

Rats

Rats are some of the most troublesome and damaging rodents. They eat and contaminate food, garden produce, and fruit as well as transmit diseases to humans and pets. Manage them by removing food and shelter, eliminating entryways into buildings, and trapping.

Indications of a rat infestation:

- ◆ Rat droppings in garages, storage buildings, attics, or around pet food containers
- ◆ Rodent feeding damage on fruit/nuts in or falling from trees in your yard
- ◆ Rat nests behind boxes, in drawers in the garage, or in woodpiles
- ◆ Burrows beneath the garbage can, compost pile, or among garden plants
- ◆ Rats travelling along utility lines or on fence tops at dusk

Identify the rat: Is it a roof rat or a Norway rat?

- ◆ Norway rats are stocky rats that build burrows along building foundations, beneath rubbish, or in woodpiles. Indoors they tend to remain in basements or on the ground floor.
- ◆ Roof rats are agile climbers with a tail that is longer than their head and body. They usually live and nest above ground in shrubs, trees, or dense vegetation. Indoors they favor attic spaces, walls, false ceilings, and cabinets.

To get rid of rats, remove food, water, and shelter and seal entryways!

- ◆ Feed pets only the amount of food they will eat at a single feeding.
- ◆ Keep garbage, trash, and garden debris in receptacles with tight-fitting lids.
- ◆ Thin dense vegetation and create at least a 2-foot space between shrubs and between shrubs and buildings.
- ◆ Thin or remove climbing hedges from buildings.
- ◆ Remove tree limbs that are within 3 feet of a roof.
- ◆ Seal all cracks and openings in the house's foundation that are larger than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch.
- ◆ Make sure doors, windows, and screens fit tightly.



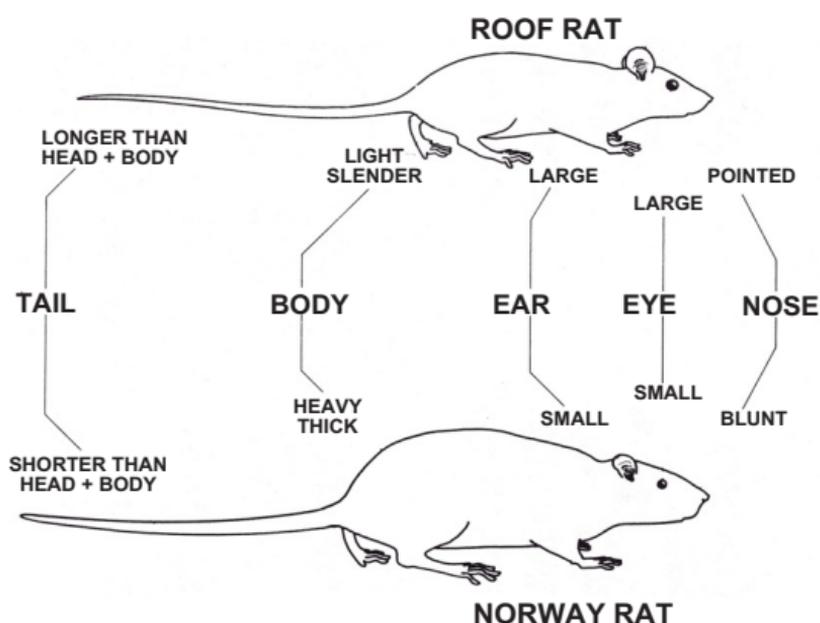
Remove rats from the home by trapping.

- ◆ Snap traps are the safest, most effective, and economical way to trap rats.
- ◆ For Norway rats, place traps close to walls, behind objects, in dark corners, and in places where rat droppings have been found.
- ◆ For roof rats, place traps in off-the-ground locations such as on ledges, shelves, branches, fences, pipes, or overhead beams.

What about baits?

- ◆ Avoid using baits indoors because dead rats create bad odors.
- ◆ Seal buildings before baiting outdoors to prevent poisoned rats from coming indoors to die.
- ◆ Place baits in tamper-proof bait stations and secure them from children and pets.
- ◆ All rodent baits are toxic to pets.

Refer to *Pest Notes: Rats* at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu for more details on rat management.



–PROTECT YOUR WATER–

To eliminate runoff to storm drains and protect our creeks, rivers and the ocean, minimize the use of pesticides and follow proper use and disposal practices. Whenever possible, use non-chemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products.

For more information, contact the University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners of Orange County Hotline: (714) 708-1646 or ucmastergardeners@yahoo.com or visit www.uccemg.com and www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.



What you use in your garden affects our creeks, lakes, and rivers!