

# RATS

## Problems They Cause

Rats can transmit potentially fatal diseases and parasites including Salmonellosis (food poisoning) and Weil's disease. They can cause considerable damage to buildings, foundations and other structures due to gnawing and burrowing. They like to gnaw electric cables, a habit that has been implicated in many a building fire.

Rats are responsible for considerable pre- and post-harvest food damage and losses. They cannot legally be tolerated in food premises due to the risk of spreading a variety of food-poisoning micro-organisms.

Control needs to be implemented as soon as they invade your premises, as the costs of prolonged infestation can escalate rapidly.

## Characteristics

Brown rats belong to the rodent order – animals with constantly growing teeth. They have a need to gnaw regularly in order to file the teeth down. This keeps them extremely sharp. In addition rats have very powerful jaws, so they are able to chew their way through soft metals, timber and even some concrete.

Brown rats live in an opportunistic way allowing them to adapt to every situation they find themselves in. They are excellent at climbing, jumping and swimming and are very fast runners. These pests are nocturnal, so sometimes they are not spotted until their population is out of hand.

## What you can do to help

- Rats only need a gap of 12mm to gain entry to your premises
- Remove potential nesting sites by keeping vegetation cut back and your area clean and tidy
- Be careful how you feed wild birds as you may be encouraging rats

## Pest Biology

The brown rat typically has brownish fur on its back and is grey underneath. Brown rats are bulky, with a pointed nose, large ears and a thick scaly tail that measures about three quarters as long again as their head and body. The adults weigh 300-500g.

They can produce frequent large litters, so have a big reproductive potential – one pair of rats can lead to 500 offspring within a year in favourable conditions.

They typically live in sewers or in burrows underground, but they will exploit any situation that provides food, water and shelter, including sewers, farms, food premises, gardens, houses etc. These animals are extremely successful, and virtually ubiquitous pests the world over.



## Commercial Control Methods

- A skilled pest control technician will identify species and determine areas of infestation
- The technician will advise on hygiene measures that will be needed to help eliminate the infestation and proofing methods necessary to prevent access to the building or to harbourage areas
- Traps and/or rodenticide will be employed at strategic points within areas of activity to kill the rats. A succession of visits might be needed to monitor and reset traps/top up rodenticide
- On completion of the treatment, the technician will advise on housekeeping measures to help you prevent future infestations

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Terminix is a member of the British Pest Control Association (BPCA).

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