



How to Control Rodents in Your Neighborhood

Rats and other rodents can be a problem in any neighborhood. They can contaminate food and spread disease, they can start fires by gnawing on electric wires, and they can destroy property and possessions.

Rodents can be detected by their droppings, evidence of fresh gnawing, and torn open containers particularly in the garage and pantry. Tracks can be seen in mud and on dusty surfaces. Burrows and runways can be found next to buildings, along fences, and under low vegetation and debris.

Rodents need a place to live and food to eat. They prefer to live within 150 feet of their food source. If you remove their shelter and food, they can be eliminated. The best way to beat a rodent problem is through prevention. There are a number of ways to keep them away. Here are a few things homeowners can do to prevent a rodent problem.

- Place pet food in airtight containers
- Clean up any spillage of food immediately
- Keep trash cans covered tightly
- Clean up all fallen fruit and nuts from the ground
- Remove pet food dishes and leftovers immediately
- Clean up animal waste frequently
- Cut back overgrown bushes, shrubs, and trees especially ivy and palm trees
- Harvest garden vegetables as soon as they are ripe
- If rodents are invading gardens, do without the garden until they are gone
- Dispose unused/unwanted sheds and automobiles
- Store lumber, firewood, and construction material well above the ground
- Seal any openings to the house, even above ground level including the garage and openings in the foundation
- Keep doors and windows screened