Opossums

Scientific name: Didelphidae
Type: Mammals

Description
Opossums have a cone-shaped nose with a pink tip, a long hairless tail, and white, gray and black fur. They are nocturnal, which means they are awake at night and sleep during the day. They spend nights searching for food.

Adult Size
Weight: 4 - 15 lbs
Size: 21 - 36"

Diet
Known for scavenging through trash, they eat insects, earthworms, bird eggs, grass, chickens, garbage, fruits and berries.

Opossums really do play dead. They will flop down and be very still with their tongue hanging out to trick predators. Sometimes this trick will allow opossums to escape. Playing dead can last up to six hours.

Like other marsupials, opossums have thumbs, called an opposable hallux, on their paws. These thumbs are on the back feet as well as on the front feet. Their tails are prehensile and can be used to help them climb and hold onto tree branches.

Though opossums will hiss at humans, they are rarely aggressive.

Prevention & Control
Opossums are most likely to cause problems by getting into garbage or raiding bird feeders. Though they do not usually cause damage, they can startle people when they take shelter in woodpiles, sheds, under decks and porches, or in other unexpected places.

- Remove spilled bird seed or fruit that has fallen from trees.
- Remove piles of wood, grass clippings, trash piles or other debris.
- Make sure your dryer vent is covered with a slotted metal vent cover. This is one of the easiest ways for an opossum to sneak into your house.
- Place motion-activated devices (lights or sprinklers) near the perimeter of your house.

Cheap & Effective Repellents
1. Mothballs - place around your garden.
2. Ammonia - pour some into a coffee can with an old rag in it. The rag works like a wick dispersing the fumes.
3. Spikes - many spikes are made of clear polycarbonate, so they can be attached to surfaces with glue, screws, cable ties or nails.
4. D-Ter & Scat – they are special powders when mixed with water make a special liquid spray. This spray works on the sense of smell and taste of animals and can be applied around or to plants.

Habitat modification techniques are usually sufficient to prevent problems with opossums. If there is a situation that warrants removal, call the Bolingbrook Animal Control Department at 630-226-8500.