

FAST FACTS

- An adult rat can squeeze into your home through a hole as small as the size of a quarter.
- Rats can live for up to 18 months, but most die before they are one year old.
- Rats can dig three feet straight into the ground.
- Rats have strong teeth that allow them to chew through glass, cinderblock, wire, aluminum and lead.
- Rats are also responsible for spreading **Bubonic Plague**, also known as the "Black Death." Although fleas are primarily responsible for infecting humans, they were originally infected with the plague by feeding on the blood of rats.

General Information

Roof Rats are excellent climbers and get their name because they usually live high off the ground, like on the roof of a building. They have very poor vision and are color blind, but they have extremely strong senses of hearing, smell, touch and taste. Rats have four to six **litters** a year and each litter has 6 to 12 babies in it. These rats are only pregnant for about 21 to 23 days and they can start reproducing when they are three months old.

Size	16" total (6-8" body plus 6-8" tail)	Common Name	Roof Rat
Shape	Long	Kingdom	Animalia
Color	Black	Phylum	Chordata
Legs	4	Class	Mammalia
Wings	No	Order	Rodentia
Antenna	No	Family	Muridae
		Genus Species	Rattus rattus

Diet

Roof Rats prefer eating fruits, berries, vegetables, cereal, pet food, nuts, grain, slugs, snails and rotten food.

Habitat

Roof Rats are excellent climbers and they usually live in spaces on the tops of buildings, on roofs or in attics. They also live in sheds, garages, boxes, ceilings, under floors, in wood heaps and in thick grass.

Impact

Roof rats cause damage to structures by chewing, eating stored foods and carrying diseases, such as **Hantavirus**. They are most famous for spreading the highly contagious **bubonic plague** in the Middle Ages. Rats will also attack both animals and humans. Human babies and even adults have been killed in rat attacks.

Prevention

- * Rats like to eat, so keep your homes clean and don't leave food out.
- * Make sure that your home and storage areas are clean and dry.
- * Make sure that you clean your sheds, crawlspaces, and garbage cans often.
- * Close up any small holes and cracks they can come in through.

To learn more about this and other rats, visit <http://www.pestworldforkids.org/rats.html>