securely fix weld mesh around the bottom of the shed, covering the gap, dug about 12” (30 cm) into the soil. Foxes breeding under garages may have burrowed under a concrete floor. Putting foul smelling chemicals down the holes is currently illegal under the Food and Environment Protection Act of 1985. The only way to get them out is to break up the concrete floor of the garage, but this is a drastic course of action.

Q: Why do foxes dig burrows in my garden?
A: Foxes are always exploring and often dig trial burrow systems in a variety of unusual places. As soon as you spot such a burrow, get an old bamboo pole and poke it down the hole to check there is no animal in it. Then fill the hole with bricks or similar material and cover it with soil.

Q: How can I stop fox cubs trampling my garden?
A: Sometimes fox cubs may play in your garden trampling flower beds, stealing washing off lines or breaking garden objects. Invariably their earth will be only a few metres away. If they are living in a neighbour’s garden, you can ask your neighbour to encourage the foxes to move on. But if your neighbour welcomes the foxes, there is little that you can do apart from block the access points to your garden.

Q: What can I do about the foxes living under my house?
A: This is a rare but serious problem. It occurs most commonly in older houses with large spaces under the floor boards and old metal vents for ventilation. The problem is particularly severe in the breeding season. If cubs are born under your house they will make noise by chasing each other and screaming. They will kick up dust and create a smell by urinating and defecating under the house. The vixen also brings home food for the cubs which decomposes and attracts flies. Foxes may also chew gas and water pipes, electricity and telephone cables. Do not to let your air bricks get into a bad state of repair. If foxes have got in, arrange for a pest control company to lift the floor boards and drive the foxes out.

Q: Can I stop foxes digging up my lawn?
A: Foxes dig shallow holes in lawns, bowling greens or playing fields when they are hunting for earthworms and grubs. These only come near the surface of the lawn in wet periods, mainly in spring and autumn. You can remove the grubs and earthworms in the lawn using a commercially available insecticide and vermicide available from garden centres and DIY stores. However, this should only be considered in extreme circumstances, due to the need to reduce the use of pesticides in the environment. Very occasionally, foxes dig deeper holes. This usually occurs when a blood or bone-based fertiliser has been applied to the lawn which foxes mistake for a corpse. All you can do is wait for the rain to wash the fertiliser deeper, or if it is a bowling green or similar area, surround it with a small electric fence.

Q: What can I do about the foxes living under my house?
A: This is a rare but serious problem. It occurs most commonly in older houses with large spaces under the floor boards and old metal vents for ventilation. The problem is particularly severe in the breeding season. If cubs are born under your house they will make noise by chasing each other and screaming. They will kick up dust and create a smell by urinating and defecating under the house. The vixen also brings home food for the cubs which decomposes and attracts flies. Foxes may also chew gas and water pipes, electricity and telephone cables. Do not to let your air bricks get into a bad state of repair. If foxes have got in, arrange for a pest control company to lift the floor boards and drive the foxes out.

Q: Can I stop foxes digging up my lawn?
A: Foxes dig shallow holes in lawns, bowling greens or playing fields when they are hunting for earthworms and grubs. These only come near the surface of the lawn in wet periods, mainly in spring and autumn. You can remove the grubs and earthworms in the lawn using a commercially available insecticide and vermicide available from garden centres and DIY stores. However, this should only be considered in extreme circumstances, due to the need to reduce the use of pesticides in the environment. Very occasionally, foxes dig deeper holes. This usually occurs when a blood or bone-based fertiliser has been applied to the lawn which foxes mistake for a corpse. All you can do is wait for the rain to wash the fertiliser deeper, or if it is a bowling green or similar area, surround it with a small electric fence.
Living with urban foxes

Foxes first colonised cities in the 1920s when the growth of urban housing and gardens provided an ideal habitat. Today there are more foxes in built up areas than the countryside, although their numbers are not increasing.

This leaflet explains the problems that can be caused by foxes and gives practical advice on how to deal with them.

Practical advice
If you have foxes in your garden then the following advice can be considered:

Remove the attraction
The most likely reason for a fox to enter your garden is in the search of food, so consider removing the food source by:
- keeping all domestic refuse in wheelie bins or closed containers, net plastic bags
- only putting your refuse out on the morning of collection
- protecting all animals and livestock
- not leaving food out for other animals and placing birds food in approved containers.

Habitats
Your garden provides a safe place to shelter whether it is an overgrown or neglected area or a void beneath a building. Voids can be protected using heavy duty weld mesh, not chicken wire which foxes can chew through.

Making it unacceptable
You can also use a suitable proprietary animal repellent available from garden centres, hardware and DIY stores. This must be used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. The use of non-approved products such as creosote and diesel oil is not permitted by law and can be very dangerous to pets.

Repellent products that are approved for use against foxes are:
- Scat, containing aluminium ammonium sulphate
- a scent neutraliser called 'Cat Off'. If this product reduces and neutralises the scents left by the foxes or urine.

Any chemical used as a repellent is covered under The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986, where it states that only approved chemicals may be used.

