

A.R.T. News

Rodents

Rats and mice often enter homes and buildings in search of food and shelter. The most common rodent pests are the commensal rats and mice. These are old world rodents that have adapted to live with man. They include the roof rat, Norway rat, and house mouse. These commensal rodents have been carried by man to every corner of the earth. Rats and mice consume or contaminate large quantities of food and damage structures, stored clothing, and documents. They also serve as reservoirs or vectors of numerous diseases.

In most cases of rodent infestation, the pest animals can be controlled without having to resort to the use of poisons. The practices of good sanitation and exclusion will prevent most problems.

The house mouse is the most common rodent invading houses. It is primarily nocturnal and secretive. The presence of mice is usually indicated by sightings, damage from gnawing into food containers, or presence of droppings. House mice are inquisitive and actively explore anything new. They are good climbers. They have a small home range and usually stay within 10 to 30 feet of their nest.

The roof rat is the most common rat encounter in buildings. These rats are excellent climbers and often nest in attics, wall voids, hollow trees, and palm thatch. They prefer to travel off the ground and enter houses from nearby trees or along power lines. Rats are usually fearful of new items in their environment and avoid them for several days. Rats have large home ranges and may travel over 50 yards to reach food or water.

Rats occurring in sewers are generally Norway Rats. These rats are strong burrowers, but can also climb as well. They are excellent swimmers and can swim under water for up to 30 seconds and can enter houses by coming up toilet pipes. Like roof rats, the Norway rat is cautious of new objects and has a very large home range, over 50 yards in radius. The Norway rat is very aggressive and will drive roof rats out of an area. However, both species of rats can be found in the same building, with roof rats in the attic and Norway rats in the foundations or basement.

