

Rats: A Homeowner's Guide

Rats can carry diseases that make people and pets sick. They can contaminate people, pets, and food when they are handled or through contact with their feces, urine, saliva, or bites.

Given the potential health threat they pose, it is important to keep rats away.

Quick Rat Facts

- Norway rats are also known as Brown rats, Sewer rats, or Wharf Rats.
- They can grow up to 13-18 inches from nose to tail.
- Rats can bear 6-12 babies up to 12 times a year. Up to 144 rats a year!
- Most rats live to 2-3 years old.

Rat behaviors

- A group of rats is called a mischief.
- Rats' teeth do not stop growing. They constantly gnaw to wear their teeth down.
- They live within 150 feet from their home.
- Rats are great climbers, jumpers, and swimmers. They can swim up to three days before drowning.



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Signs of Infestation

Here are a few examples of signs that your property could be infested with rats:

- Burrow holes in yard or along fences or the sides of buildings
- Rodent droppings seen
- Paths worn in grass or mulch
- Gnaw marks
- Greasy rubs marks along runs

Where do rats live?

- Under wood or lumber piles
- In piles of brush and tall grass
- Under rocks and landscaping features
- In unused lawn furniture
- Around trash and garbage
- In and under sheds and garages



Burrow and bait box/LCGHD



What attracts rats to my yard?

- Improperly stored garbage and uncleaned recyclables
- Improperly stored animal food
- Bird and wild life feeding
- Dog and cat food bowls outside
- Fruits and vegetables on the ground
- Improperly managed compost piles
- Dog feces
- Ponds, fountains, and water hoses

What can I do to make my yard less attractive to rats?

Follow the checklist for rat-proofing your property:

- ___ Stop feeding birds and wildlife
- ___ Remove dog feces daily
- ___ Remove water sources
- ___ Do not leave pet food outside
- ___ Store garbage cans with tight fitting lids
- ___ Clean recyclables before storing
- ___ Enclose and secure compost
- ___ Remove clutter in the yard
- ___ Keep bushes and shrubs trimmed
- ___ Stack firewood 18" off the ground
- ___ Install sweeps on garage doors

How do I eliminate rats?

After making the yard less attractive to rats, the elimination of rats is important to prevent further infestation.

- Homeowner use of poison is strongly discouraged. Contact a licensed pest control operator for use of rat poison.
- For at home methods, purchase snap traps and bait with apples, bacon, or peanut butter.
- Bait traps, but do not set for a few days. This will train the rats to go for the bait.
- After a few days, set and place traps in areas that rats have been seen.
- Dispose of all rats using proper protection.

What should I do if I see rats?

Take Immediate Action!

- Clean yard and remove all potential food sources. See "**What can I do to make my yard less attractive to rats?**" for checklist.
- Notify your community administrative offices.
- Contact the Lake County General Health District at (440) 350-2543 or at www.lcghd.org.

Licensed pest control operators can be found through the Ohio Department of Agriculture's Pesticide Program:

<https://agri.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/oda/divisions/plant-health/pesticides/company-search>

- Enter your zip code or search under Lake County for licensed pesticide operators in your area.



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General Health District
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