

Unwanted Visitors – Humane Deterrents

'Pest' control is a multi-million pound industry. However, insect and rodent infestation problems are largely the result of human negligence and are therefore preventable. With the help of this factsheet, and a little patience, you should soon be able to have your home to yourself again – along with a guilt-free conscience!



Rodents

The tell-tale signs of rodents in your home are obvious. You will notice gnawed wires, curtains, food storage containers, wooden skirting boards and door frames – not to mention droppings. You may even have come face to face with your visitor! Things to do first:

- Never call environmental health as their first action is always to exterminate 'pests'.
- Fill in all cracks and holes, especially behind appliances like washing machines. Mesh covered with plaster is a good option as mice are able to squeeze through openings as small as 10mm.
- Weather-strip around any doors or windows that have openings.
- Keep all rubbish bins tightly sealed and empty them frequently. Rodents tend to establish a 'territory' near food sources, generally 10-30 feet away. They will eat almost anything, particularly cereal grains and seeds. They are also known for having a sweet tooth – biscuits are often the first thing to go!
- Dog and cat dishes are also a food supply. Any food dishes that companion animals have finished with should be removed.

- Avoid locating bird feeders on window ledges, as this can encourage rodents to establish a territory close to your home.

Humane traps

Humane traps only work if used in conjunction with the 'things to do first' tips. You can now purchase them in many garden centres and hardware stores. The humane trap is designed so that once a rodent enters the box, a trap door closes behind him. Once you set a trap, it is vital that you check it every few hours. Mice and rats have a very fast rate of metabolism so they become thirsty and hungry very quickly. Being trapped in a closed environment heightens this, so it is vital that the trap is checked frequently.

- Tried and tested bait includes cheese/soya cheese, jam on bread and biscuits.
- Although it may seem to defeat the purpose, it is best to release rodents in the immediate area out side of your home. Taking rodents to an unnatural environment such as the countryside (if they are a city rodent) is not a good idea. As long as you are using the trap to remove rodents from inside your house, whilst sealing any potential means of re-entry, you should eventually have the problem under control.
- Try to release them into a sheltered environment, such as under a garden shed, where they will have some source of protection from any predators, such as cats.

Other natural rodent deterrents include mint, garlic or camomile oil placed in small dishes around the kitchen.

Note... if you should ever find a rodent in a glue trap, pour a small amount of cooking oil or baby oil onto the areas where the animal is stuck and gently try to set them free. Seek immediate veterinary attention.





Insects

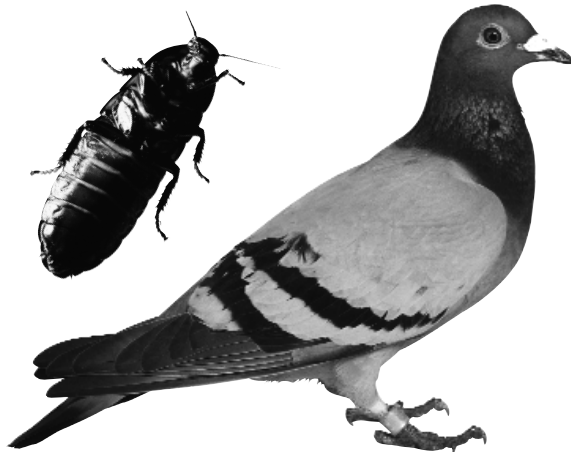
Although it should be remembered that all insects have a beneficial purpose, the majority of people don't like sharing their garden, or home, with an abundance of them.

Ants

Pour a line of cream of tartar at the place where the ants are entering the house, they will not cross it. For an effective ant repellent, wash counter tops, cabinets and floors with equal parts water and vinegar.

Caterpillars

Stripping old fruit from the vines and trees will keep insects from laying eggs.



Cockroaches

Place whole bay leaves in several locations around the kitchen.

Wasps

A favourite place for wasps to set up home is in the loft or shed. Simply placing a dish filled with water and ammonia can keep wasps at bay.

Another tip to keep infestation at acceptable levels is to leave a section of your garden 'wild', as hedges and wild areas encourage predatory insects and birds.

Wildlife

The ever increasing expansion of towns and cities into rural areas inevitably results in



people coming into increasing contact with wildlife. If you experience problems with any of the following animals, or if you find an injured animal, you can contact the following numbers for advice.

Foxes

Contact The Fox Project on the Fox Deterrence Helpline on 0906 272 4411. (March 2004 update – see close up on pest control.)

Bats

Turn off the lights and open all doors and windows. You can contact the Bat Conservation Trust on 0171 627 2629.

Pigeons

Contact the Pigeon Control Advisory Service (PICAS) – www.picasuk.com.

Squirrels

Contact Squirrel Support – David Hall on 01455 614013.

Birds

Birds nesting in an attic rarely do any damage, so try to leave them alone. After their young are grown they usually move out on their own accord.

