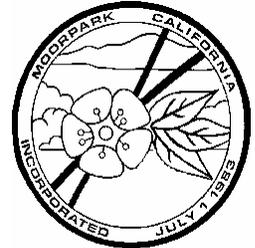


# CITY OF MOORPARK VECTOR CONTROL

City of Moorpark Animal & Vector Control  
799 Moorpark Ave.  
Moorpark, CA 93021  
805 517-6267



## ROOF RATS GENERAL INFORMATION

The **roof rat**, *Rattus rattus*, is a problem species in Moorpark and Ventura County. This rat is slender and agile, and the tail is longer than the head and body. Roof rats will enter buildings if given the opportunity, and often use utility lines and fences as runways. Roof rats prefer to feed on fruits, nuts, ivy, and pet food commonly found in residential areas.



## ROOF RAT HABITAT

Roof rats may live or establish their nests in:

- Your home
- Algerian ivy
- Palm trees
- Yucca
- Pampas grass
- Honeysuckle
- Blackberries
- Italian cypress
- Juniper tams
- Star jasmine
- Other heavy shrubbery
- Wood and lumber piles
- Storage boxes
- Yard and garden storage

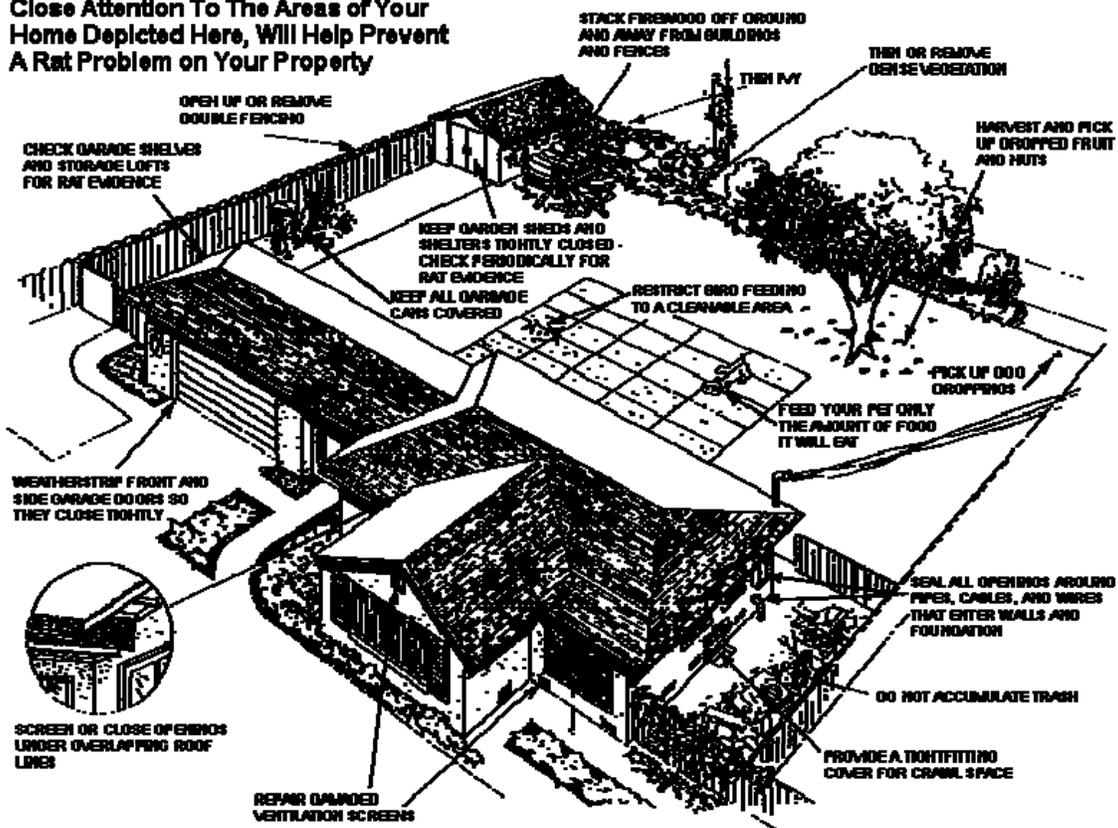
For more information on plants that are attractive alternatives non-attractive to rats read the flyer on Roof Rats and backyard plants.

