

City of Pleasant Ridge

Rodent Information Booklet



City of Pleasant Ridge
23925 Woodward
Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069
248-541-2900

EXCLUSION, SANITATION, TRAPPING

Exclusion

The best way to keep buildings rodent free is to prevent rats and mice from getting inside. Rodents fit through tiny openings and can gnaw through wood, lead, aluminum, copper, cinder block and uncured concrete. The following measures, with the proper materials, will make buildings less accessible to rodents.

- Mice can gnaw their way through openings as small as 1/4 inch. Rats can gnaw through openings as small as 1/2 inch.
- Patch openings in walls larger than 3/8 inch using gnaw-proof materials, such as steel sheeting, 1/4 inch hardware cloth, galvanized steel and concrete. Holes may be plugged with steel wool prior to patching. An aerosol foam spray may then be used to seal remaining cracks.
- Close outside doors tightly when not in use.

Sanitation

Eliminating places that may provide rodents with shelter, water and food is the purpose of sanitation.

- Eliminate debris in and around buildings and grounds.
- Trim weeds and brush and keep grass short (3 inches or less) to minimize cover and food sources around the building perimeter.
- Clean up food waste and spillage daily.
- Store food 12 to 15 inches off the floor and 12 to 18 inches away from the wall for easy inspection and sanitation. Use rodent-proof containers when possible.
- Between storage areas, allow 24-inch aisles for easier inspection and sanitation.
- Screen dumpster drainage holes with hardware cloth.
- Don't leave pet food out overnight.
- Eliminate water sources available to rodents.

ROOF RAT



Rattus rattus

Other Names: Alexandrian rat, black rat, fruit rat and ship rat.

Body. Body is slender, 6 1/2 to 8 inches (17 to 20 cm) long. Average weight is 6 to 12 ounces (170 to 340 g).

Life: Adult life is approx. 18 months. Females will have 3-7 litters per year with 6-14 young in each litter.

Color. Varies from black to brownish-gray. The underside varies from gray to white.

Nose. Nose and muzzle are pointed. Roof rats have an acute sense of smell.

Habits. Able to swing, jump and climb, roof rats usually enter and nest in upper portions of buildings. May nest outside in trees (especially palm), ivy and similar vegetation. Burrow very little. Nocturnal. Most activity and feeding takes place between a half-hour after sunset and a half-hour before sunrise. Strong social hierarchy.

Teeth. The gnaw pattern of rats is 1/8 inch. Rats are able to gnaw through wood, lead, aluminum, copper, cinder block and uncured concrete.

Tail. Hairless and longer than the head and body - 7 1/2 to 10 inches (19 to 25 cm) long. Uniform color from top to underside.

Ears. Ears are large and cover the eyes if bent forward.

Eyes. Eyes are large and prominent. Because rats are colorblind and have poor eyesight, they primarily see light, shadow and movement.

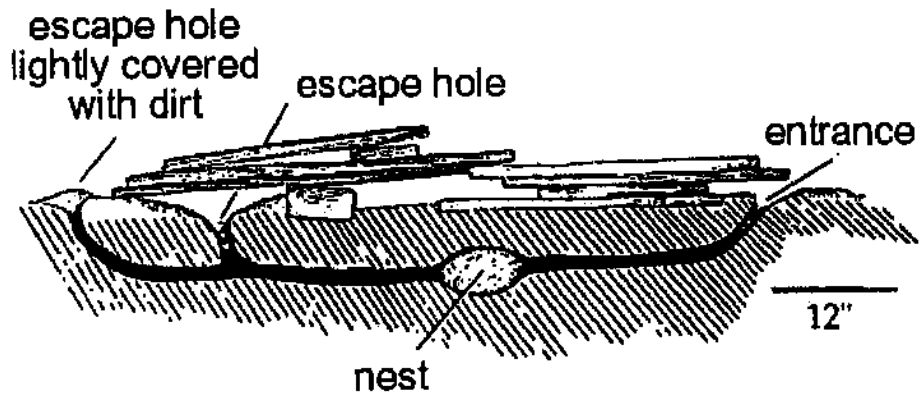
Droppings. Droppings have pointed ends and are about 1/2 inch (1 cm) in length. Fresh droppings are soft and dark in color. A roof rat averages 30 to 180 droppings per day.

Food Preferences and Consumption. Omnivores. Seeds, fruits, vegetables, eggs and grain. Rats visit fewer food sites than mice, but eat more at each site. Consumes 1/2 to 1 ounce of food daily. Drinks up to 1 ounce of water daily.

Geographic Range Best suited for tropical and semitropical zones, roof rats are found along the Pacific Coast, in Hawaii, along the lower half of the East Coast, throughout the Gulf States and major river systems (i.e., Mississippi River).

