

MICE OR RATS

Well, if they're at your house, they're probably best described as field mice or maybe cute little forest mice, however if they've invaded your friends' house, then the statement "I see you have rats" might be more appropriate.

About ten years ago, our house, workshop, and car barn suffered an invasion the likes I thought not possible! I quickly engaged San Juan Pest Control to combat this problem. Cost was to be no object. For those of you who know me, you know that things would have to reach total desperation for me to authorize such an expense.

The pest company team was trapping 10 to 15 critters weekly. The leader of my vermin control team informed me after several months that they were **just keeping up with the birth rate!** I was then informed that after extensive training, I would have to join the team if success was to remain the goal. He assured me that if I strictly followed his training methods, I'd have at least a 50% chance of recapturing my home and possibly even my vehicles! So as not to keep you in suspense, let me announce if not total victory, we humans and pets are in complete control of the close-to-3% of the total land that houses us and our vehicles for the last **10 years!** Now the workshop is a war not won, however we have learned how to coexist. The renowned Orcas Auto Tech more commonly known as Uzek stated that in some winters close to 40% of his electrical repair work is generated by the little creatures chomping on our engine wires. Here are our steps taken to mouse-proof our vehicles:

1. When in storage, open vehicle hoods.
2. Liberally distribute clothes dryer sheets throughout the engine compartment. (Mice are especially

fond of air cleaner boxes).

3. Park on sheets of expanded metal (plaster lath). The sharp edges keep some of them from crossing to the tires and then their new winter home.
4. Spread "Shake-Away" packets into cozy areas of your car and, for that matter, also your house. These are non-poisonous little miracle packets that have a smell that may drive some of your rodents over to your neighbors' house without harming your family. How do I know they work some of the time? Well I've not seen a dropping near one. Proof, no—hope, yes. Also, do not let your close neighbors know about these for obvious reasons!

Remedies to save your house:

1. Stuff steel wool into any hole that's big enough to fit a common yellow pencil. That's right, that hole will serve as a baby mouse door!
2. Remove all fiber insulation that a mouse may have lived in. There are special hazardous material companies in spacesuits trained for this. My \$400 worth of insulation was removed and disposed of for only \$2,400.
3. Bait traps with peanut butter without setting them for several nights. When they get used to their

newfound dinner plate, WHAM!

Traps must be set along perimeters or inside corners. No enemy wants to be caught out in the open.

4. Keep crawl spaces clean and try stringing lights on an appliance timer. On and off every few hours should do the trick.

5. If you feel that you must replace insulation, seal joist cavities with ¼" wire cloth. No insulation, no mouse, but big heating bill.

6. Place Shake-Away where droppings exist and in dark areas they might find cozy. For this, you need to think like a rat.

All of these remedies are pet friendly except maybe the trap. There is hope. Our home and vehicles have remained mouse-free for the last **ten** years. I cannot vouch for the neighborhood. I cannot tell you which of these remedies work the best and which ones may not work at all. I just know that the combination along with removal of cozy warm dark areas has a 10-year record of success. I do not dare change one thing. By the way, I guess you have figured out where, in Crow Valley, the necessary supplies can be purchased. Good luck unless you're my neighbor.



To the few folks on Orcas who may wonder where Paul goes in the winter: here's one of his neighbors @ the RV park.