

Rodents such as rats or mice, pose a health concern in the community. They can spread disease, transmit fleas to pets and cause damage to buildings. Rodents are attracted to water, shelter and food, which is why they are often found in houses.

The City of Subiaco provides free sample rat baits. House owners and residents in the City of Subiaco are entitled to two allocations of sample bait each financial year, or four allocations in the case of pension/concession card holders.

## **Spot the rodent**

There are a number of signs that indicate there is a rodent in your home. You might notice:

- droppings (twelve to eighteen mm long);
- debris such as snail shells with the insides eaten out, almond shells, cape lilac berries left in sheds and other secluded spots around the house;
- signs that fruit and vegetables have been eaten;
- squeaking or movement noises in walls, ceilings or under floors;
- signs of gnawing damage.

## **Control of rodents**

Rats can be discouraged and controlled by denying them water, food and shelter.

A few simple precautions should be followed:

- Store firewood away from shed sides and keep well clear of the ground.
- Do not allow junk to accumulate in sheds.
- Do not allow garden refuse (leaves, grass clippings) to accumulate for any length of time.
- Rubbish bins should be well maintained and free from holes.
- Remove fruit and nuts from trees at the end of the season.
- Clean up food scraps around the yard weekly.
- Block access holes with material such as wire mesh. Rats can climb a rough faced brick wall to gain access to a house via the roof.

These methods can be used in conjunction with rat-baiting for effective control.

## **How to use rat baits**

The most effective method of eliminating rodents is to use active preventative measures in combination with the placement of anti-coagulant rodent baits. These baits are very effective as rodents are incapable of ridding themselves of the rodenticide they consume.

Once you have noted where the rodents are active, remove all food sources, but do not disturb any articles such as boxes, junk or firewood at the nesting site, as this will cause them to disperse. Place the baits in dark covered areas such as roofs, behind fridges and stoves, and where the rats are nesting. If the rodents are eating grapes on vines or fruit trees, wax block baits should be wired to suitable branches. Monitor the use of baits every few days. Replace all baits and maintain a supply for at least two weeks after you note that no more bait has been eaten. Don't be fooled when baits remain untouched for several days, it is preferable to leave fresh baits in place for at least two weeks after the last bait was taken.

Precautions should be taken when handling rat bait. Always read the label before use, and use gloves or wash hands immediately after touching the rat bait.

Please remember that all baits should be kept out of reach of children, family pets and wildlife.

If you have concerns about contact you or your child has had with rat bait, you should call the Poisons Information line on 13 11 26.

For further information regarding rodent control, please contact the city on (08) 9237 9254.