



Central Saanich Community Gardens Rodent prevention strategy

June 2nd, 2021

(not yet vetted by Old Island Pest Control, therefore subject to change)

Introduction

In an effort to mitigate any rodent issues, we have researched and established rodent prevention measures for the community garden. We have also partnered up with Old Island Pest Control, who will provide consultation on our strategy and design, and will be hired in case rodents or other pests become a problem after establishment of the gardens.

Experiences from other community gardens

Mixed responses from other community gardens. Most gardens don't have an (extensive) rat problem, except for Agnes Street. Agnes Street was the only one that said members have crop losses due to rats.

Points to take away:

- Cowichan Lake doesn't have a lot of rats, mentions managing compost heap well and actively to discourage rats from taking residence. They haul stuff people bring from home and fish/meats away and use a garbage can with proper lid.
- Colwood doesn't have a big rat problem, but they put traps out often at night, that get removed by morning.
- Colwood found rats that burrowed into the beds in the winter, presumably for warmth.
- Greenglade only uses tumblers and does a haul-stuff-away party twice a year with a trailer. They had a big heap but stopped doing that and the 'minor rat issues' went away.
- Agnes Street suggests to not have too much brush and covered areas, as those attract rats at theirs.

Key preventative measures to take:

1. Partnership created with Old Island Pest Control for consultation and
2. Wire mesh on the bottom of beds to prevent burrowing
3. Rodent proof compost bins


We will use off-the-ground tumblers for anything edible, and rodent proof compost bins for 'greens and browns'. Compost will be turned frequently, which will aid early detection.

4. Food scraps, meat, fish, and comparable material will be left out of compost, see image at the bottom
5. Shed will be rodent proof – seal off all cracks and seams.
6. Garbage cans that are solid and have a lockable lid for anything that doesn't go into the compost.

7. We will enforce pack in what you pack out principle for anything not garden(ing) related
8. Active monitoring by garden coordinator and monthly inspection by Society.
9. Do not leave attractants around the gardens, e.g. seeds.
10. Make pathways of a material that rats can't nest in (e.g. woodchips). Pathways will most likely be aggregate.
11. Leave no standing water.
12. Use/plant herbs and plants that (in principle) deter rats, like mint and onion.
13. Maintain brush and decorative plants in the border on the outside of the fence, as to avoid making spaces for rats to hide.
14. Use fine mesh wire fence at the bottom couple feet of the fence, possibly use (hardware) cloth 8 to 12 inches deep at the fence line to prevent rats from burrowing.
15. Avoid clutter in shed, keep shed organized and make sure shed is closed off.

Acceptable and Non-Acceptable Items in your Community Garden Compost

	<h1>OK</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plant material free of disease or seeds • Coffee grounds • Plant stalks chopped into 1-2" pieces • Grass clippings • Clean cardboard • Clean newspaper 	
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	<h1>NO</h1> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food scraps from home • Cooked foods, meats, dairy, eggs, or animal bones 	
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Sources:

<https://ucanr.edu/blogs/blogcore/postdetail.cfm?postnum=27721>

<https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/special/urban/rat-control-in-city-gardens.htm>

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<https://www.pests.org/how-to-get-rid-of-rats-in-lawn-gardens-and-the-yard/>

https://www.bbg.org/gardening/article/managing_rats_in_city_gardens