

Actually I Train Woodpeckers for Al-Qaeda

by Linda Seccaspina

Now that Spring has sprung I am reminded about the day a former neighbour complained about my squirrel collection. I love to feed the black squirrels that gather in my yard and she became convinced I had trained several ninja squirrels to enter her garden after dark and tear up her budding flowers.

Instead of arguing I jokingly told her I had trained some beavers to do some pretty good tricks, but squirrels were a lot harder to educate. I also reminded her that squirrels were simply polished yard rats that are going to dig up flowers anytime they want and there are countless documentaries on a squirrels perseverance to conquer a bird feeder or outwit a cat.

The angry neighbour did not give up and insisted I had trained the squirrels to wait until it grew dark to do their damage. Well - unless it was a flying squirrel with a friend named Bullwinkle, that would be just about impossible. Laughing, I told her that it was probably a leftover squirrel recruitment from the government's top secret '*Squirrel Lethalization Program*' to train squirrels to be assassins, but they still had not mastered running back and forth safely in front of cars.

Weeks later she insisted there were tiny scratches on her windows, disappearing bird food in the feeder, and her garbage cans were tipped over in the night. Had anyone even questioned the squirrels I asked? Have you ever tried to interrogate a squirrel she replied? They never provide a straight answer, always bounding all over the place.

So in retaliation my neighbor began to train her cat to poop and pee on my property and sometimes I saw the feline driving her car around the neighborhood watching me. To top it off I think she actually persuaded a random local raccoon to tear up my garbage.

Finally she insisted I must do something about the problem or she would call animal control. Was there a training manual for squirrels I asked? This whole story began to sound a little squirrely to me so I attempted to train a squadron of local birds to defile her windshield when her cat drove by- who was now trained to steal my mail.

Finally the irritated neighbour moved away and there were no more thoughts until I remembered this story today. Actually I'm dictating these comments to an earthworm who sits on my keyboard and types it in for me. It's slow-going, but we get there eventually.

***Absolutely true story except the cat- he was a slow learner.
The earthworm is currently a project in motion.***