# ROOF RAT ACTIVITY

Homeowners should be alert for these signs:

- Rub marks caused by the rat's oily fur
- Droppings found in forced air heaters, swimming pool heater covers, and water heater closets
- Sounds (gnawing) from attic, sub floor, and walls
- Visual sightings on utility cables, tops of trees, or in trees

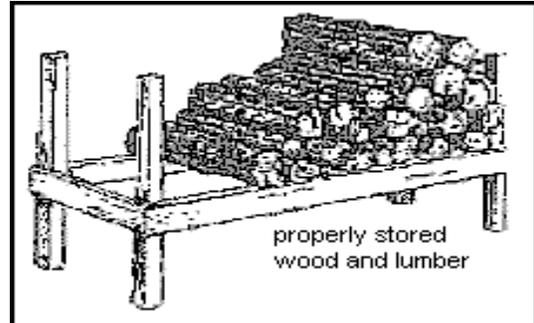
**Close Attention To The Areas of Your Home Depicted Here, Will Help Prevent A Rat Problem on Your Property**



## RAT CONTROL BY ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Rat survival and prosperity requires three basic environmental conditions:

- Abundant food
- Available source of water
- Access to suitable harborage



Good environmental management practices, supplemented by the wise use of rodenticides and trapping are the most effective approaches to rat control.

**H**arvest fruits as soon as they ripen. Pick up all fallen fruit.

**N**ever leave uneaten pet food outside overnight.

**A**lgerian ivy, oleander, bougainvillea, and other thickly matted plants should be thinned and trimmed well away from roofs, walls, fences, utility poles, and trees.

**S**tock wood and lumber piles on racks at least 18 inches above the ground and 12 inches away from the walls; clean up debris piles.

**R**epair leaky faucets and eliminate any other unnecessary standing water.

## **PLACES WHERE ROOF RATS COMMONLY ENTER HOMES**

- Broken or missing foundation vent screens
- Attic vent screens broken or left off
- Space between heavy roof shakes
- Open wooden meter boxes (in older homes)
- Space between roof jack and vent pipe
- Under or on sides of garage door
- Brick chimneys which have settled away from house
- Tile roof
- Close all openings larger than ¼ inch to exclude rats and mice.

## **BUILDING MAINTENANCE: RAT PROOF YOUR HOME**

**Rats** can enter even small exterior openings of a home. Important steps a homeowner can take are inspecting and repairing vent pipes and shafts, attic vents and louvers, basement windows and ventilation ports.

**Screen** openings with ¼ inch hardware cloth and or steel wool.

**Seal** gaps around exterior pipes and electrical conduit with concrete fill or sheet metal.

**All** repairs should be inspected at least twice a year.

**Keep** tree limbs at least 48 inches away from the roof and walls of the house.

# TRAPPING

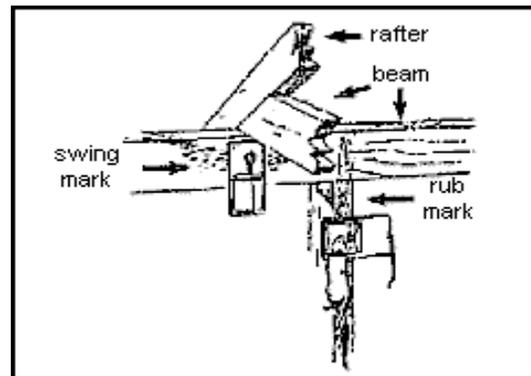
Trapping rodents is an effective method of control. Trapping is especially desirable when poisons cannot be used near food, small children, or where domestic animals or livestock are present. **Traps should be used indoors to prevent the serious odor problems that can occur when poisoned rodents die in inaccessible areas.**

## TYPES OF TRAPS

Rodent "snap traps" are inexpensive and come in two sizes. The smaller trap is designed for mice and the larger for rats. It is very important to choose the proper size trap. Several rat traps should be set to maximize trapping effectiveness.

## TRAP PLACEMENT

Placement of snap traps is crucial to their effectiveness. Place traps in areas frequented by rats. Rats establish runways along fence tops, and next to walls. Look for the presence of rat droppings when placing snap traps. Place the narrow end of the trap containing the trigger against a wall or known runway.



Snap traps can also be attached to pipes or studs with wire, nails or screws. Better results are usually obtained if two traps are set side by side. It is also a good idea to prebait, that is, use a baited but unset trap at first so that the rodent can become familiar with the baited trap. This requires only two or three days, after which the traps can be set.



## **CHEMICAL CONTROL**

Homeowners may purchase rodenticides at nurseries, feed stores, and hardware stores. All rodenticides should be handled carefully. **Always follow all label precautions and recommendations.**

## **SAFETY PRECAUTIONS FOR CLEAN-UP**

When handling rodents, these precautions should be followed to avoid the possibility of disease transmission.

- Ventilate the affected area the night before clean-up by opening doors and windows.
- Use rubber gloves.
- Apply household disinfectants at maximum recommended concentrations to dead rodents, rodent droppings, nest and surrounding area, and allow for at least 15 minutes contact time before removal.
- Clean the affected area with paper towels or a mop. **DO NOT SWEEP OR VACUUM.** Double bag the disinfectant-soaked rodent and clean-up materials securely in plastic bags and seal.
- Before removing gloves, wash in disinfectant, then soap and water. Thoroughly wash hands with soap and water and dispose of gloves and clean-up materials with other household waste.