

Rats and Mice

How do we deal with rats and mice entering our home? The answer is a simple one to give but a difficult one to perform. We must either kill them or remove them from the house. Then, remove all the things that attracted them in the first place. Locate and seal all entry points. Evicting the pest can be easier than keeping them out, but both must be done to correct the pest problem. When evicting wildlife always seal entry points with something they cannot chew through. To keep out rats and mice, seal all holes larger than one-quarter inch for mice and one-half inch for rats.

If you do not remove the things that attracted them in the first place (a place to live and food to eat) then you can expect the rodents to return. Remove their food source - pet food, waste food or stored food. Clean up trash and brush piles and piles of lumber, etc. to remove their cover and destroy their homes. Put all stored food out of their reach. Seal it up securely. Store food off the floor and periodically clean food storage areas.

Trapping rats and mice is a common control. Rats are harder to control than mice. Bait traps with peanut butter, cheese, bacon or other smelly baits. Place traps along the wall in sheltered spots with the trap perpendicular to the wall and the bait closest to the wall. Use a trap sized for the quarry. Traps are safer than baits since other animals or people are less likely to get seriously injured.

You may have to use 'bait and switch' to kill rats with poison baits. Establish a feeding station where you feed the rat. Place food (pet food) and water together there and replenish it so the rats will get used to eating there. Then switch the rats from food to bait. There are two types of baits, single feeding baits that kill with one feeding and multiple feeding baits that require several feedings to kill the mouse or rat. We recommend multiple feeding baits, if you use baits. They are less toxic if something else gets into them - like a pet or a child. Fill the bait box every day until the pests quit feeding and die.

You may want to build a feeding box to keep other animals out of the bait, to protect the bait from weather and to provide cover while the pests feed. There should be a hole in each end of the box. The holes should be 2 1/2" wide. Label the box "poison" and keep out of reach of children, pets and beneficial animals. A large pipe will even work as a bait station. Place it parallel to the wall. Use two to three inch pipe for mice and three and a half to six inch pipe for rats.

You can use glue traps to catch your rats and mice, but you will often have to dispatch the pests yourself. Glue traps are sticky boards that trap creatures that step or crawl on them. Use large traps for rats or other large animals and tie them down if necessary. Place traps close to the wall where animals are moving. Baiting them may help.

Evicting unwanted house pets requires hard work and perseverance. Keep at it until you have your home to yourself again. There are also several companies that specialize in wildlife removal.