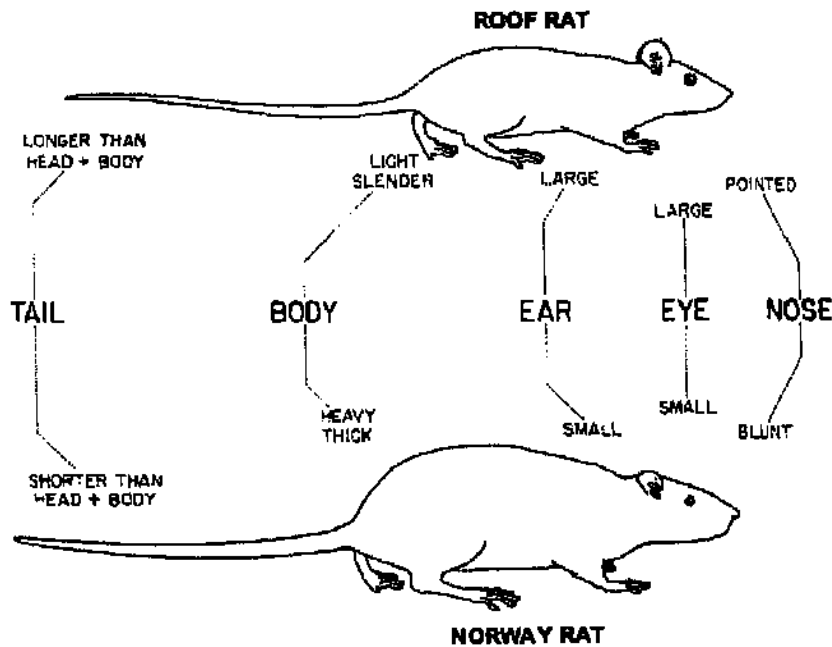
Facts:

Rats explore their territory of 100 to 300 feet daily. Rats can survive a fall from up to 25 feet onto a hard surface



Norway rat burrow beneath a pile of boards.

From Hygnstrom, S. E., R. M. Timm, and G. E. Larson, eds. 1994. *Prevention and Control of Wildlife Damage*. Vol. 1. Lincoln: Univ. Neb. Coop. Ext.



Key characteristics

of Norway and roof rats.

From Bjornson, B. F., and C. V. Wright. 1960 (revised). *Control of Domestic Rats and Mice*. Center for Disease Control, USDHEW, Public Health Service Pub. 563.

PREVENTING RODENT HARBORAGE



All structures and exterior property shall be kept free from rat infestation. Where rats are found they shall be promptly exterminated by approved processes which will not be injurious to human health. After extermination, proper precautions shall be taken to prevent reinfestation.

All foundation walls shall be maintained plumb and free from open cracks and breaks and shall be kept in such condition so as to prevent the entry of rats.

Exterior Storage

All Building material, lumber, boxes, cartons, barrels, bottles, cans, containers, machinery, junk, raw materials, fabricated goods and similar items which may afford harborage for rats shall be stored or stacked either upon rat-proof paved areas or elevated eighteen (18) inches above the ground, and shall be separated into storage units as to minimize the possibility of rat harborage, and as to permit inspection and extermination procedures.

City of Pleasant Ridge Private Property Inspection Check List

Property Address _____

Date _____

Time _____

The following items are known to contribute to rodent harborage and rodent food sources. **Removing these items from your lot will greatly reduce your chance of having a rodent infestation on your property.** Please remove any of the items indicated below immediately:

- Remove unlicensed and/or inoperable vehicle(s) from property.
- Remove all nesting materials from sheds, garage or yard. These include but are not limited to: carpeting, rope, string, cardboard, paper, wood, wood chips, tree branches, automobile tires, hay or straw.
- Remove all appliances from exterior property area including but not limited to: air conditioners, washing machines, dryers and refrigerators.
- Remove all leaves and cut tall grass; trim shrubs so that they don't lie directly on the ground. Remove all weeds and overgrowth from flowerbeds.
- Remove all sources of water including but not limited to: stagnant water on pool covers, leaking water spigots, birdbaths, fishponds and any low areas that hold water.
- Remove edible products from sheds, garages or yard. Including, but not limited to the following: birdseed (do not leave any seed on the ground, clean-up daily), flower seed, animal food, flower bulbs, animal feces, pet food and water dishes, fruits from fruit trees.
- Elevate all wood, including firewood 18" off the ground or store on a concrete or asphalt surface or dispose of properly.
- Store all trash in metal or plastic garbage cans with tight fitting lids. Inspect cans for holes and replace when necessary.
- Replace/repair any and all rotted or missing siding or trim on garages and sheds.

If you have any questions regarding any of the above, please contact:

Sherry W. Ball at (248) 541-2900 or Scott Pietrzak at (248) 542-7322

REPRODUCTION

Mice and rats reproduce rapidly, as is generally the case with small prey animals. Their relatively short life spans, short gestation periods and rapid sexual maturity make effective rodent control critical. The reproductive cycle and number of rodent offspring increases with adequate food, water and harborage.

House Mouse Reproduction Cycle

- Mice sexually mature and mate in as little as 5 weeks. Generally, sexual maturity is reached in 5 to 8 weeks.
- Female mice reproduce up to 8 times in their lifespan, with litters averaging 4 to 7 pups. Therefore, a single female may produce up to 56 offspring annually.

Rat Reproduction Cycle

- Norway and roof rats can sexually mature and mate at 8 to 12 weeks of age.
- Norway rats average 8 to 12 pups per litter, averaging 4 to 7 litters per year.
- Roof rats average 4 to 8 pups per litter, averaging 4 to 6 litters per year.

Related Reproductive Characteristics

House mice, Norway rats and roof rats share several reproductive characteristics:

- After giving birth, they can be in heat and become pregnant again in as little as 24 to 48 hours.
- Females can be pregnant and still lactate to feed their current litter of pups. However, the gestation period may be slightly longer in this case.
- They will reproduce year-round in stable environments with adequate food, water and harborage. Less favorable conditions limit reproduction to spring and autumn.
- House mice, Norway rats and roof rats live approximately one year.