



Be a friend to WILDLIFE



We can safeguard our homes and yards from mice, rats, gophers, and other rodents without the use of hazardous poisons. There are much safer and more effective ways to keep rodents out.

Rodents have many natural predators, from owls and hawks to coyotes and snakes. Our native predators are the most effective long-term solution for keeping rodent populations in check. A single owl can catch more than 1400 mice a year! Rodents are an important food source for other wildlife, and they also benefit plants by dispersing seeds.

Using rodenticides to kill rodents can backfire: poisons will slowly kill off rodents' natural predators, which leads to an increase in the rodent population. Poisoning individual rodents will also cause a spike in the food supply, resulting in quicker breeding among surviving and new rodents.

Rodenticides Can Poison Children, Pets, and Wildlife

- Rodenticides are poisons that kill rats, mice, and gophers. But they can also kill much larger species, including dogs and cats.
- Rodenticides, or "rat poisons," are hazardous to anyone who swallows them, especially children.
- Products sold as rodenticides, such as bait stations, pellets, bars, or packs, contain highly toxic ingredients that lack antidotes or medical treatments. Watch for an official warning label on the product:
"ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS - This product is extremely toxic to fish, birds, and other wildlife. Wildlife feeding on treated bait may be killed. Dogs, cats, and other predatory and scavenging mammals and birds might be poisoned if they feed upon animals that have eaten this bait."
- These toxic products cause a slow, painful death for animals who have been exposed.
- A poisoned rodent is a toxic time bomb. Rodents

don't die inside the bait stations but suffer while wandering around in our yards and neighborhoods. As they get weaker and sicker, they become easy prey for their natural predators: owls, hawks, eagles, foxes, and coyotes. Cats and dogs will also have an easier time catching them. When predators or scavengers eat a poisoned rodent, they too will get sick and may eventually die.

The top five reasons to avoid rodenticides:

1. Children are at risk of accidental poisoning.
2. Cats or dogs may die or become severely ill from eating poisoned rodents.
3. Wildlife may die from eating poisoned rodents.
4. Rodents may die in an inaccessible location in your house; the smell of a dead animal will persist for weeks to months.
5. Poisons don't address the problem: that rodents have access to areas they shouldn't have.

ACTION TIPS

Be a friend to wildlife: Here's how to avoid poisons.

TIP #1

Make your yard less attractive to rodents

- Keep trash bins tightly closed and remove any refuse from your yard.
- Remove fallen fruit and spilled birdseed.
- Use rodent-proof, above-ground bird feeders.
- Elevate your bird bath above ground level.
- Don't feed dogs or cats outdoors.
- Pick up dog waste

TIP #2

Prevent rodent access to your house

- Seal any cracks and crevices leading into your home. Mice can enter through dime-sized holes. Check around piping and wire entries.
- Use weatherstripping on windows and doors and replace when it ages.
- Keep kitchen counter surfaces, floors, and cabinets free of crumbs and store dry food and pet food in glass containers.
- If you hire a professional to rodent-proof your home, ask whether they are trained in integrated pest management (a holistic approach that starts with the least hazardous method).

TIP #3

Create a habitat for natural predators of rodents

- Plant trees in your yard to make it attractive to birds, including ravens and raptors, that eat rodents.
- Install a barn owl nesting box to naturally control rodents. An owl family can eat upwards of 3000 rodents per year.
- Before you try to attract predators, all use of poison (including by your neighbors) must have stopped at least 3 months before.

TIP #4

Be cautious about using non-poisonous products

- Live trapping (cage traps) and relocation may be complicated; animals may not survive if released far from their capture area. Don't release an animal on someone else's property.
- Never use glue or sticky traps, which are indiscriminate and cause a cruel death for any animals caught in them (including birds).
- Check out commercial birth control products for rats and mice, which can be dispersed in feed stations, such as ContraPest®.

NEED HELP?

Neighborhood safety: If you care about wildlife or if you have pets, find out whether your neighbors use rodenticides and let them know about safer solutions.

Free hazardous waste drop-off: bring any poisons and toxins you find on your property to Albuquerque's Household Hazardous Waste Collection Center at 6137 Edith NE or call the Household Hazardous Waste Hotline at 505-349-5220.

Health concerns? If you suspect that someone may have swallowed a rodenticide, call the Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. In an emergency, call 911.