

RAT PREVENTION POLICY – MARCH 2025

Following the guidelines laid out in the Campaign for the Responsible Rodenticide Use – Code of Best Practice (CRRU)

- Removing food and water source
- Removing the places they use for shelter
- Clearing rubbish and overgrown areas to prevent cover and harbourage.

In short, we need to make the sites less attractive to rodents in the first place. If they cannot find sources of food, shelter and warmth, they will be more inclined to move on, and so reduce the need for rodenticides to be used in the first place.

Discouraging rats on the allotment is everyone's responsibility.

1. Keep your plots tidy. Clear away any rubbish. Use the project materials you have around. Any materials used on a seasonal basis should be stored appropriately in your shed/off the ground to prevent providing shelter for rodents.
2. Rat proof all compost bins to prevent rats from gaining access by burrowing underneath. Site 'Dalek' style plastic bins on slabs or chicken wire. Mesh with a hole size of 10mm or less is ideal. This will allow the safe composting of kitchen waste such as veg and fruit peelings, teabags and coffee grounds.

Traditional open style bins should be lined with chicken wire to prevent rodent access by burrowing underneath. These should be used for storing dung/seaweed/leaf mould/annual weeds.

Rats have easy access to traditional open style compost bins, therefore substances such as kitchen waste/poultry and aviary cleaning/rabbit or guinea pig hutch shavings or any other material that would attract rats cannot be used in these composters. This includes foodstuffs grown on the allotment.

Anything that provides a food source for rats must be composted in the plastic style compost bin – if appropriate to do so.

See Compost guide for further details

3. Use your compost annually. Any that is not ready can be turned and used to start the next bin.
4. No household waste. **Never** put meat/dairy/bones/cooked foods or any other inappropriate items in your compost bin. This will attract rats and make your bin smell. *See compost guide*
5. Sheds should be kept secure. Check regularly to make sure rats have not burrowed underneath or are nesting inside. Keep vegetation cleared from buildings.
6. Harvest ripe fruit and veg promptly. Do not leave discarded fruit and veg on the ground.
7. Wash and peel veg before eating. Any that show signs of rate damage should be disposed of.

8. Consider storing seeds and bulbs in rodent proof containers
9. No straw stacks on site over winter. Straw should be brought in as a mulch and used immediately

RATS ACTIVE

If you suspect a rat problem on site, contact the committee by emailing the committee at nairnallotments.org and using the Contact Us button. Your concerns will be passed on to Robert Cunningham, Pest Controller who will investigate and deal with this.

A site survey will be completed. Where necessary, bait boxes will be laid and the plot holder contacted. It is vital that she/he follows guidance from RC. Their plot should not be cleared before treatment since this will disturb the rodent population and make bait acceptance more difficult to achieve.

Where bait is placed in areas of public access, it is now a regulatory requirement that areas treated must be marked during the treatment period. A 'rats active note' will be attached to the gates of any plots where bait boxes have been laid. An e-mail will go out to the ploholders affected, and a general e-mail and poster on the notice board will inform all other site users. A notice explaining the risk of primary and secondary poisoning must be made available alongside the baits. These will be sited on the notice board and eco-loo door.

Whilst rats are active additional care should be taken when bringing children and pets to the site.

Remember that rats may carry bait away and hoard it, or drop it off in areas where children or non-target animals can come into contact with it. Currently the bait used is in a wax block. It is red in colour – poster on the eco-loo door. COSHH details are laminated and stored in the eco-loo at Sandown and sited in the shed at Mill Road.

Should you find any dead vermin – please wear disposable gloves and bag the rodent. Put it into the brown bin on plot 7. There are very strict rules regarding the safe disposal of poisoned rodents. If you are unable to deal with this yourself, cover with a box or similar and contact the committee by emailing the committee at nairnallotments.org and using the Contact Us button to arrange removal. At times of known rat activity, disposable gloves and bags will be made available in the Eco-loo/Mill Road shed.

RODENT BORNE DISEASES

Rodents carry diseases that may be serious or even life threatening to people and animals. These may be caught by contact with surfaces or water contaminated with rodent urine.

You should wear waterproof gloves.

Cover any cuts and abrasions on exposed parts of the body with waterproof dressings.

Remove gloves and wash exposed skin thoroughly before eating, drinking or smoking.

DO NOT bring poison or traps onto site to try and deal with the problem yourself. These are very strict guidelines that must be followed to prevent any accidents from happening.

Remember, if you suspect a rat problem contact the committee by emailing the committee at nairnallotments.org and using the Contact Us button.