



How to Survive a Garden Gnome Attack: Defend Yourself When the Lawn Warriors Strike (And They Will)

By Chuck Sambuchino

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Move over zombies and adolescent vampires.

There's a new threat in town—and it's only twelve inches tall. *How to Survive a Garden Gnome Attack* is the only comprehensive survival guide that will help you prevent, prepare for, and ward off an imminent home invasion by the common garden gnome. Once thought of as harmless yard decorations, evidence is mounting that these smiling lawn statues are poised and ready to wreck havoc. The danger is real. And it's here.

Class 1 gnome-slayer and gnome defense expert Chuck Sambuchino has developed a proven system—Assess, Protect, Defend, Apply—for safeguarding property, possessions, and loved ones. Strategies include step-by-step instructions for gnome-proofing the average dwelling, recognizing and interpreting the signs of a gathering hoard, and—in the event that a secured perimeter is breached—confronting and combating the attackers at close range.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Just AWESOME...filled with delightfully demonic photographs of rampaging, blissful garden gnomes. This is a classic 'gift' book (just in time for Christmas) with eye candy pictures galore."

—This Garden Is Illegal blog, 9/29/10

"reminiscent of a 'Monty Python's Flying Circus' sketch, which is the highest praise I can bestow on a humor book."

—Carpe Geum blog, 9/26/10

"The book is written so straightforward that it seems believeable. And helpful. And—well, words fail me...the book is a hoot...[it] is perfect to display on a coffee table. Think of the fun you'll have when your guests notice it. Will they look around to see if diminutive creatures are sneaking up on them? Will they look at you as if you're totally nuts. At any rate, fun will ensue...The book would also make a great gift for a gardening enthusiast—especially if the gardener already has some garden gnomes. Or bundle the book with a garden gnome and let the recipient really wonder about you."

—Peevish Pen blog, 9/23/10

"Let's say your smiling lawn gnomes are plotting a home invasion. Here's the definitive guide to 'prevent, prepare for and ward off' that attack."

—Sacramento Bee

"This breezy read and its charming photos are ideal for anyone who melts whenever they find a new version of that classic ceramic yard ornament, the gnome."

—Denver Post

"Hooray to Chuck Sambuchino for not breaking character once during his entire book ... including the Acknowledgements page. This book is for those special folks with quirky senses of humor."

—San Francisco Book Review

"Every gardener and most non-gardeners will love this stylish, hilarious book."

—Buffalo Spree Magazine

"You'll laugh. You'll question the sanity of the message. You will look with new eyes on that garden gnome you thought was a mere, sweet little elfin garden ornament. I found myself wondering as I finished this marvelous small book; when will *How to Survive a Pink Flamingo Attack*, be released? I highly recommend this book to gnome lovers/owners everywhere. Even if you are not a gnome owner, but a gardener or have a neighbor who gardens—you need to read this book for your own protection or for a laugh a minute if you prefer humor."

—Billie A Williams, award-winning mystery and suspense author

About the Author

Chuck Sambuchino (@chucksambuchino) of Writer's Digest Books edits the GUIDE TO LITERARY AGENTS and the CHILDREN'S WRITER'S & ILLUSTRATOR'S MARKET. His Guide to Literary Agents Blog is one of the largest blogs in publishing. His 2010 humor book, HOW TO SURVIVE A GARDEN

GNOME ATTACK, was optioned by Sony Pictures. His latest humor book, WHEN CLOWNS ATTACK: A SURVIVAL GUIDE (Sept. 29, 2015), will protect people everywhere from malicious bozos and jokers who haunt our lives. His books have been mentioned in *Reader's Digest*, *USA Today*, *the New York Times*, The Huffington Post, *Variety*, *New York Magazine*, and more.

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Introduction

Keep reading if you want to live.

Call them what you want. Garden gnomes. Lawn ornaments. Little evil outdoor statuary hell-bent on world domination. It doesn't matter. What does matter is that, right now, they're hiding in plain sight, pretending to be symbols of merriment and good will. But secretly, quietly, while pushing diminutive wheelbarrows and brandishing miniature flowerpots, they're planning home invasions all over the world. Perhaps they're in your backyard right now—and you're staring at one while reading this. (Wait a minute—does that gnome look a little closer to the patio door than yesterday?)

