



Rodents

description

Norway/Brown Rat: large robust bodies; small eyes; brownish-gray body with gray underside; tail shorter than body; burrows under foundations, floors, stacks of goods and rubbish; capable of climbing

Roof/Black Rat: sleek body; large eyes; grayish-black with light underside; tail longer than body; seldom burrows; nest is usually high

House Mouse: small and slender; light brown to gray; can squeeze through openings slightly larger than 1/2" across; 10 to 20 times more common than rat infestations

signs of infestation

- Droppings
- Tracks in moist earth or dust
- Burrows in the ground
- Gnaw marks
- Greasy smudge marks
- Musky smell
- Sounds in walls or attic at night

problems:

- Reservoirs of bubonic plague, endemic typhus fever, rat bite fever
- Can contaminate food
- Chewed wires which can cause fires
- Gnawed pipes and water hoses
- Damage to wood, mortar and cement

Least Toxic Solutions

Prevention

- Remove rodent shelter areas such as lumber piles, trash
- Store food, including pet food and bird seed, in containers with tight fitting lids
- Keep garbage in containers with tight-fitting lids
- Hang bird feeders away from the house and on metal poles
- Prune tree branches that touch or overhang the home
- Do not leave pet food out overnight
- Store materials that can be used for shelter 18" off the ground with space between the material and the wall
- Store firewood away from the home
- Repair plumbing leaks and other water storage areas
- Cover or fill any openings rodents could enter with rat-resistant materials such as 1/4" hardware cloth or steel wool
- Place hardware cloth over vents in the attic
- Close doors when not in use and cover all edges subject to gnawing with metal



Roof Rat

Rosemary Thomas

Solutions

- Trap pests with either wood-based snap traps or glueboards – they are as effective as rodenticides, but may take a little more time and effort if infestation is large; traps are the preferable option if the presence of dead rodent will cause odor or sanitation problem
 - Buy the proper size trap for your rodent problem (rat vs. mouse)
 - Place traps along travel routes where rodent signs are visible
 - Pre-bait traps; add bait to traps but do not set it until rodents are feeding well on the bait (rodents are shy of new items placed into their environment)
 - Reuse traps instead of disposing of them; rodents are attracted to traps that have had rodents visit them previously
 - Set traps perpendicular to the base of the wall with the trigger closest to the wall
 - Change bait daily – fruit, peanut butter and nuts are good baits
 - Secure bait well to the trap
 - Do not use greasy/oily baits on glueboards
 - When trapping outdoors, leave traps out only at night to avoid trapping non-target organisms



earth-wise guide to

Rodents

(continued)

If You Must Use a Rodenticide...

- Use bait only in bait stations to avoid children or non-target animals from eating bait
- Remove baits once rodents are gone to avoid attracting insects (baits are made with grains)
- Use ready-to-use formulas
- Options:
 - Baits – combined attractant and rodenticide
 - Anticoagulants

DO NOT HANDLE DEAD RODENTS WITH YOUR BARE HANDS!

References:

Texas IPM, Texas AgriLife Extension Service, <http://tcebookstore.org>

University of California Integrated Pest Management Program,
<http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu/>



**Watershed Protection
Development Review**
974-2550

*Agri*LIFE EXTENSION
854-9600
Texas A&M System