Mouse Damage to Fruit Trees and Plants

Rachael Boyle
Phillips-Rooks District Extension Agent
Agriculture and Natural Resources

Mice are very prevalent in some areas this year. You’ll want to be on the lookout for mouse tunnels around your fruit trees and plants. Trunks and roots of apple trees are among the favorite meals for mice. There is probably no damage yet. But if we receive enough snow to cover winter food supplies, mice will begin to feed on the lower area of tree trunks and roots. This feeding may be severe enough to girdle tree trunks and kill the trees.

Mice like to hide in dead grass and weeds around the trees, especially close to the trunks. They will often tunnel near the soil surface and feed on the tree bark. You can check for mice by placing baited mouse traps in PVC or other pipe near your trees. Insert the traps far enough so that pets are unable to reach the trap. Check the stations about once a week and reset traps if necessary.

Mouse damage can be severe enough to kill trees that are old enough to bear fruit. Clear dead grass and weeds away from your trees and monitor for mice if you are using mulch around your fruit plants. For further information please contact the local K-State Research & Extension Office.