Questions answered

Q: Are urban foxes different from rural foxes?
A: There are the same species with some foxes living outside the city and commuting up to 25 kilometres to urban areas to feed at night. Urban foxes are no less healthy, smaller or mangier than rural foxes.

Q: Why can't the foxes be caught and returned to the countryside where they belong?
A: Neither shooting nor snaring is acceptable in urban areas, the fox's reputation for cunning is well earned and it is very difficult to get one to walk into a live trap.

Q: Why can't the foxes be caught and "returned to the countryside where they belong"?
A: Foxes are very adaptable animals and the British countryside is no more their proper habitat than urban areas. Releasing animals in a new area is very tricky and if unable to find new territory, the animal may eventually die. Such dumping of animals is therefore inhumane, and could well be an offence under the Abandonment of Animals Act 1996.

Q: Will foxes kill my cat?
A: This is a rare and generally, cats and foxes will ignore each other. Foxes are only a little bigger than a cat, and if a fox tackles a cat, it risks severe injury. If attacked by a cat, a fox will try to defend itself.

Q: Do foxes attack people?
A: Fox attacks are extremely rare with no confirmed cases in Edinburgh or the surrounding area. Young foxes may try to play with children, but are unlikely to attack them. A cornered fox may bite in self defence. If you find a fox trapped in a building, do not approach it or try to pick it up. Leave it an escape route.

Q: Will foxes kill any other of my pets?
A: This is very rare and generally, cats and foxes will ignore each other. Foxes are the same species with some foxes living outside the city and commuting up to 25 kilometres to urban areas to feed at night. Urban foxes are no less healthy, smaller or mangier than rural foxes.

Q: Will foxes attack people?
A: Fox attacks are extremely rare with no confirmed cases in Edinburgh or the surrounding area. Young foxes may try to play with children, but are unlikely to attack them. A cornered fox may bite in self defence. If you find a fox trapped in a building, do not approach it or try to pick it up. Leave it an escape route.

Q: Will foxes kill any other of my pets?
A: This is very unlikely if you take good care of your pets. Pet killing is most frequent in the late spring/early summer when foxes are rearing cubs. Do not leave your pets unsecured in the garden at night and make sure that their hut or shed is solidly built with a secure fastening or lock. Any wire on the hutch should be very strong mesh and securely nailed down.

Q: Do urban foxes get mange?
A: Urban foxes can become infected with the mange mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which burrows into the skin. It is very virulent and infected animals invariably die. Foxes must once a year and lose much of their fur, becoming extremely thin and scruffy. This is sometimes confused with mange.

Q: How can we stop foxes from coming into the garden?
A: While you can feed foxes, they are rarely short of food and even winter poses no problem. If you decide to feed your foxes, resist the urge to make them too tame. Urban foxes are generally tolerant of humans. They may assume everyone will react in the same way as some people are scared of the animals. Sometimes foxes enter houses through cat-flaps in search of food. The fox may then be unable to find its way out and paint, causing damage to the house. Cat flaps are now available that react to a device on a cat's collar so the flap will only allow your pet entry.

Q: Can I stop the fox making those awful screaming noises?
A: Foxes live in families that defend a joint territory and use calls to maintain contact with other members of the group. Their calls are most obvious during the mating season around January and February. The calls are usually short-lived and quiet down fairly quickly.

Q: Do urban foxes get mange?
A: Urban foxes can become infected with the mange mite, *Sarcoptes scabiei*, which burrows into the skin. It is very virulent and infected animals invariably die. Foxes must once a year and lose much of their fur, becoming extremely thin and scruffy. This is sometimes confused with mange.

Q: How can we stop foxes from coming into the garden?
A: While you can feed foxes, they are rarely short of food and even winter poses no problem. If you decide to feed your foxes, resist the urge to make them too tame. Urban foxes are generally tolerant of humans. They may assume everyone will react in the same way as some people are scared of the animals. Sometimes foxes enter houses through cat-flaps in search of food. The fox may then be unable to find its way out and paint, causing damage to the house. Cat flaps are now available that react to a device on a cat's collar so the flap will only allow your pet entry.

Q: How can we stop foxes from coming into the garden?
A: While you can feed foxes, they are rarely short of food and even winter poses no problem. If you decide to feed your foxes, resist the urge to make them too tame. Urban foxes are generally tolerant of humans. They may assume everyone will react in the same way as some people are scared of the animals. Sometimes foxes enter houses through cat-flaps in search of food. The fox may then be unable to find its way out and paint, causing damage to the house. Cat flaps are now available that react to a device on a cat's collar so the flap will only allow your pet entry.

Q: How can we stop foxes from coming into the garden?
A: While you can feed foxes, they are rarely short of food and even winter poses no problem. If you decide to feed your foxes, resist the urge to make them too tame. Urban foxes are generally tolerant of humans. They may assume everyone will react in the same way as some people are scared of the animals. Sometimes foxes enter houses through cat-flaps in search of food. The fox may then be unable to find its way out and paint, causing damage to the house. Cat flaps are now available that react to a device on a cat's collar so the flap will only allow your pet entry.