

Rats

There are 2 types of rats in the UK – the black rat or ship rat which is rarely found in the district and



the common brown rat (pictured left). An adult brown rat is about 25 cm long and weighs over 500g. They usually feed at night time and can travel a long way for food, up to 500m from their nest.

Rats will burrow and make a nest in loose soil under garden buildings, in piles of rubbish and compost and sometimes inside houses. Rats need to keep their front teeth worn down by gnawing and so cause damage to

wood, plastic and building materials. They often gnaw electricity cables which can cause electrical fires.

Health risk

Rats naturally carry diseases that can spread to people and also bring bacteria from their food and nests to our homes. A rat infestation inside a house is a serious health risk and needs treating.

Signs of an infestation

You may notice the following if you have an infestation:

- Rat droppings
- Damage to food items
- Chewed wood or plastic
- Hear the rats especially at night.

Advice to avoid infestations

- Don't leave large amounts of food in bird feeders and clear up off the ground.
- If you think you have an infestation, stop feeding birds and other animals.
- Store rubbish in metal or plastic bins and keep the lid on.
- Don't put cooked food or meat in your composter.
- Block off places they can enter – holes in walls, badly fitting doors etc.

It is impossible to stop an occasional rat visiting the garden looking for food. Your aim is to discourage them from living there.