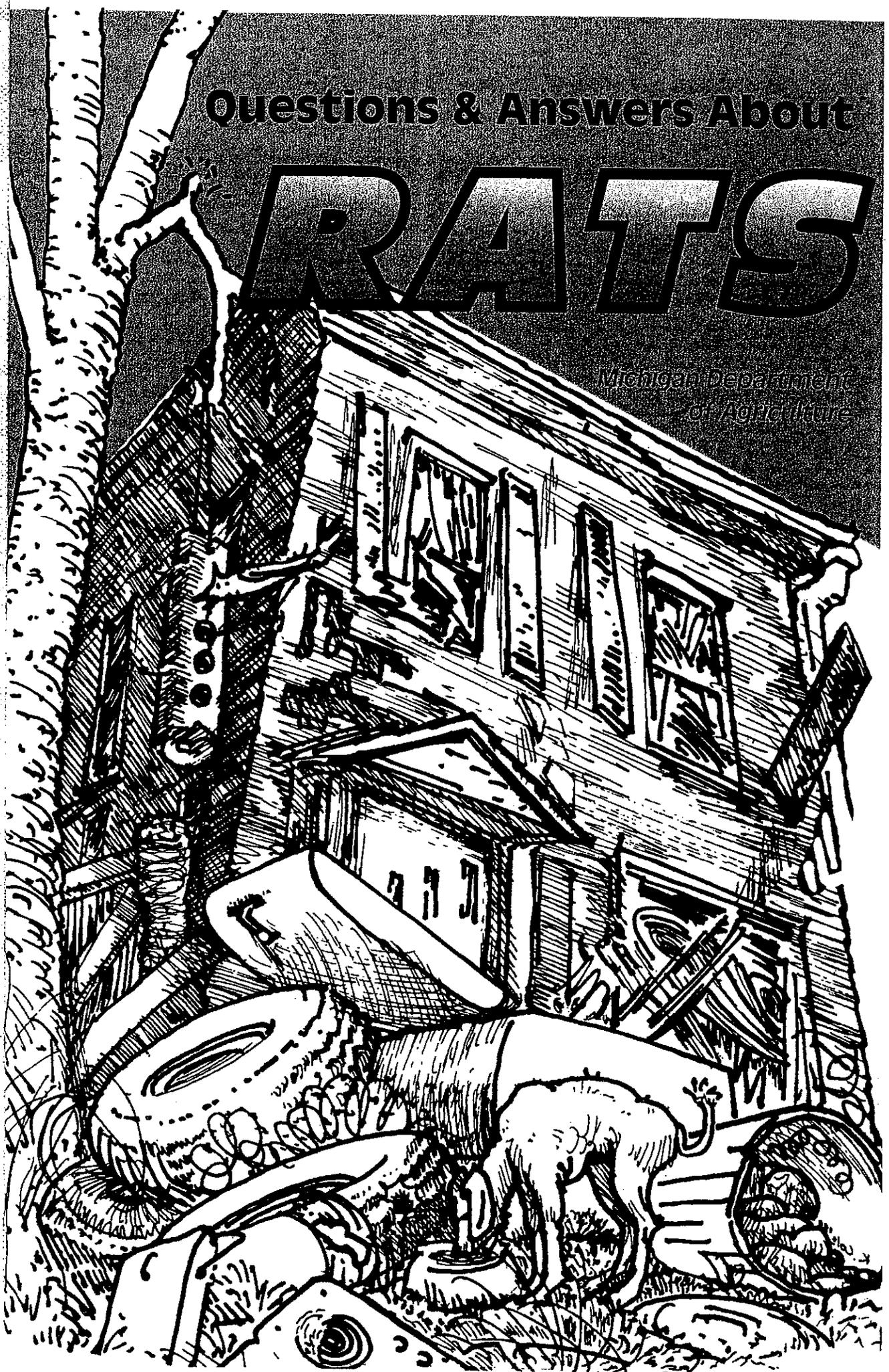


Questions & Answers About

RATS

Michigan Department
of Agriculture



Meet the enemy



Rats have accompanied people to most areas of the world. People's indifference and carelessness in handling food and refuse have fostered populations of rats in such close proximity to their homes and work that they are called domestic rodents.

