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CHICKENS & RAT CONTROL

This information sheet has been written to help you think about where your chickens are kept, how they are housed and best practice for feeding your chickens.

Keeping chickens at home is becoming more popular; in fact we have a small flock of chickens. The eggs are fresh and our children enjoy looking after them. However, owning a pest control company, we are aware that chicken husbandry can actively encourage rats that are opportunistic feeders, into the area. Rats will steal chicken food, eggs & chicks, if they can get to them.

Rats also like gardens that have decking, rubbish, compost heaps and garden bird feeders which provide them with shelter, central heating and all-you-can-eat buffets for rats, all on your doorstep. If you can remove these additional garden features (where possible), again you are reducing the chances of rats living in your garden.

Five Steps to Minimise Rat Activity Around Chickens

1. Select your plot for the chicken house



This was a neglected vegetable patch that was located away from the property, in a sheltered corner of a garden.

2. Build a solid foundation.



Any garden structure such as a chicken house or a shed can provide ideal conditions for rats to dig under and move into. By creating a solid foundation such as paving slabs, you will prevent rats from digging under and getting into the chicken coop.



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3. Type of Chicken Housing



There will be many factors as to which type of chicken housing you choose. However, the size of wire mesh is important from a pest control perspective. It is recommended that the wire mesh is no larger than 10mm. This will not stop mice from entering the chicken house but it will deter rats. Don't forget the paving slab base will stop them digging up and under too.

4. Food Management



Only feed your chickens inside the chicken house. A layer of wood chip (not bark chippings) encourages the chickens to scratch. An indoor feeder containing layer pellets will allow the chickens to feed freely but the rats will be unable to access the food source due to the solid foundation and wire mesh that you have put in place. Treats such as household scraps, corn or meal worms can be scattered once a day, inside the chicken house to encourage natural behaviour such as scratching. By preventing access to the chicken food & any eggs that are laid, the rats will be unable to feed. Without easy access food, it is unlikely that you will encourage rats into your garden.

5. Enjoy your chickens!



You can still allow your chickens to free range your garden or you can fence off an outdoor area so that they can scratch for earthworms and insects. By feeding the chickens indoors, you will not be actively encouraging rats into your garden. Remember to close or lock the door behind them each night after the chickens have gone to roost, to keep them safe from danger.

If you do observe rat evidence along fence lines or the edges of the chicken house, call Hinton Pest Control Ltd and we will be happy to offer you professional pest control advice.

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