

Mice and Rats

Rodents most commonly seen in and around dwellings in the Bay Area include house mice, Norway rats and roof rats (also known as black rats). These animals are not native to North America, cause millions of dollars of damage each year, and can cause food poisoning, and spread diseases to humans such as plague and typhus. In the Bay Area, we also have native rodents such as deer mice, harvest mice, California voles, and dusky-footed wood rats (also know as packrats). These are usually seen away from homes, but can sometimes be found close to or in dwellings.

You can easily minimize the attractiveness of your home and garden to rodents:

- Keep leaf litter, lumber, trash, brush, wood and rock piles to a minimum to reduce hiding places. Ground cover such as ivy is used commonly by non-native rodents.
- Remove all sources of food. Fruit, such as figs, apples, apricots, and grapes should be promptly harvested and not allowed to accumulate or drop to the ground.
- Seal all places where rodents may enter your house. Mice can get through a hole the size of a dime; rats can get through the hole the size of a quarter.

In your home:

- Do not use glue traps or poison. Glue traps are inhumane and can catch unintended victims such as lizards and birds. Poisoned rodents may secondarily poison predators or pets. Snap traps are the most humane.
- If you hire a pest control operator, make sure it uses traps and exclusion instead of poisons that can have secondary effects.