



## Squirrely Business

**Humans seem to both adore** and revile squirrels. We admire their aerial acrobatics and nut-gathering work ethic, but we also support a whole cottage industry of products designed to outwit them.

Despite the grief they get for shaking down our bird feeders, more serious conflicts can arise when squirrels begin indulging their penchant for nesting in attics and other structural nooks and crannies.

These invasions usually begin with poor roof maintenance. Deteriorating boards or small holes often go unnoticed until some enterprising squirrel happens by, gnaws a larger hole, and gains access. Once inside, squirrels use whatever they find—insulation, boxes, attic treasures—to construct cozy beds.

Around September, more squirrels appear, as they typically have a second annual litter in the fall. If the pitter-patter of little feet you hear turns out to be a mama with her young, try to be patient until the family matures. But if you can't bear to share and it's no later than October, mama may be willing to pack up and move the kids; she'll have an easier time wrangling her offspring while they're still small and helpless.

Squirrel eviction can require persistence, but harassment tactics are usually successful (and far more humane than calling most wildlife control services, which often use lethal traps). Keep attic lights turned on 24/7, turn a radio up loud, and plant a few cider vinegar-soaked rags in the vicinity. Once you're positive everyone's out for good, seal all holes with aluminum flashing or make more permanent repairs. Seasonal checks of your roof and attic will keep these guys out of your home—and leave you free to admire or bemoan their daring leaps onto your bird feeder.

— *Margaret Baird*

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### RECIPE BOX

**A former steak lover turned vegan**, chef Tal Ronnen has one goal for his culinary creations: They must appeal to both meat eaters and vegetarians. By applying traditional French cooking techniques to meatless cuisine, Ronnen is gaining a reputation for concocting satisfying meatless meals, and he's sharing his secrets in *The Conscious Cook* (Harper Collins 2009).

Several recipes feature Gardein, a meat alternative Ronnen hopes will help Americans transition to plant-based diets. "A meat

substitute allows people to become healthier by reducing the amount of meat in their diet without sacrificing the texture and flavor they're used to," says Ronnen, who is also vice president of culinary innovation for Garden Protein International. "It's not about radically changing your lifestyle—it's about being conscious about what you are cooking and how you are eating."

Ronnen's easy "chicken" salad recipe is an elegant spin on an old-fashioned dish—perfect for a no-fuss but memorable meal.

— *Julie Falconer*

### California Gardein "Chicken" Salad — Serves 8



**1 cup vegan mayonnaise**  
**2 teaspoons rice vinegar**  
**Juice of 1 lime**  
**1 tablespoon agave nectar**  
 (a sweetener found in the baking section of many grocery stores)  
**1 cup champagne grapes**

**3 stalks celery**, diced ¼ inch  
**2 pounds Gardein chicken-style strips**, thawed and coarsely pulsed in a food processor or chopped by hand (check the freezer section of your supermarket)  
**¾ cup walnuts**, toasted and coarsely chopped  
**Sea salt** and freshly ground **black pepper** to taste

1. Place all of the ingredients in a large bowl and toss gently to combine.
2. Serve on your bread of choice.

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