



Rodents in your Ride!

Courtesy of the folks at cruisinkitsap.com

I would like to tell you that the information in this article is based on scientific and indisputable evidence but alas I cannot. However it is based on personnel observations, experiences and information harvested from the ever questionable Internet. In my defense, I have yet to find anyone who claims to be 100% positive when it comes to explaining their behavior.

So why are our automobiles such a tempting residence for these pests. It boils down to refuge, food and an insatiable desire to exercise their Incisors. Engine Compartments offer a prime target since they provide easy access and a convenient shelter from other predators. A shift toward Plant based materials, in newer vehicles, has actually increased this problem. Anything small enough to be chewable, puts wires and any small diameter items at risk. If they manage to gain entrance to your vehicle you could find chunks of upholstery and padding to come up missing. Colder weather often sends these little critters looking for shelter.

So what can we do to reduce the risk?

- Parking in a well sealed Garage
- Parking away from any food source, garbage, garden or nesting resources
- Parking in a well lit area
- Do not leave any food items inside the car
- Move the vehicle regularly

How do we keep them at bay?

There are a number of devices that operate above the range of Human Hearing however there is considerable evidence that they either have no effect or provide mixed and unpredictable results. I remember vividly bringing one of these home and when I turned it on, our Cat launched out of there like he was on fire! My suggestion here would be to check any product reviews you can find before investing.

One thing that Rodents and many Insects have in common is a very highly developed sense of smell. Often many times more sensitive than our K9 partners. Certain scents invoke biological responses that are involuntary and automatic within Rodents. This will cause them to not enter an area or make them want to leave. Mint and Peppermint are two that come to mind and are not entirely unpleasant to us humans. Once I had one particular Drawer that attracted small Sugar Ants. No matter what I did they kept returning until one day I put a few drops of Peppermint Extract in the drawer on a small cloth, they disappeared never to return.

This begs the question, how do you find something that will work? In this case I find that the good folks at Amazon can be your best friend. You simply read the reviews (specially the negative ones) and find out what kind of results they get.

So can we Trap or Poison them?

The short answer is YES! However there are a number of things you should consider.

Poisons are not very high on my list since other animals or pets might fall victim to them. I try to avoid them if at all possible.

The Classic Mouse Trap will work but you should make sure that you securely tie it off to something least they run off with it and die someplace where you cannot find them. The smell can be very bad! I also found that you need to apply the bait beneath the actuating lever since they can often remove the bait without tripping the lever when it is placed on top.

Sticky traps work however you need to be mindful of where you place them and once again be sure to secure them to something so they don't run off with them.

A great solution for a Barn or unattended space is the old five gallon Bucket trick. You simply float some form of food in a few inches of water. You then attach a small walkway to the edge of the Bucket. They will smell the food source and fall into the bucket while trying to get at the food.

I hope you find this article helpful.

JB