Fear not. Now that you know they're planning to strike, you're much safer than you were sixty seconds ago. The next thing to do is learn everything you can about how to protect yourself, your loved ones, and your residence from these malicious garden dwellers. Do you know how to stop a gnome from tunneling under the house? What is the best (really the only) way to combat several gnomes at once in close quarters? How to interpret their communication? Would you recognize the signs of a gathering hoard or an impending infiltration? If you answered no to any of these questions, it's a good thing you're reading this handbook.

How to Survive a Garden Gnome Attack is the only survival guide that instructs you on how to prevent and ward off a home invasion and eradicate them from your property for good. In the unfortunate event of an actual attack, it will prepare you for battle, outlining dozens of possible encounter scenarios and defense strategies. It is important to read the book in its entirety for a thorough understanding of what you and millions like you are dealing with. And after you've finished reading, you'll be ready to face the pointy-capped little men waiting outside and save your own life in the process.

If you think you have time to waste, rest assured you do not. Right this very minute, garden gnomes are conspiring and mobilizing in your neighborhood. This problem is not going to go away—and never forget that gnomes cannot be domesticated. This is war. They want you dead, and they may succeed—unless you're ready. And if you think it could never happen to you because of who you are or where you live or what you look like, trust me when I tell you that they have you in their sights. It doesn't matter where you were born or whether you're sixteen or eighty. These wily warriors are out to exterminate humanity, one gnomeowner at a time.

So before you continue, take a moment to make sure all your doors and windows are secured—that includes pet doors. Background or white noise in the room (a small fan works well) is advisable to disrupt any possible enchantments. Do that and then come back. We'll wait. They won't.

1. Are You at Risk?

If you're reading this book, chances are you're in proximity to garden gnomes (*Gnomus hortus*) and have made the most important decision of your life: to educate yourself and take a stand against these suburban subversives. As gnomes continue to populate the planet at an alarming rate, we are all at risk—some more than others. Some of us will have years to wait before we have to fight a lawn gnome to the death in single combat. Scarily, some of us have days at most before forces clash. Your first step should be to assess the probability level of an attack on your domicile:

Factors increasing your risk of an attack:

- For some insane reason, you actually own lawn gnomes.
- You live in a suburban or rural house.
- Your dwelling sits on secluded, wooded acreage.
- You live alone.
- You follow a strict routine, making it easy to predict your comings and goings.
- There are gnomeowners in your neighborhood.

Factors decreasing your risk of an attack:

- You've never seen a garden gnome except in pictures or on TV.
- You live in an urban area with little green space.
- You live in an apartment complex or high-rise.
- You travel frequently.
- You frequently move among your many residences because you're rich.
- You live with a large, extended family, whose members all watch over one another.

If you possess three or more factors that increase the likelihood of a lawn ornament onslaught, you are no doubt a “high-risk” target. Stop everything you’re doing and carve out an afternoon to finish reading this book. (Even slow-witted readers can manage this—it’s only 106 pages.) When you’re done, go out and buy supplies to protect yourself—then come back, start fortifying your home, and read this guide again.

2. Suspicious Activity

According to garden gnome defense expert David Lamay, every household assault is preceded by deep reconnaissance and probing (DRAP). Such scrutiny increases a gnome’s chances of success as well as the chances of your burial. Similar to thieves casing a store before a robbery, gnomes will try and find out as much as they can about you, your home, and your habits before mounting an offensive. Prior to a strike, gnomes perform months or even years of reconnaissance work—scoping out every detail of your day-to-day routine and any vulnerabilities in your residential defenses. This pre-attack investigation is called probing, and a conscious gnomeowner will begin to notice unusual and disturbing signs in and around the house, garden, and outbuildings (detached garage, garden shed, pool house, etc.).

Start to think about probing in terms of location. When they enter and explore your territory—the house—they’re probing you. But at the same time, you can probe them right back. The backyard is their territory. When you’re outside, take the initiative and start assessing them. A note of caution: Although you’re fairly safe in open spaces, it is never recommended to follow a gnome into the woods should you see one leave the lawn and head for the trees. Consider this to be crossing the Gnome Rubicon; you’re on their turf—in their world. If you step out of the familiarity of your backyard and into the black hole that is the forest, your chances of survival decrease by 60 percent, while your odds of getting bludgeoned to death at the thicket’s edge increase by 200,000 percent.

