

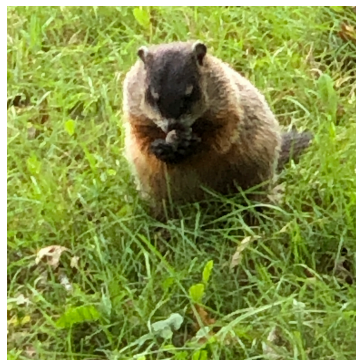
Gillespie Creek Journal

After four months of sharing our vegetable gardens with a “ghost” robber. Plenty of guile was sputtered, until last week when I snapped these photos of the perpetrator. I **Chucky the woodchuck!** So cute and alluring, yet so impolite when his diet consisted of vegetable leaves. With the shortening of the day and cooler night time temperatures as you see he is now bulking up on acorns.. Thank you Chucky! A woodchuck or groundhog is a rodent, belonging to the marmot family. They live in the lowlands of North America and much of the Eastern United States. This guy probably weighs about 8 lbs. How do they fit into the ecosystem of a neighborhood? Their deep holes and tunnels loosen the soil, turn it over and bring oxygen to the roots of plants. Groundhogs also have been helpful in medical research. They are credited with breakthroughs in Hepatitis B treatment.

Punxsutawney Phil, the Pennsylvania groundhog predicts how much longer winter will last. If he comes out of his retreat on February 2 and stays out of hibernation, there won't be six more weeks of winter.



Guess Who!



“Chucky” photos by Judy Appel

Visit gillespiecreek.com for more archived photos and newsletters.

A Drumlin Woodchuck by Robert Frost

One thing has a shelving bank,
Another a rooting plank,
To give it cozier skies
And make up for its lack of size.

My own strategic retreat
Is where two rocks almost meet,
And still more secure and snug,
A two-door burrow I dug.

With those in mind at my back
I can sit forth exposed to attack
As one who shrewdly pretends
That he and the world are friends.

All we who prefer to live
Have a little whistle we give,
And flash, at the least alarm
We dive down under the farm.

We allow some time for guile
And don't come out for a while
Either to eat or drink,
We take occasion to think.

And if after the hunt goes past
And the double-barreled blast
(Like war and pestilence
And the loss of common sense),

If I can with confidence say
That still for another day,
Or even another year,
I will be there for you, my dear,

It will be because, though small
As measured against the All,
I have been so instinctively thorough
About my crevice and burrow.