



**Pest  
Management  
Academy**

## Rodent hoarded food & stored product pests



Stored product pests like Indian meal moths and saw-toothed grain beetles are sometimes found infesting items outside of the kitchen, items that don't actually qualify as stored foods. A common, and easily overlooked, source of stored product pests is rodent cached food in hidden voids.

Rats, mice and squirrels collect pet food or bird seed and may hoard many kilograms of it in hidden sites. When there is food competition, rodents hoard food near their nest so they can eat it in a protected location. For mice, this often means a food cache behind the kick plate under the sink or in a kitchen wall void, usually within 3 metres of their nest. Inside furniture, appliances, and the void under the bathtub are other mouse hoard sites. Rats cache their food anywhere, and for squirrels, the attic is a prime hoarding site. Sometimes, rodents hoard more food than they could ever use.

Some stored product pests will infest hoarded food right away (sometimes it's already infested when the rodents hide it). Other secondary food pests like saw-toothed grain beetles move in

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once the food is old or broken. And if the hoarded food gets wet, a whole new group of fungus-related beetles, flies, and mites can move in. A rodent food hoard can accumulate over many months and can result in hundreds of insects finding their way out of the hoard and into living space.

In most cases you can't solve the food pest problem permanently without first locating the site of the cache, opening the void, removing the food... and only then treating the site. Then getting rid of the rodents is your next job.

Sometimes your client can help you when you can't seem to locate the source. Have him put a mark on a floor plan of the house each time he sees one of the pests. Or try sticky trap monitors. If you determine that lots of pantry pests such as drugstore beetles, granary weevils, Indian meal moths or mites seem to be emerging from a certain void, the source could be rodent hoarded food.

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