

# Rat Control Tips

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Effective rodent control is based on the fact that it is extremely difficult to eliminate rodent infestations within the community setting by extermination efforts alone. Rats are prolific breeders so rodent control measures must include the elimination of the food, water and harborage necessary for them to carry on the breeding process.

The following steps provide the basis for effective residential rodent control:

1. **Know your enemy. Be Aware.** Inspect your property regularly for signs of rodent activity.
2. **Be neat.** Keep your yard free of trash, debris, high grass or accumulations of building supplies. If you must store materials or equipment outside do so neatly. Organizing and/or elevating stored items helps to reduce harborage and allows you to inspect under and around them more easily.
3. **Don't feed the Rats.** You may not realize that pet food, dog manure, open garbage cans or cans without tight fitting lids or bags of garbage, bird seed or other food scraps left outside are an open invitation for rats to visit you and establish a home in your yard. Never put household garbage or food scraps in compost piles.
4. **Cut off their water supply.** Dump pails, unused flower pots, toys or equipment in which water can accumulate (standing water also provides a breeding area for mosquitos during the summer months).
5. **Protect your home.** Close any holes you find in the foundation of your house, eliminate cavities under steps, sidewalks, or porches. Close threshold gaps at exterior doors. Provide a heavy one fourth inch mesh screen over sump pump outlets or a tight fitting lid on your sump pump well.
6. **Think about your own activities.** Be sure to clean up any outside eating areas. Minimize spillage around the Bar- B-Q. Greasy residue on a patio or porch or food residue allowed to build up on cooking equipment may attract rodents for extended periods of time. The feeding of wild animals such as birds and squirrels must cease and vegetable gardens or even fruit trees may have to be removed for rodent abatement measures to be effective.

7. **Don't build in problems.** Try to utilize construction methods that minimize or eliminate crawl spaces under decks or sheds. If building low to the ground is unavoidable utilize heavy one fourth inch wire mesh to close perimeter gaps. Remember rats can slip through spaces of one half an inch and are energetic diggers. Wire mesh should extend below ground at least 1 foot to deter tunneling.
8. **Communicate.** Talk to your family and your neighbors. They may not realize that a problem exists. Rodent infestations must be addressed by everyone if they are to be successfully controlled or eliminated.
9. **Fight the Rat.** When you see a rat, rat run, or rat burrow, take action immediately. The problem won't just go away. Fill in the burrow to see if it is reopened, indicating an on going infestation. You should take measures to exterminate the existing population. Many bait station or trap products are available at local hardware and lawn and garden stores. You may wish to utilize a certified professional pest control operator. Just remember, any abatement must be accompanied by a continuing effort on your part to use The Rat Control Tips.