There are several species of rats, but the one we are concerned with is the Norway rat (*Rattus norvegicus*). This species is also called the barn rat, brown rat, house rat, wharf rat, and sewer rat.

Rats are bad...

- 
- Rats spread diseases like salmonellosis, leptospirosis, plague and rat bite fever.
 - Rats bite people (usually defenseless adults and babies).
 - Rats contaminate and destroy food.
 - Rats destroy property.
 - Rats cause hysteria when seen.
 - Rats' gnawing may cause fires.

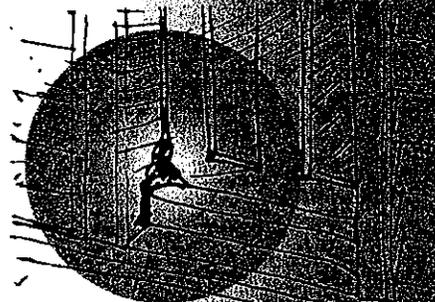
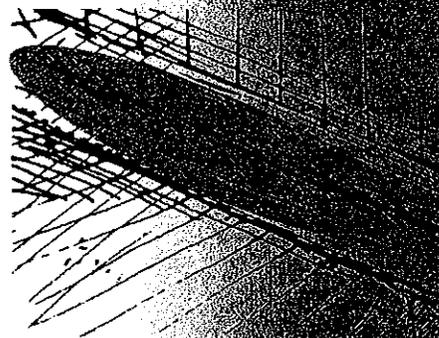
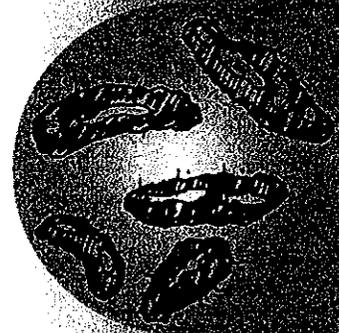
Looking for rats? Here's how...

Burrows – Rats live in nests made in burrows in the ground. Look for holes or fresh diggings under concrete slabs, near garbage storage areas, along earth banks, near brush piles, and near similar places that provide harborage.

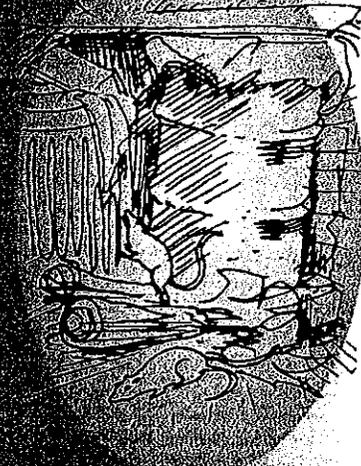
Droppings – Look for black shiny capsule shaped droppings with blunt ends, Norway rat droppings are approximately 3/4 inch long.

Runways – Outdoors-look for narrow beaten paths of earth free of debris. Indoors-look for greasy smear marks along walls, steps, and runways where rats travel.

Gnaw marks – Look for distinct teeth marks and light colored wood chips for fresh gnaw marks. Rats like to gnaw on door ledges, corners, stored materials, etc.



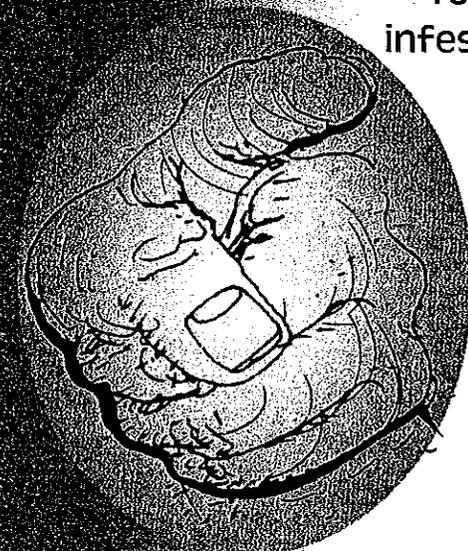
What attracts rats?



