

Groundhog Dray
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Q A groundhog moved in under my new backyard shed and leaves mounds of dirt in the area. It also deposits dirt in my neighbor's backyard and tears up his grass. He demands that I hire an exterminator to get rid of the pest or a landscaper to put pebbles under the shed to deter it from returning. Must I do so?

A In general, a property owner has the right to raise an objection to something in his neighbor's property that directly causes him an annoyance. The Gemara calls this *giri dilei*—his arrows—akin to firing arrows into another's domain. The Gemara discusses the right to complain about animals in a neighbor's property. For example, Bava Basra 23a tells of a property owner who operated a bloodletting practice that attracted ravens that fed on the blood.

After his neighbor complained about the noise and mess, he was ordered to rectify the matter.

Chazon Ish (Bava Basra 1:1) explains why this annoyance is considered *giri dilei*. Because ravens normally feed on blood, bloodletting directly invites ravens. Based on this, Pis'chei Choshen (Vol. 6 Ch. 13 note 30) rules that an apartment owner may prevent his neighbor from putting garbage on his porch that attracts insects. This is *giri dilei*, because insects are naturally drawn to trash.

Pis'chei Choshen further says that adding an awning that attracts birds to your apartment porch is not *giri dilei*, because providing birds a comfortable location isn't considered an invitation to the birds as providing food would be. It's an indirect cause, so the neighbor has no right to object to the noise and filth.

Like the case of the awning, your shed doesn't invite groundhogs, it's just a comfortable spot that groundhogs like. This is not considered *giri dilei* and you don't need to remove it.

