

Rodents – An Explanation

The rodents most often found in the Malden area are the House mouse Norway rat, voles, chipmunks, squirrels and beavers.

Of concern to most residents are the House mouse and the Norway rat because they can intrude on the living space of humans.

Rodents are the most common mammal in the world both in numbers and species. They are so numerous because of their body design, high reproductive rate, the ability to adapt to a wide variety of habitats and climates.

They also carry disease which is the main concern of area residents. Some of the diseases are salmonella, lyme disease, hantavirus, rickettsial pox and plague.

All of these diseases require close contact with the rodents fecal matter, fleas or an actual bite from the rodent. The House mouse and Norway rat have not been shown to be infected with the rabies virus in wild populations.

RODENT HARBORAGES

Rodents choose and develop their harborage based on available food and water as well as the harborages protection against predators. The typical harborage is a hole dug into the ground or a hole gnawed into a structure. The nesting area is developed and then multiple escape holes are made.

ENVIRONMENT

The Rumney Marsh, Linden Brook, the mass transit and former rail bed systems, Fells Reservation, Fellsmere Pond, Holy Cross and Forestdale Cemeteries are all examples of rodent habitat. If residents live near these environments or ones like them they should **double their efforts** to eliminate food sources and man made harborages. **Non-owner occupied property owners should also double their efforts to educate their tenants.**

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Eliminating piles of debris, yard waste and overgrown vegetation is a good first step to reducing the harborage sites on your property. These materials make it easy for the rodent to develop a harborage quickly.

Eliminate strewn trash, feeding pets outdoors, improperly maintained bird feeders, excessive pet feces, containers holding rain water, over planted gardens and improper disposal of yard waste will improve the rodent's health and reproductive cycle. **Store all trash outside the premises in rodent resistant barrels with lids.**

EXTERMINATION

If rodents have harbored inside a home the owner should try to trap the rodents using non- chemical tools such as snap traps or glue traps and fix any openings in structures and remove all sources of food stored on counters or on the floor.

For a more effective chemical rodent control solution property owners should consult with a licensed pest control contractor to ensure the proper installation of the pesticide and required notification of the property's occupants.

Extermination is most effective when good sanitary practices are used, food sources and man-made harborages are eliminated and property owners educate themselves and their tenants.