

FBMG Help Desk
Question of the Week

I am having a problem with armadillos digging up my flowerbeds and lawn. What can I do?

Let's take a look at the armadillo.

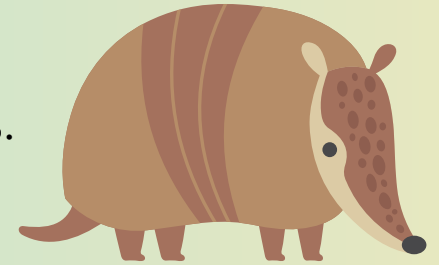


What Are They?

The Nine-Banded Armadillo

The name Armadillo means 'little armored one' in Spanish

The only species of armadillo found in North America is the Nine-Banded Armadillo, so called because of the number of 'bands' that wrap around it's torso. Adult armadillos can weigh up to 17 pounds. They prefer warm, wet conditions and shade. Mostly nocturnal, they tend to avoid activity during the heat of the day.



The armadillos we find in Texas actually originated in South and Central America many years ago, and migrated northward, and even have been identified as far north as Indiana and Ohio



Armadillos are mammals and their young are born alive. They are one species where the young are always born as same sex quadruplets. The babies have soft shells that harden as they grow to adulthood.

They are mostly near-sighted, and have sometimes been adopted by Texans as mascots or subjects of toys, games, t-shirts and the like.

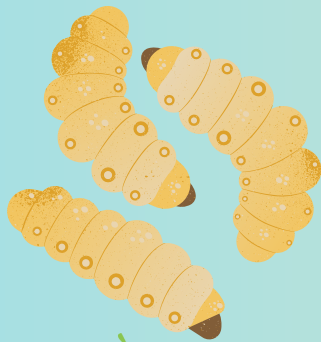


What Do They Eat?

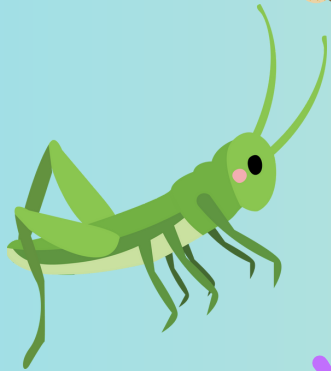


Over 90% of their diet consists of insects.

Eaters of opportunity, they consume mainly what is found on the ground or just below the surface!



- grubs
- earthworms
- ants
- cockroaches
- crustaceans
- grasshoppers
- spiders
- snails
- beetles



Sometimes

- spoiled fruits & veggies
- bird eggs
- turtle eggs
- fungi
- roots



Where Do They Live?

Armadillos Are Spelunkers

Living in burrows that measure 7-8" in diameter and can be up to 15 feet in length and quite extensive, they prefer sandy or loose soils.



Signs of armadillo activity include uprooted flowers, damage to turf, disrupted insect mounds or nests, and their distinctive cone shaped holes that they make when rooting for food.

They prefer to dig their burrows in areas of cover, since they prefer the shade and do not like confrontation, Their young 'pups' typically stay close to the burrow unless accompanying their parents on a foraging run.



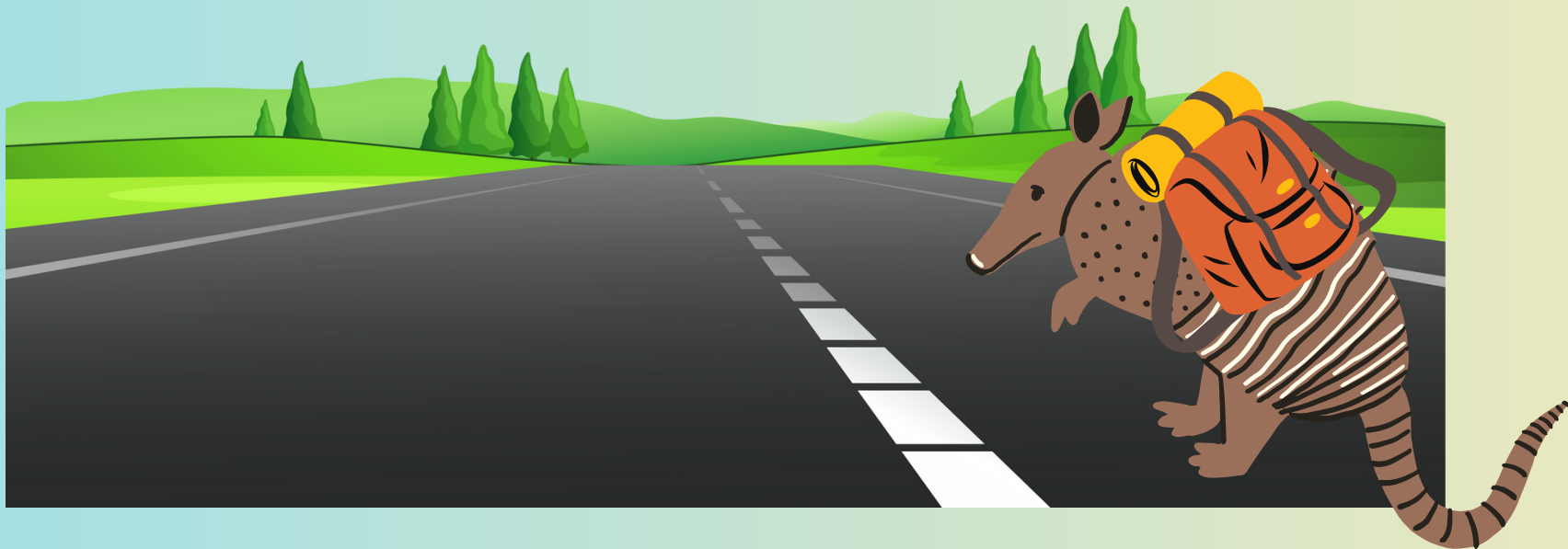
How To Invite Them To Leave?

Hit The Road, Jack!

Since their diet is mainly insects, control the food source and they will usually go elsewhere. This can be done by maintaining a healthy lawn and making your lawn insect predator friendly with plantings and hardscape.

There are no Armadillo repellants at this time.

- Remove their habitats and places for them to hide
by thinning mulch and brush piles
- Call a professional if trapping is needed



Natural Predators

Armadillo Natural Threats

The natural predators of the armadillo are also typically nocturnal, and include

- coyote
- bobcats
- birds of prey



***Do you have questions
about your home
landscape and plants?***

***Contact the Fort Bend
Master Gardener Help Desk***

***Email:
FortBendmg@ag.tamu.edu***

***Phone:
281-341-7068***

***The Help Desk is manned
Monday thru Friday,
9am-Noon***



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