

OLD WORLD RODENTS

Common Name: Old World rodents

Other Names: roof (black) rat, Norway (brown) rat, house mouse

Scientific Names: Rattus rattus, Rattus norvegicus, Mus musculus, respectively

Appearance:

size	- rats, 12 to 18 inches (30 to 46 centimeters) - mice, 6 to 7 inches (15 to 18 centimeters)
color	- rats brown, gray to lemon-colored - mice brown to gray
other	- ears and tails nearly hairless

Range: - statewide

Habitat: - warehouses, farm buildings, attics, roof spaces, palm trees, ornamental shrubbery, fields

Diet: - meats, fish, grains, vegetables, nuts, fruits, other various foods

Reproduction: - 4 to 8 litters yearly

Behavior:

- active mostly at night
- gnaw surroundings daily to keep teeth sharp
- rats are excellent swimmers
- rats use regular pathways along walls or behind debris

Problems:

- carry diseases communicable to man
- contaminate and destroy stored foods
- damage structures
- undermine foundations by burrowing
- some agricultural losses of tree crops such as citrus and avocado

Solutions:

- "rodentproofing" structures to block all possible entry points, including gaps as small as 1/4 inch (6 millimeters)
- use of rodent-resistant materials, such as sheet metal (26 gauge or heavier), perforated metal (24 gauge or heavier), hardware cloth (19 gauge or heavier), brick with mortared joints, cement mortar and concrete
- proper storage and handling of food materials and garbage

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- regular removal of debris
- reduction of vegetative cover
- immediate harvesting of ripened fruit
- trapping
- poisoned bait should not be used unless applied by an expert

Legal Aspects: - not protected by state or federal laws