

Hints *For* Homeowners

How To Best The Pests

(NAPSA)—A nice cozy place to spend the winter—that's what rats, mice, squirrels, raccoons and opossums are looking for, and the most appealing place to dig in could be your home. While few homeowners think they put out the welcome mat for these disease-carrying pests, not taking care of basic maintenance can be just as inviting.

Once these invaders break into your home, they can spread the potentially lethal hantavirus and arena virus. Micro-droplets of mouse urine can cause allergies in children. Besides spreading disease and bringing parasites such as fleas, mites and lice into your home, rodents can do extensive damage by chewing through wiring and wallboard.

The good news is, you don't have to let them. Basic maintenance can be a good way to say "not welcome." Here, from the experts at the National Pest Management Association, are steps homeowners can take:

- To keep mice and other rodents out, make sure all holes of larger diameter than a pencil are sealed. Mice can squeeze into spaces as small as a nickel, rats can wriggle through holes the size of a half dollar.

- Seal any cracks and voids.
- Don't overlook proper drainage at the foundation and always install gutters or diverts which will channel water away from the building.

- If you find rodents in your



Once mice and rats and squirrels break in, they can cause health problems and home damage.

home, consider calling in an expert. Pest control firms can help provide information and may even do pest proofing. Searching out hiding places of rodents and other pests and precisely targeting management efforts requires a competent, knowledgeable and technically-trained specialist. Mice, after all, can produce 2,500 heirs in as little as six months, becoming a serious problem.

Call a pest control professional to identify the problem, survey for and control the rodents using an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach.

A pest control professional has the special training, experience and tools necessary to assure adequate protection against such destructive pests.

For more information or to find a licensed pest control professional, visit www.pestworld.org.