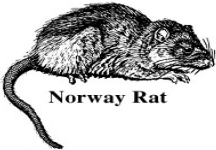
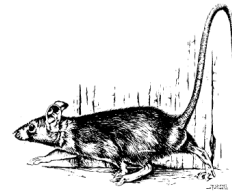


**ALCON SERVICES**  
**FALL NEWSLETTER**

Fall is upon us, so even though it is not a pleasant subject let us talk about the most common pest problem that we have in the fall and winter. Unfortunately, it is RATS, and people tend not to want to think about them, and in our experience, people just don't like rats. They think it is better to have mice, or squirrels or some other problem, just not RATS, anything but RATS. However, RATS is what most people have. Now let us talk about what you can do to prevent this common household pest problem. If you are hearing noises in your attic, or walls, you should probably have it checked out by a professional. The most important thing we tell our customers is to have your home inspected every September or October to determine if you have a problem, and to treat for rodents before it becomes a serious problem.



RATTUS NOVEHICUS (Norway Rat), or a RATTUS  
RATTUS (Roof Rat). Does it really matter which? Most of our clients do not care they just want them gone. NOW!



Now is the time to start thinking about Rodent Control, Squirrel abatement, and other varmints that may be in and around your home and yard. The most common fall and winter problem we have in North Texas are rodents in the attic, garage, living areas, and out buildings.

If you believe you have a rodent problem it is generally because you:

- See these critters in or around your home
- See something scampering along the fence or overhead wires
- You have a feeling of not knowing what you saw, but you thought you saw something out of the corner of your eye.
- Your dogs may be scratching or sniffing, or just plain looking worried.
- You hear noises in the attic or walls.
- You identify the problem by seeing droppings, or evidence of damage.

Inspect your home thoroughly. Most people will not or cannot inspect properly, which is why it is best to have a pest control professional inspect your premises for you. We will get up in the attic, where it is usually very hot and filled with all kinds of critters, and what not. Inspections are tedious, but we are familiar with what rodent problems to look for. However if you want to perform this inspection yourself, start in the garage, and attic. Look for:

- Rodent droppings,
- Signs of rodent damage
- Tunneling
- Nests, etc.

Controlling rodents is much easier before they set up permanent residence in your home. Exterior perimeter bait stations are very effective, and help prevent rodents from getting into your home.

Exclusion is by far the best method for controlling rodents in and around your home. However once you realize you have a rodent problem, or suspect you have rats or mice, it should be dealt with quickly in order to contain the problem.

Once you get rid of them start thinking about keeping them out of your home in the future. Think Exclusion! Go outside your home and look for any openings larger than a quarter, fascia boards, soffits, garage doors, air conditioning, and gas lines. Look around all doors windows, and the roofline, if there is a hole bigger than your thumb then a rat can gain entrance. If they can get their nose into a hole, both rats and squirrels will make short work of making it large enough to get their entire body in your home.

There are a few practical ways to get rid of rodents in or around your home, baiting or trapping (glue boards, snap traps, and live traps). The only problem with trapping is that they only catch one, and no one only has one rat or mouse. The other method is through baiting (poison), and most people are familiar with the problem of baits. The rats may die in your attic, walls, or other areas of your home that are not accessible for removal. In addition, there is the problem of dogs, and other household pets getting into the bait. The accompanying problem with maggots, flies, and the knowing that something has died in my house is typically not a pleasant outcome.

In general baiting is the most effective, practicable, cost efficient method for getting rid of rats and mice around your home. In fact, we keep bait out all the time in the attic, garage, and storage shed, and use exterior perimeter bait boxes, which are checked frequently. In general, we have not had a problem with rats in or around our residences for over 10 years. You can also get bait into areas that are not accessible by any other means, they can be dispensed throughout your attic, and garage, and it is inexpensive solution.

Most of the time baiting works fine, but every once in a while there is the problem of how to deal with a dead rodent in your home. If the carcass can be found and removed, the smell can be eliminated. Epoleon products are effective for removing the odor of dead rats or mice. The smell usually lasts between 10 –14 days, and then there can be the problem with maggots and flies. (that is another course in biology)

Rodents are nocturnal, so they are out and about, when we are not. So most people are not aware of the problem with rodents until it is too late.

On a recent inspection, one of our clients said he was having a problem with a strong odor in the upstairs baby room. In addition to finding rodent droppings in the attic, we found a bird's nest in the attic vent that contained a dead bird, and a dead possum on the furnace. We also, observed three holes in the outside fascia board around the roof, and holes where the air conditioning and gas lines entered the home, in addition there was a clogged dryer vent screen. Our clients had no idea these problems existed until they noticed the odor.

If you have any questions, we are happy to discuss your situation with you.