

Vector Information Sheet

HOW TO PREVENT RATS AROUND YOUR HOME

Eliminating rats is a community effort! If you have rats, your neighbor may also have rats. The only successful and permanent method of rat control is the elimination of food, shelter, and through rodent exclusion.

Food and Water

- * Store pet food in sealed containers. Move food and water indoors at night. Store bulk feed 18 inches above ground and 12 inches from walls.
- * Harvest fruit and nuts as they ripen, and store properly so that rodents will not be able to reach them. Remove fallen fruit daily.
- * Remove all debris. Place garbage in tightly sealed trash containers.
- * Repair leaks in faucets, drip irrigation, and sprinkler systems. Prevent puddles from refrigeration condensation.

Shelter

- * Store outdoor items (hay, firewood, lumber) on shelves at least 18 inches above ground and 12 inches from walls.
- * Reduce or remove ground cover, dense ivy, and other similar ornamentals.
- * Trim vegetation and trees two to three feet from buildings. Remove old growth from palm trees.
- * Inspect outdoor storage sheds periodically.

Exclusion

- * Weather-strip all doors, and screen all windows.
- * Repair all structural damage, and seal openings ½ inch or greater around vents, plumbing, and conduits entering the structure.
- * Inspect foundation for separation at bottom of exterior walls. Check crawl space doors for tight fit, also attic and subfloor vents for any damage.
- * Screen stove fan vents and sewer vent pipes at roof with hardware cloth.

Biology of the Roof Rat

- * Slender, 6-8 inches long with large ears and a hairless tail longer than its body.
- * Average life span is one year.
- * Females may have three to seven litters, and each litter may produce five to eight pups.
- * Its diet consists of citrus, nuts, pet food, garden vegetables, and snails.
- * It is a very agile climber using power lines and tree limbs as avenues of travel.
- * Will enter a building through a ½-inch opening and lives in attics, garages, appliances, autos, woodpiles, and dense foliage.

Trapping Indoors

Because rats prefer to travel close to walls, place traps against and perpendicular to walls where droppings, gnawing, or holes indicate activity. This will ensure that the trigger mechanism will intercept the rodent's most likely path of travel. Pre-baiting of traps (baiting unset traps for two to three days) will encourage rats to explore them, and doubling the amount of traps ensures greater success. Bait traps with peanut butter, bacon, nut meats, dry pet food, or dried fruit. Tying bait on trap with thread ensures triggering of trap.



Bait Stations Outdoors

By removing harborage (shelter) and food sources, you will eliminate the need to use rat baiting stations. A qualified pest control operator is recommended when using anticoagulant poisons in a baiting program. Do not use poison bait inside buildings as poisoned rats may die in an inaccessible area and create a serious odor problem. **Always follow the label, and store unused bait out of the reach of children and pets.** Dispose of dead rodents by burial or in a plastic bag placed in a garbage container.