So why haven’t you been attacked yet? That’s a good question—a question by someone who wants to stay alive. The answer is they’re still evaluating the situation and weighing the pros and cons of an attack. Perhaps you already have solid home defenses in place and didn’t realize it. Perhaps the gnomes decided to assault your neighbors first. Or perhaps your life is on the agenda for tomorrow.

Sightings and Strange Phenomena

Things to watch for outside the house include the following:

- **Footprints in dirt or mud:** Gnomes will try to cover their tracks with trickery, but sometimes they will let

their guard down. If you see small shoeprints in wet earth, you know a gnome has been prowling.

- **Misplaced wheelbarrow:** If they’re moving tools or stones, they’ll need to use a wheelbarrow. Look for indentations in the grass and watch for wheelbarrows where they shouldn’t be (right outside the front door or in the middle of the driveway). Give your wheelbarrow a quick hose blast. If you find residue on your next inspection, that’s a clue that danger is afoot.

- **Unexplained movement:** You’re weeding a flowerbed or cutting the grass when you suddenly stop and just stare at a lawn gnome. Your pulse quickens because something isn’t . . . quite . . . right. (Was the gnome in the red cap sitting to the right of the birdbath yesterday? Was the gnome in the blue tunic always on the bottom step of the stairs to the deck?) What you’re feeling is a combination of adrenaline and intuition. Pay attention.

- **Sensation of being watched:** Psychiatrists will say that we cannot actually “feel” eyes boring into the back of our heads, but they also insist that lawn gnomes pose no threat to humanity whatsoever—proving they obviously know nothing. • **Homegrown produce stunted/discolored:** First of all, stop eating from your garden—immediately. It’s too easy for a gnome to taint your homegrown tomatoes and strawberries, and keep in mind that most gnome potions won’t wash off with a quick rinse under the kitchen tap. Look for unusual size and coloring, disturbing outgrowths, or premature rotting.

- **Inexplicable animal behavior:** You’re not looking for specific behaviors, but rather for baffling deviations from the norm. Are birds no longer coming to the feeder? Are local nocturnal mammals (raccoons, possums) venturing out in daylight? Is your dog barking “at nothing” or urinating on himself? All of these are telltale signs of looming doom.

Possibly worse than suspecting strange goings on are afoot outside your house is noticing alarming occurrences happening inside your dwelling. Things to watch out for indoors include the following:

- **Pipe smoke:** Gnomes should know better than to smoke inside a house, but a rare, undisciplined warrior may light up and give you a precious clue that intruders have breached the perimeter.

- **Sawdust:** Wood shavings indicate they’ve entered through a baseboard, kitchen cupboard, or bathroom vanity, or they’re tunneling up through the floor or down through a ceiling beam. It’s time to start checking attics, basements, and crawlspaces for gnome passageways.

- **Toolbox missing/emptied:** Your toolbox is the Holy Grail to a gnome. Think about it. The average toolbox contains devices perfectly designed for stabbing and puncturing (screwdrivers, drills), bludgeoning (hammers, wrenches), dismembering (pliers, hand-saws), and crushing (mallets, crowbars). Toolboxes are rarely removed altogether because of their weight and location (on a shelf or workbench in the garage), but if it does turn up missing—or is significantly lighter—it’s not the annoying neighbor’s kid...

- **Cameras/video camcorders missing/manipulated:** A gnome’s greatest allies are human ignorance and disbelief. Either we don’t know they’re a threat, or we just can’t believe they’re a threat. If only we could catch them moving on camera, we could educate the world. Gnomes understand the potential danger, so one of their first acts of probing will be to find and disable any recording devices you have—including video apps on your cell phone—so that, whatever happens, you have no “proof of life” apart from your injuries.

- **Utensils/appliances missing/moved:** Have you ever opened your utensil or cutlery drawer and wondered where all the knives went? Well, now you know. Silverware will be among the first things gnomes nab. In addition, any small appliance with a detachable blade (vegetable peeler, coffee grinder, blender, food processor) must be kept under lock and key. Other household items to keep a close watch on include nail files, ballpoint pens, and scissors (all sizes).

