



RATS! We've got RATS!

Every property in the Foothills Clusters is constantly being visited by pack rats. Their digging and climbing capabilities make physical exclusion of the rats by wall or fence impossible. We each must decide if we'd prefer the rats to simply pass us by, or establish a base of operations on our property. When making this decision, it is important to consider the following:

- Pack rats reach maturity in about 2 months and can reproduce every 2 months. If you have a few rats, you are soon likely to have many more.
- The rats are solitary, so each new rat will want to quickly establish its own home. Places they find to be very inviting include car engines, pool and spa pumps and heaters, air conditioning units, and in and under houses and sheds.
- The rats do not respect property lines, so your rats' young will likely become your neighbor's problem.
- Pack rats must constantly chew. They find home and automotive electrical wires, insulation, irrigation tubing, and many landscape plants irresistible. Rats doing thousands of dollar of damage to homes and cars is not uncommon.
- The rat nests harbor kissing bugs, spiders, and scorpions, and will attract rattlesnakes.
- Pack rats themselves are known to carry diseases and viruses.

Suburban developments allow for very high density of rat populations while minimizing good predator habitat. If you do not wish to harbor rats, you should:

- Carefully walk your entire property to identify rat activity.
- Look for middens (piles of twigs, stones, cactus pieces, mesquite pods, etc.) under cacti and agaves, around rock piles and walls, and in the places listed above.
- Consider removal of the rats and middens. **DO NOT USE POISON.** A rat killed by poison is then likely to be eaten by another animal that will also be killed. Live trapping in a cage and then elimination of the rat is the preferred method.
- Wear a surgical respiratory mask when removing middens or working in rat infested areas, or hire a pest control specialist to do the work.

- Trim landscape plants appropriately to preclude their use as nesting sites.
- If you see a snake on your property, let it go about its business. It wants to avoid you and catch your rats! Snakes do for free what pest control companies charge considerable money to do.
- Seal AC units, pool equipment, and vent openings with ¼" hardware cloth.
- Please note that lights and scented sprays are not guaranteed to repel rats. Their urgent need to find a home will likely outweigh any such inconveniences.



Pack rat midden in prickly pear



Pack rat damage to car engine

Questions or comments? Write to PackRats@FoothillsClusters.com and we'll connect you with our resident expert.