



St. Lawrence County Public Health Department

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St. Lawrence County Public Health Tips for Critter-Proofing Your Home

As the warm weather begins to fade, St. Lawrence County Public Health Department urges homeowners to begin critter-proofing their homes as many pests, such as rodents, raccoons, and bats, begin seeking shelter from the cold weather. Such pests can cause serious and sometimes fatal diseases like Hantavirus, Lyme, and Rabies. Other pests, such as cockroaches, can trigger asthma and allergy symptoms. Critter-proofing your home in the fall is the best way to prevent unwanted guests in the winter.

Critter-Proof your Home

- Start by walking around the perimeter of your home, checking for any openings where wildlife may find a way to enter, and sealing off potential entry holes/gaps
- Ensure your chimneys are securely capped with hardware cloth
- Check all vents, gables, and eaves to ensure that screens have not been torn away
- Ensure screening is securely fastened to dryer vents and exhaust fans
- Check areas where pipes enter the home and stuff any spaces with coarse copper wool
- Cut back any tree branches that are growing up against your home, especially any that might give rodents access to your roof
- Trim back any overgrown bushes and shrubs
- Make sure your exterior doors and garage doors each have a sweep that makes contact with the doorframe or ground
- Keep wood piles at least twenty feet away from your home
- Ensure all garbage is placed in sealed watertight garbage with tight-fitting lids – if necessary, tie the lids down with straps

Pesticides

The most effective and humane way to solve critter problems is through prevention. By critter-proofing your home you can prevent unwanted pests entirely and avoid having to resort to pesticides to exterminate them after the fact. If you choose to use pesticides to address a current pest problem, be mindful that if misused, poison products can potentially harm you, your children, and your pets. Always read the product label and follow all directions as written. As of June, 2022, the EPA banned

the use of mouse and rat poisons in pellet form. All rodenticide bait products must now be sold as a block or paste packaged in an approved bait station.

Further Information

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticides/public-health-issues-caused-pests>

<https://www.epa.gov/safepestcontrol/mouse-and-rat-poisons-pellet-form-banned>

<https://spca.bc.ca/news/rodent-proofing-your-home/>

<https://data.ny.gov/Energy-Environment/Current-Certified-Pesticide-Applicators/c7db-kwpj>

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