

RAT AND MOUSE CONTROL

IN RESIDENTIAL AREAS

General Information:

Roof rats (*Rattus rattus*) cause most of the rodent problems in the District. They are slender and have a tail that is longer than the length of its head and body. Roof rats are good climbers, and can be seen crossing power lines and the tops of fences. They feed on many fruit and nuts grown on residential property, including oranges, walnuts, avocados, plums, peaches, and apricots. Roof rats typically nest in overgrown vegetation (especially Algerian and English ivy), piles of lumber and firewood, yucca, palm trees, junk, debris, and structures.

Norway rats (*Rattus norvegicus*) appear heavier than roof rats, with a tail that is shorter than the length of its head and body. They live in burrows under buildings and piles of trash, and in sewers. They are less common than roof rats and less likely to climb.

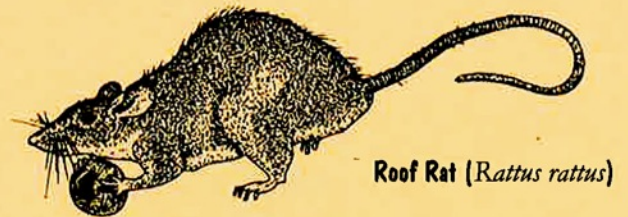
House mice (*Mus musculus*) are much smaller than rats, with a tail longer than the length of its head and body.

Rat Control

Rats can be controlled by following these steps in order:

1. ***Keep Rats Out***

Rats can enter a structure through a hole about the diameter of a quarter. Ventilation ports, basement windows, attic vents and louvers, vent pipes and shafts, mobile home base skirts, and all other potential points of entry should be screened with one-quarter-inch hardware cloth to exclude rats. Gaps around pipes and conduit, and cracks around doors and windows should also be sealed.



Roof Rat (*Rattus rattus*)

2. ***Remove Food and Water***

- Remove sources of food such as extra bird seed and pet food. Harvest ripe fruit and pick up fruit that has fallen on the ground.
- Store pet food in metal containers with secure lids.
- Control snails and pick up pet feces.
- Keep trash in containers with tightly fitting lids. Trash should be removed regularly.
- Repair leaking faucets, sprinklers, or other piping. Keep drain covers tightly fastened.

3. ***Eliminate Shelter***

Harborage must be removed. Algerian and English ivy, palm trees, yucca, bougainvillea, and other dense shrubbery should be trimmed regularly or removed. Lawn and hedge clippings, junk, and other debris should be removed.

Firewood and piles of lumber should be stored at least 18 inches above the ground and 12 inches away from fences or walls.

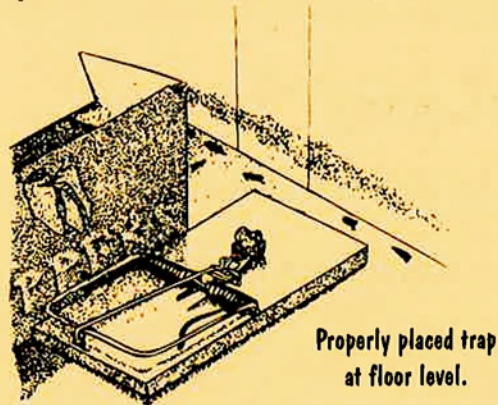
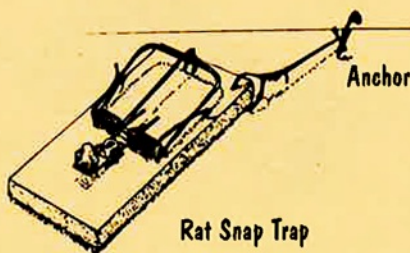
4. *Destroy Rats*

Use snap traps to trap rats in a structure. These traps are available at most nurseries and hardware stores. Effective baits include peanut butter and oatmeal, freshly cooked bacon, or pieces of apple. Place traps near nesting areas and along paths where they are likely to travel such as against walls or along fences. **SNAP TRAPS ARE DANGEROUS! DO NOT** place traps where children or pets can reach them. Dead, trapped rats can be placed in a plastic bag and disposed of in the regular trash.

Poisons are for outdoor use only. The safest poisons currently available are anticoagulants which require several feedings to be effective. These may be purchased at nurseries, hardware stores, and farm supply stores. Poisons can be used outside with the following precautions:

- Use tamper-resistant bait stations.
- Bait stations must be secured so they cannot be carried away or moved.
- Bait stations must be hidden and placed where evidence of rat activity is apparent.
- If a bait station is placed in vegetation, it must be secured so uneaten bait cannot fall out.
- Bait stations **MUST** be placed where children and pets **CANNOT** reach them.

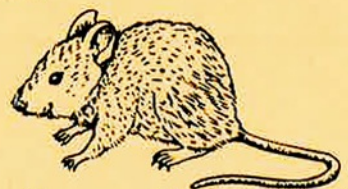
*** Follow all instructions on the label!**



Mouse Control

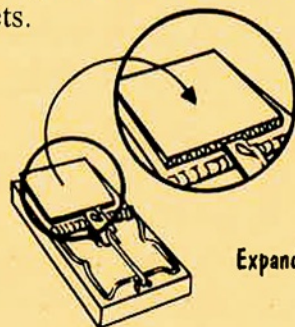
Mice can squeeze through a hole the diameter of a dime. The precautions listed above to exclude rats will also work for mice.

Mice can be trapped with snap traps, but those with expanded triggers are preferable. Effective baits include anything humans eat, and nesting materials.



House mouse (*Mus musculus*)

Traps should be placed along runways and in dark corners. As with rat traps, **DO NOT** place traps where children or pets can reach them. Poisons can be used as long as it is not accessible to children or pets.



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