

# RATS



## Pest Control Factsheet

The common or brown rat is found throughout Britain, living anywhere that offers food and shelter in both towns and the countryside. It has now almost replaced the ship or black rat.

### Description

- Adult rats weigh around 300 gm and are about 40 cm long, including tail.
- Colours vary but are usually brown fur on the back with lighter grey underneath.
- They have poor sight but excellent hearing and sense of smell.
- Strong teeth allow them to chew through most materials.
- They dig extensive burrows, often linking up with the drains.
- Their droppings are dark and jelly bean sized.

### Life Cycle

- Rats live for 9 to 18 months.
- The female has up to 7 litters each year with 8 to 10 young.
- Young rats start to breed in 2 to 3 months.

### Importance

- Rats spread many diseases which are harmful to man, including Weils' Disease which can be fatal.
- They eat our food but spoil even more with their droppings and urine.
- Their gnawing damages timber, pipes, cables and other materials.
- Burrows damage drains and undermine paths, patios and sheds.

### Getting the Problem Under Control

- Our Officers will provide the professional help needed
- They will inspect the area to determine the extent of the problem
- Treatment will be carried out, normally with baits being laid

## Advice for Clients

The Officer carrying out treatment for you will explain what has been done and point out things you need to do or ways in which you can help us to control the rat problem.

### Helpful Information

Tell the Officer –

- Where you have seen the rats or the signs of them you have found.
- If you or your neighbours have seen rats outside or noticed holes in the garden.
- Of any recent problems with drains in the area.
- If there are building or roadworks going on nearby.

### Proofing

It is important to check for ways the rats are getting in and take action to stop them –

- Holes and gaps in outside walls must be solidly filled.
- Chewed or damaged exterior doors must be repaired or replaced.
- Damaged or missing air vents and grilles must be replaced – **but never blocked.**
- Waste pipes must be checked for damage and repaired or replaced where necessary.

### Hygiene

Do all you can to remove sources of food for the rats -

- Clean up after every meal and don't leave any food lying around, especially overnight.
- Put waste in the dustbin straight away and keep the lid on.
- Clean and remove pet food bowls after feeding.
- Stop putting out food and water for wild animals until the Officer tells you the rats have gone.

### Housekeeping

Keep the house and garden tidy so that the rats can't easily shelter or nest -

- Clear any parts of the garden that are overgrown.
- Remove unwanted items stored in the garden.
- Don't overfill cupboards or store too much in lofts and cellars.