

Rats and mice are widespread throughout the metropolitan area and in our community. The most common species within this area are the Norway Rat (*Rattus Norvegicus*) and the Roof Rat (*Rattus Rattus*). It is almost impossible to completely eradicate them; however there are actions we can all take to reduce the problem. Here are some helpful hints to reduce the opportunities for rats to harbour in our community.

Detecting Rats

- Rodents are generally more active at night. If you see rats during the day, this usually indicates high numbers or that there is a good food supply nearby.
- Droppings are black, thin and about 10mm in length.
- Rat runs are formed because the rodents prefer to run alongside a wall or fence. Over time, a distinct path is worn in the dust or grass. By following this rat run, the rat may be traced to shelter. Rats can travel up to several house blocks to find water and food.
- Eaten food is usually placed in a protected area (e.g. against fence lines, in sheds) and could include snail shells, nut shells, and fruit seeds.
- Evidence of nesting or gnawing such as burrow holes or shredded materials.

How to Remove Rats from Your Property

The most common methods for controlling rats are trapping and poisoning. Rat baits and traps should be placed in areas where rodent activity has been noted. Care should be taken to ensure baits and traps are placed so as to be inaccessible to children, pets and wildlife. Dead rodents can be buried or wrapped and placed into a domestic rubbish bin. Gloves should be worn when handling dead rodents and hands should be washed with warm water and soap immediately afterwards. Trapping and poisoning rats will kill rats on your property, but this is only a temporary measure as rats will return if favourable conditions for existence persist. For complete extermination and protection against re-infestation, rats must be deprived of food and shelter.

How to Deny Rats Shelter

- Clear the house and land of all rubbish and minimise materials stored on the ground. Stacked materials should be kept at least 30cm above the ground.
- Do not allow vegetation to get out of control: keep lawns short all year round, cut back trees, bushes and ground creepers, and remove garden waste regularly.
- Keep your sheds and garage neat and tidy. It is recommended that disused soft furnishings (e.g. old mattresses) and cardboard and papers, are minimised and, if kept, inspected regularly to ensure that rodents do not use these as nesting materials.
- Inspect your home and sheds for potential rodent entrances and block them where possible with concrete, hard setting filler, steel wool or heavy gauge sheet metal.

How to Deny Rats Food

- Store garbage and food waste bagged in enclosed bins and ensure that they are regularly emptied.
- If compost bins are used, keep the base of the bin clear of any vegetation and don't throw animal products (e.g. meat, cheese) or pet faeces into the compost bin. Lidded composts are preferable.
- Keep animal feed in metal bins with tight fitting lids. When feeding animals, leave out just enough food for pets to eat immediately.
- Regularly remove pet faeces and keep poultry yards clean and well-maintained.
- Regularly clean up any fruit or nuts that fall from trees.