



Problems caused by snakes

Ian Temby, Flora and Fauna Branch

Problem

Risk of snakebite due to presence of snakes near houses or other regularly used buildings.

Background

Snakes normally avoid people, but there is an element of risk, for people and their animals, associated with living near snakes. It is therefore a good idea to reduce the chance of unexpected encounters with snakes close to living areas. Mice and frogs attract snakes. If snakes are a problem, then modifying the area to make it less attractive to mice and frogs may reduce the chance of snakes being attracted. In Victoria, nearly all snakes longer than about 40cm, south of the Great Dividing Range, are likely to be toxic to humans.

Most cases of snakebite occur when people are trying to catch or kill snakes. Do not attempt to catch or kill snakes.

Snakes are protected in Victoria under the **Wildlife Act 1975**. There are several licensed wildlife controllers who specialise in snake removal and who may be able to assist with the capture and removal of snakes. They usually charge a fee for this service.

Solutions

- Modify the habitat around buildings to make it unsuitable for snakes and their prey by:
- Keeping grass very short; and
- Removing rubbish, piles of wood and other cover, such as sheets of iron.
- If you intend creating habitat for frogs, make sure this is away from buildings, to minimise the chance of unexpected encounters with snakes.
- Get a dog or geese to warn of the presence of snakes (among other things).
- Be alert during warm weather when snakes are likely to be active.
- Use a torch and take particular care when walking at night where there might be snakes and wear shoes or boots as protection.
- Leave snakes alone to reduce risk of snakebite.
- If you do see a snake near your house, keep an eye on it to see where it goes, then call a licensed snake catcher, if necessary. The DSE Customer Service Centre on 136 186 can supply the names of the nearest licensed snake catchers.

This publication may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria and its officers do not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for any error, loss or other consequence which may arise from you relying on any information in this publication.