




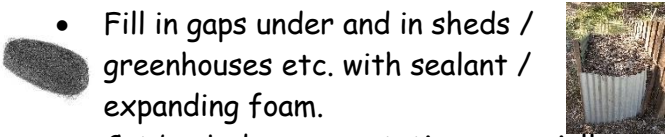






Reducing the Risk of Rats on Your Plot

Allotments are an ideal place for rodent populations to flourish. Evidence of rats includes live sightings, droppings, signs of damage and burrows. Rats need 3 main things to survive: food, water and adequate shelter. By removing one of the 3, the chance of rats surviving are much lower. Long-term management is required as killing rats is only a short-term control method.

<p>Food: Rats mainly feed on cereals / grains but are also known to eat sweet items such as chocolate. Food sources on allotments come from produce, (such as sweetcorn) and livestock food.</p> 	<p>To remove the food source:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect crops as much as possible. • Use feeders. Ensure that livestock feed is not left on the ground. • Clean up spillages and ensure feed is stored in a bite-proof container. 
<p>Water: Rats need free access to water.</p> 	<p>Prevent access by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covering water butts / containers / ponds. • Fixing leaking pipes. • Reducing standing water on plots. 
<p>Location & Shelter: Rats are good burrowers and have a 'home-range' of 30m (urban) - 700m (rural). They have kinaesthetic memory which means they remember the steps to take to get to a particular location. They are also neophobic which means they are cautious of new objects in the environment. Rats need sheltered areas to feel safe.</p> 	<p>The prevent harbourage for rats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and block any 'rat-run' areas. • Fill in burrows using non-chewable materials such as wire wool / mesh. • Fill in gaps under and in sheds / greenhouses etc. with sealant / expanding foam. • Cut back dense vegetation, especially on plot boundaries to create more exposed areas. • Avoid piles of wood /waste etc. • Block access into compost heaps - these provide an ideal temperature for rats to nest. 

Other methods to control rats:

Snap-traps	Live-traps	Dogs and Cats	Using Rodenticide
<p>Can be used multiple times but tenants would need to responsibly dispose of any carcasses themselves.</p> 	<p>Must be inspected once a day. Food and water needs to be provided for the trapped animal. Tenants responsible for dispatching / releasing rats humanely.</p> 	<p>Historical method which disturbs the rats which can then be caught.</p> 	<p>Domestic use poison is available. Professional products can only be used with adequate training. Baiting needs to be done correctly and controlled due to the environmental impacts. Some sites do have a bait control programme in place already.</p> 

(information compiled using CRRU UK code of Best Practice and Lantra Awards Rodent Management Technical Guide)