

RATS:

- Report from *Maya Davis Shemer*, SBRA Advisory Board

In the past week I have had two dead and dying rats on our property. I believe that this is due to the use of poison. There are better ways to deal with rats and poison is detrimental to our environment, other animals and birds of prey, and also to us! Please use another form of rodent control and read below for more information as to why you should not use poison.

Rats cause extensive damage to property, and carry diseases and parasites. Most people opt to use rat poison to rid their homes and properties of rodents. Before you decide to use this method, consider the dangers associated with rat poison.

RISK TO CHILDREN

Leaving bait traps or containers with rat poison in areas occupied by children can lead to disastrous results. Children are naturally curious; an unfamiliar object can attract their attention. Some rat poison comes in the shape of pellets, which looks like candy to children.

Even worse, the rat poison tastes sweet, giving children more reason to try it. Incidents involving children eating rat poison have increased 40% over the past ten years.

RISK TO PETS

There is a large risk that your family pet will try to eat rat poison that is left unattended. Pets can often reach objects that you believe are difficult to reach. There is always the chance that your pet will find the rat poison that you thought was well hidden.

HEALTH RISKS OF DEAD RATS

There are two types of rat poison: anticoagulant and non-anticoagulant. Anticoagulant rat poison, such as those made with warfarin, brodifacoum, or bromadiolone, works by causing internal bleeding in rats. This type of rat poison usually takes two to six days to kill a rat. Non-anticoagulant rat poisons are usually made with zinc phosphide, bromethalin or cholecalciferon, and often kill rats within a few hours.

Rat poison does not kill rats instantly, allowing them to travel back to their hiding places. Sometimes this means they die inside your walls, which will cause a terrible odor. This also means that you need to remove the dead rat. Handling dead rats puts you at risk for contracting any number of diseases that the rats are carrying.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

Thank you to Cory Buckner from Crestwood Hills for this info from their website.

<http://crestwoodhills.com/news/protect-our-raptors-stop-rat-poison/>

I like the idea of this product:

Victor Electronic Rat Trap

- \$49.95 without batteries at Orchard Supply Hardware
- \$37.47 at Home Depot/Amazon OR
- 3 for \$89.98 at <http://www.victorpest.com/victor-electronic-rat-trap-bm240promo> + batteries.



[To see this trap graphically demonstrated see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DEAMT7eU35k>]

This trap is allegedly more human and instantly zaps the pest with no pain. One set of batteries can work on up to 50 pests. You must check and empty it daily. It will not harm skunks or larger animals in my experience. Make sure to keep it out of range from sprinklers and rain. Water can damage them, but Orchard Supply Hardware will replace any defective units just keep your receipt and box.

Rats are a ubiquitous urban problem is not unique to our creek area. But we are fortunate to have Great Horned Owl and nesting Red Shouldered Hawks here. They are both very large birds and both hunt rodents, by night, by day. I find owl pellets (with rodent bones and fur) and sometimes rat tails and feet on a regular basis. Both are the result of a raptors meal of rats and mice. We are lucky to have these magnificent predators in our neighborhood to help with the rodent population.

Pet food, citrus trees, some compost piles and wild bird feeders (also grass seed and organic fertilizers) are very attractive to rats. Feed your pets indoors (or pick it up immediately) and keep their food in a rodent proof container. Keep seed and organic fertilizers in a rodent proof containers as well (glass or metal-they will gnaw through bags or plastic). A small covered metal trash can works well for all of these. Keep your bar-b-que grill clean.

Another truism is that rats love bamboo; they love to nest in it and to eat bamboo shoots. It is also a terrible fire hazard-same goes for fan palms.

Margery

FROM THE CITY COUNCIL OFFICE:

If there are issues with live rat infestations in anyone's home,

1. Vector control (Rat division) can help. Please refer them to Rodents: LA County Department of Health Services, Vector Management Program – (626) 430-5461

2. Los Angeles Co West VCD

6750 Centinela Avenue

Culver City, CA 90230

(310) 915 - 7370

(310) 915 - 7651 FAX

County: Los Angeles

3. On line submit a form: <http://www.glacvcd.org/vector-information/service-request-form/>