

RATS (*Rattus norvegicus*)

Why have I got rats?

Rat numbers fluctuate year by year and it is possible that anyone could experience problems in their garden or home. Rats will find food, water and somewhere to live over a wide area only one of these elements may actually be on your premises with others being in neighbouring properties.

Do rats pose a risk to my health?

Rats can be a health hazard because they may carry diseases that can be passed on to people and domestic animals through food or food surfaces that they contaminate. Diseases such as 'Weils disease' can enter the body through open wounds, so if you are working in an area where rats have been, cover all wounds with a waterproof plaster, wear gloves or wash your hands regularly. Any surfaces that rats may have been in contact with should be disinfected. Any contaminated food produce should be thrown away.

What damage are rats likely to cause?

The two front teeth (incisors) of rats grow continually and they must chew things to keep them short. They can damage property by making holes in and shredding a variety of materials. Serious damage such as floods and fires can occur if they gnaw on plastic\lead water pipes or electrical wiring.

Where do rats live?

The most common places to find rats in a garden are, under sheds, in woodpiles and in compost heaps. The drainage system is also ideal because of all the food scraps that are washed away as waste along with an abundant supply of water.

What do rats eat?

Rats are omnivores (meaning both vegetable and meat products are eaten) but the most common food sources within our environment are rubbish bags left outside containing waste foodstuffs/packaging, food left out for the birds and waste food scraps on compost heaps. A good rule is not to let rubbish build up and to dispose of food waste in a closed container that is regularly emptied.

The Council's Pest Control Service

We offer a service to control rats. Please telephone 01206 282581 to find out the current charge and to arrange for an appointment for one of our officers to visit.