IMPROPER REFUSE STORAGE

- Garbage on the ground.
- Garbage stored in plastic bags.
- Garbage stored in damaged cans or cans without lids.
- Pet food left out overnight.
- Animal droppings.
- Bird feed on the ground.
- Brush/rubbish piles.
- Large rubbish items.
- Burning barrels.
- Tall weeds and grass.

How can rats be eliminated?

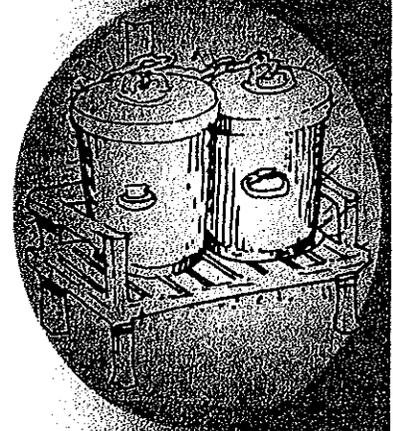


You can get rid of existing infestations by:

1. Starving them.
2. Cleaning the premises.
3. Killing them with poisons or traps.
4. Rat proofing the building.

1. Starving them

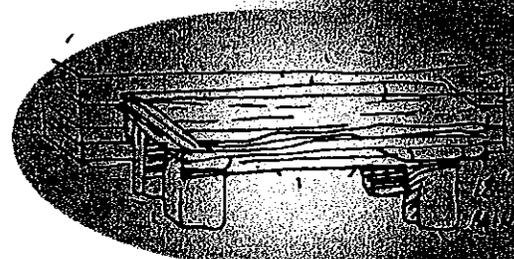
- Proper storage of garbage and rubbish is the single most important factor in rat prevention/elimination.
- cans with tight fitting lids are essential.
- Plastic bags are not rat proof.
- Do not leave excess pet food sitting out.
- Wash pet food dishes daily.
- Avoid putting out bird seed, peanuts or bread crumbs. If you must have a bird feeder place it at least 4 feet off the ground.



PROPER REFUSE STORAGE

2. Cleaning the premises

- Get rid of all unnecessary articles, junk, and large rubbish items.
- Cut weeds and grass.
- Store lumber/firewood on racks 18 inches or more above the ground.
- Clean dog kennel/pen areas daily.



PROPER LUMBER AND
FIREWOOD STORAGE

3. Killing them with poisons:

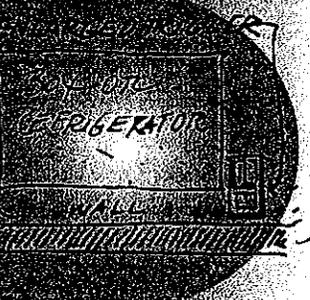
The most commonly used poisons are those that prevent blood clotting. These are slow acting poisons and rats need several feedings, **so it is necessary to maintain a continuous fresh supply until feeding stops.** Label directions will tell you how many days. It is usually 8 to 12. **Remember**—poisons must be used as stated on the product label. Most major chain stores, farm supply stores, and grain and elevator facilities have poisons and traps.

READ THE LABEL. FOLLOW DIRECTIONS.

With traps:



TRAP WITH EXPANDED TRIGGER



PROPER TRAP PLACEMENT

- Snap traps are the safest and least expensive way to kill rats.
- Place several traps along runways.
- Place trap with trigger toward the wall.
- An expanded trigger increases effectiveness.
- Expand triggers with 2-inch square cardboard or hardware cloth.
- Bait traps with peanut butter, raisins, bacon, or canned cat food (fish/meat flavored).
- Unbaited traps also are effective.

4. Rat proofing the building...

- Seal all holes and openings within 3 feet of the ground.
- Seal all holes and openings 1/2 inch and larger.
- Use 17-gauge hardware cloth.
- Use 24-gauge sheet metal.
- Use concrete, brick, or mortar.

Rat facts

Rats can:

- Squeeze through a 1/2 inch hole.
- Climb horizontal and vertical wires.
- Reach vertically 18 inches.
- Jump vertically 3 feet.
- Swim up floor drains.
- Swim up sewer lines.
- Swim through a toilet bowl trap.
- Survive on pet food.
- Survive on animal droppings.
- Gnaw through soft metals, wood, electrical wires, and cinder blocks.