- **House drafts:** You can’t understand it. You keep inching up the thermostat yet the house remains chilly. What’s wrong? Then you start to notice some parts of the house are very drafty—a sign that gnomes are finding their way in. If you feel a draft or chilly gust, do your best to follow it to its source and try to identify the weak point in your defenses. If you’re having trouble doing this yourself, enlist the help of your local power company. Request an “energy audit” and let a professional locate the breach.

Logbook of Strange Phenomena

Keep a logbook on hand to chronicle any and all unusual happenings inside and outside the house. As the frequency of unusual phenomena increases, so does the likelihood of an attack. Details to note include the following:

- What was the nature of the strange event?
- Where did you see this unusual occurrence?
- What was the date?
- What time of day was it?
- Were you alone?
- Were you indoors or outdoors?
- If indoors, in which room or area of your house did the sighting occur?
- If outside, was the sun out? Was it raining? Describe the temperature.
- Have you seen this sign before? Is this a recurring phenomenon?

Although the notations may seem pointless now, if an attack were to commence and you live to tell the tale (and you will—think positive!), such a journal will prove invaluable to researchers. Other gnomeowners will be able to pinpoint a pending attack within days or even hours of the actual event—all thanks to your thorough record keeping.

3. Recognizing Communication

Agriglyphs (Mini Crop Circles)

Consider this: Lawn gnomes are positioned all around your property. They sit atop retaining walls, line walkways, skulk beneath hedges and birdbaths, loiter near fountains and other water features, and hang from tree swings. By creating visual cues in the earth itself, a lawn gnome can avoid suspicion—because the communication is nonverbal and inaudible—and signal to a colleague from any distance or angle. They often use these agriglyphs when other options have been compromised. Agriglyph is a term coined by the late celebrated Scottish agronomist Sir Hamish Tootler-Murphy, who disappeared under suspicious circumstances in a backyard in eastern Connecticut on July 17, 1979.

Agriglyph joined the formal gnomenclature in 1977, but evidence that it had already entered the vernacular exists as early as 1974.

So how are agriglyphs created? Like the classic cornstalk crop circles, the mini glyphs are made by bending tall blades of grass in the same direction. Whether this is done by one gnome or many remains unclear. You've probably already seen these designs in your lawn but not thought much of it. Well start thinking of it now. Better yet, start translating. "These are clear signs that lawn gnomes are preparing for an invasion," says garden symbologist Elizabeth Wayfield. "It's like tarot cards. Different symbols mean different things. Some symbols mean it's time for the homeowner to get the hell out of Dodge."

The first line of defense toward discouraging the insidious mini crop circle is to deprive the perpetrator of his materials; in other words, maintain a regularly and closely mown lawn.

Mazes

Not so much communication as gameplay, a maze on your property should still alert you that something is very wrong. Why? Because the design of the maze is actually a copy of the floor plan of your home. This means they've gotten inside and they're practicing how to attack you within your own walls. However, this explanation has only been verified on three occasions, and mazes are generally thought to be used primarily

for gnome recreation and mind-sharpening activities.

Mentions of mazes can be found in some of the earliest writing on human-gnome contact. In her 1969 landmark book, *A History of Mazes and Gnomes*, architectural historian Margaret Olssant details the uncanny correlation between large estates in Europe that possessed boxwood hedge mazes and topiary labyrinths with gnome ownership.

Sometimes the labyrinths are relatively simple, with rudimentary patterns of stones laid out on a forest floor—or your front lawn (see “Stonescaping” on page 24). The most intricate and exquisite mazes are hedge mazes—sculpted out of brush and thicket—used to sharpen a young gnome’s fight-or-flight acumen. If you see a hedge maze on or near your property, you’re in trouble for two reasons. First, the gnomes have grown so brash they’re not afraid of attracting your attention. Second, complex hedge mazes are usually created by a gnome elder, or “wise man,” as an artistic *Magnum Gnomus*. The fact that a chieftain lives near you is bad, bad news.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Quincy Eddy:

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