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Tips on Preventing and Deterring Rats

Below are some tips and suggestions for protecting your home and property. This information is meant to inform residents of possible signs of rats and educate home owners on the nesting habits of these unwanted vermin. When in doubt, contact an exterminator for a professional opinion.

Signs of an infestation- rats try to remain hidden from view so they are often hard to spot. Some signs of an infestation may include

- Burrows near compost piles, plants, or trash cans. A burrow is roughly 3-4 inches across, or about the size of a baseball.
- Rats can nest indoors and will use shredded paper, cloth, or insulation to build a nest. They will also nest inside piles of debris on a ground level floor.
- Small, dark droppings left in lines or piles behind furniture, along baseboard, in attics, sheds, basements or garages.

Secure storage- place trash in garbage bags in metal or hard polyethylene resin cans with securely fitted lids to keep rats from feeding on the contents. Animal waste should be bagged and placed in a metal can.

Seal holes and gaps- conduct a thorough inspection of your home including the roof, under the porch, around a chimney and windows. Openings larger than a dime must be sealed to keep out rats and other unwanted vermin. A professional exterminator can be helpful in identifying hidden points of entry.

- Gaps can be filled with copper or steel wool, caulking, mortar, or another appropriate material. Add or replace worn weather stripping around doors, especially garage doors, windows, and other leaky entry points. This can also help keep your heating and cooling bills.
- Replace or repair any damaged vents or torn screens. Most vents are fitted with insect screens but they can become dislodged over time.
- Mice and rats tend to establish their home near a constant source of water. Areas of pooled or running water should be addressed and mitigated. This also keeps mosquitos from breeding.
- Rodents generally feel safer in areas with overgrown vegetation. Keeping the growth under control will deter these creatures.

Keep gardens and lawns clean and mowed- rats hide in dense vegetation and wood piles. Make sure to regularly clear any piles of branches or leaves. Store firewood on a platform at least 1 foot off of the ground and away from surrounding structures. Keep all grass below 6 inches per borough code. Any ripe or overripe food grown in your garden can attract rats. Make sure all food that falls to the ground is

regularly picked up. Vegetation like ivy or vines or tall shrubs should be kept 4 feet away from the roof line or any eave or soffit vents.

Bird seed, pet food and pet waste- Install a rodent baffle on your bird feeder or use a rodent-proof feeder. Regularly clean up underneath the feeder to prevent an accumulation of feed on the ground. Store feed in a metal rodent-proof container.

Pet food containers left outside are an easy snack for rats and other vermin. Make sure to clean up any leftover food and remove the dish once feeding is complete. Pet waste should be cleaned up and placed in a metal container for disposal in the trash. Use a container with a snug fitting lid and make sure to inspect regularly for holes. Please do not discard pet waste and bags into storm drains, both items pollute our rivers and can clog storm lines.

Use a metal compost tumbler- Look for one that is completely sealed or that has a locking lid and that sits up off the ground. Food scraps in the compost can attract rats so it's advisable to limit their introduction if you're already dealing with an infestation.

Repellants and snap traps- snap traps quickly and humanely kill rats. Be sure to check them daily. Repellants when combined with a clean house and waste management may add an extra layer of defense from infestation. You can:

- Soak cotton balls in peppermint oil and leave them in drawers;
- Put mothballs on shelves and in drawers;
- Sprinkle crushed red pepper or pepper spray near openings and holes;
- Scatter cat litter near rat-prone areas like in attics, window wells, or sheds.

Please notify the Edgewood Code Enforcement Officer at (412) 242-4824 x 119 to report any unsanitary or unsightly conditions.