



A Community Plan to Manage Rats in University Hills

Trapping and poisoning are only temporary solutions. As long as food, water, and rat-friendly habitat are available in University Hills, new populations of rats will keep moving in to replace the dead ones. Without sanitation, exclusion, and habitat modification, rat control efforts are doomed to failure. We can succeed in keeping the rat population manageable (we can never eliminate rats) only if we all work together to adopt an integrated approach.

1) Sanitation:

- Don't let fallen fruit lie on the ground--pick it up.
- Harvest ripe fruit, especially oranges, avocados, peaches, apricots, plums, walnuts and tangerines.
- Take bird feeders in at night and pick up spilled seed.
- Don't leave pet food/water bowls outside.
- Secure trash cans and close trash bags tightly.
- Wash trash cans regularly with soap and water.
- Store wood 18" above the ground and 12" from the walls.
- Clean up debris piles in gardens

2) Exclusion:

- Seal up your house and garage—this is vital! See link for easy, explicit instructions.
<http://www.ocvector.org/documents/bulletins/Rodent-proofing%20residence.pdf>, You can complete this job in 1 to 2 hours, or you can hire a company to do it for you. A rat can enter your house through a hole the

size of a quarter. However, with steel wool and ¼" wire mesh you can completely exclude them. It is far more cost-effective to pay a company to seal up your house than it is to pay for constant baiting in and around your house.

3) Habitat Modification:

- Choose plants that are inhospitable to rats. Don't plant ivy, oleander, bougainvillea, and other thickly matted plants. Ivy is a rat's favorite habitat! If you have ivy, thin it out and trim it low or consider replacing it.
- Trim yucca and palm trees.
- Leave a 2' space between shrubs—rats don't like to be in the open.
- Keep tree branches 2 to 3 feet from your house
- Don't grow vegetation on your house walls.
- For plant do's and don'ts, consult OC Vector's list:
<http://www.ocvector.org/documents/bulletins/CalifNativePlants4landscape.pdf>

4) Trapping and Deterrence

- Snap Traps, for example, Victor Easy-Set Rat Traps with extended triggers set for a light touch
- Encourage raptors with perches and owl boxes—but only after the community has stopped using rodenticide.
- Fresh Cab — a botanical repellent <http://www.earthkind.com/products/fresh-cab-category>
- Rataway — <http://www.rataway.com/>
- Grow mint in pots—rats don't like it.
- Cayenne pepper--sprinkle in pathways and known nest sites.
- Mothballs (but they're toxic and must be kept away from kids and pets).
- Raticator — electronic trap (can be used outside in a bait box):
<http://raticator.org/>

Please do not use glue traps. They are inhumane.

Please do not use rodenticide. It kills indiscriminately and is devastating to wildlife and dangerous for children and pets.

For further explanation, Marin County (which hasn't used rodenticides since 2009) has provided a really helpful brochure with detailed advice on how to set traps, exclusion methods, etc.

http://egovwebprod.marinpublic.com/depts/PK/Main/IPM/Data%20Files/Pest_Specific_Plans/Rat_Plan.pdf