

MOLE

The Latin name for the mole is *Talpa europaea*.

A mole is a small mammal characterised by a pointed snout, tiny eyes, soft, black, thick, velvety fur, short legs, broad flat feet and long powerful claws which are situated on the front pair of legs. It can grow up to 16cm long.

Moles are indigenous to Europe, Asia and North America. This voracious animal digs below the surface of the ground for its food, which consists of earthworms and insect larvae. They are capable of digging rapidly, using their powerful forefeet and claws to push the earth back behind them. Close to the surface of the ground, moles construct their elaborate burrows with many chambers. Their burrowing often produces ridges on the surface called molehills.

Their breeding season is short, commencing in late February, with a gestation period of 4 weeks.

Moles spend most of their lives underground. Their eyes are almost useless but they have good hearing and very sensitive noses for finding food.