Those pesky Mice!

By Mike Bryson, March 2008

Mouse Facts

- Mice travel over their entire territory daily, investigating each change or new object that may be placed there.
- Mice have poor vision, hence their activity patterns rely heavily on smell, taste, touch, and hearing.
- Mice use the long sensitive whiskers near the nose and hairs on the body as tactile sensors. The whiskers and hairs enable the mouse to travel in the dark, adjacent to walls in burrows.
- Mice also have an excellent sense of balance, enabling them to walk along telephone wires, ropes and similar thin objects.
- Mice are excellent jumpers, capable of leaping at least 12 inches vertically.
- Mice can jump against a flat vertical surface using it as a spring board to gain additional height.
- They can run up almost any vertical surface; wood, brick, weathered sheet metal, cables, etc.
- They can easily travel for some distance hanging upside down.
- Although they are good swimmers, mice tend to take to water only if left with no other alternative.
- Mice are basically nocturnal in nature.
- House mice breed throughout the year and can become pregnant within 48 hours of producing a litter.
- There are usually about 6 mice to a litter and females may produce as many as ten litters (about 50 young) per year.
- It takes 18 to 21 days for gestation, and 35 days for a mouse to mature. Most mice live anywhere from 15 to 18 months.
- They make their nests out of the same types of soft materials as rats, and as many as 3 females may use the same nest.
- They commonly nest in insulation in attics, also in stoves and under refrigerators.
- Mice do not travel far from their nest, about 12 to 20 feet.

The most common way mice transmit disease organisms is by contaminating food with their droppings and/or urine. The most threatening organism spread by mice is Salmonella, a cause of food poisoning, spread via droppings. Other transmittable organisms include tapeworms via droppings, rat-bite fever via bites, infectious jaundice/leptospirosis/Weil's Disease via urine in food or water, a fungus disease (Favus) of the scalp either by direct contact or indirectly via cats, plague and murine typhus via fleas, Rickettsial pox via the mite Liponyssoides sanguineus (Hirst), lymphocytic choriomeningitis via droppings, and possibly poliomyelitis (polio). Another problem is house mouse mite dermatitis which is caused by these mites when they feed on humans.

What to do????

Place Rodent Bait Stations every 30-50 feet along the inside walls of all buildings. If necessary, stake or anchor the bait station to the ground or a permanent surface to prevent it from being

moved and to keep the bait away from other animals.

Place bait blocks in bait stations.

For mouse problems, you could also place Mouse Bait Stations every 10-20 feet around the inside perimeter of buildings or wherever you've seen signs of mice. Be sure that these bait stations fit flush along walls or in corners with the point directly into the corner. They can also also be placed along walls adjacent to entry ways to intercept rodents as they enter.

Place one single-feeding type bait in each Bait Station. Inspect stations frequently until you have activity under control. Increase baiting in areas that have high rodent activity.

You may need to adjust the placement of the bait stations depending on the level of rodent activity. More frequent inspections and baiting may be required in some areas in the fall when rodents head into buildings for the cold season.

Keep up a fresh supply of bait. Rodents will reject rancid or spoiled bait. Bait securing rods also help bait blocks stay fresh longer by elevating them above the floor of the bait station, away from any moisture build-up.