

Rat fact sheet

The common brown rat originated in Asia and China. The common brown rat was first recorded in Europe at the beginning of the 18th century.



The common brown rat is usually around 20 to 27cm long and its weight is around 100 to 500g. The common rat is usually a brownish grey on the back and grey underneath, but colour varies. Rats have a single pair of upper and lower incisor teeth, which are continuously growing, which explains why they cause so much damage as they have to gnaw to prevent these incisors from growing too long which prevents them from eating.

Habits

Rats generally stay within 50m of its home, but can range up to 300m. They may move every 2 weeks or so depending on the food source they are feeding on and may travel several kilometres to find more food.

Rats are mainly active at night and can be found in fields, gardens and sewers. Rats are sexually mature at around 3 to 4 months old and can produce 6 to 11 young.

How to prevent rats

Compost bins should be placed on solid bases to prevent rats from burrowing underneath them.

Over hanging branches from trees that are touching the roof should be cut back to prevent rats getting access to the loft space.

Check sheds for holes in the floor and the back panels where rats may have gnawed through over the winter. These should be sealed to prevent further access.

Check for holes around the outside of the house especially around waste pipes, remember rats can get through holes as small as 25mm (1").

If you see a rat in your garden and you feed the birds, stop feeding straight away, as this will encourage the rats into your garden.