

General Rodent Information

Pests like rodents can quickly become an unwelcome guest in any home or yard if appropriate measures are not taken. There are three main things that rodents look for in choosing a new home: food, water, and shelter. Eliminating any potential sources of these 3 items can greatly reduce the likelihood of an ongoing problem. Here are some steps that you can take to help prevent a problem:

- Seal all holes and openings larger than $\frac{1}{4}$ inch (rats can squeeze into openings of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch and mice can fit through $\frac{1}{4}$ inch openings) in diameter on buildings that are within 3 feet of the ground. Keep in mind that rodents can gnaw through wood, soft metals, cinder blocks, and other soft materials.
- Eliminate any potential food or water sources, including outdoor pet feeding stations. Pet food and water dishes should be kept inside if possible, or emptied at night.
- Keep bird feeders at least four feet from the ground and clean

the ground underneath feeders frequently.

- Clear weeds and debris away from buildings.
- Store all firewood, boxes, lumber, etc at least 18 inches off the ground.
- If you store garbage outside, make sure it is in water tight containers with tight fitting covers. Elevating the garbage containers 12-18" off the ground will also help.
- If you have a dog, make sure to clean out the doghouse frequently and pick up dog droppings daily.
- Compost piles should not contain any food items, only leaves, grass, and twigs.

If you suspect that you have some furry friends lurking about, taking the above steps can help make the environment less friendly towards rodents. Occasionally, other steps such as traps and poisons may be necessary. Make sure that these products are used as intended and

keep in mind that some poisons can harm both people and pets if used improperly. If you are not sure what to do, contact a professional pest control operator.

As rodents can travel up to 300 feet daily in search of food, water, and shelter, it is important that you should share information about suspected problems with your neighbors so that future problems can be averted. Disruptions such as sewer repairs, construction, and storms can lead to rodents traveling further to seek food, water, or shelter. It is important to keep in mind that even when all measures of prevention have been taken, rodents can still show up occasionally.

Additional information available at www.bhamgov.org under the "animal control" section of the "residents" tab.

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