



There is a prevalent pest in Winding Cypress. It might be cute to some people, but it is certainly a destructive nuisance. It is best to be proactive so that it doesn't become a pest to your home. This pest is called a Palm Rat, also known as roof rats, citrus rats, black rats, and ship rats. They belong to the Muridae family of the rodent. The most common identifying characteristic of palm rats is their tail. They are hairless and longer than the combined length of their head and body.

Palm rats prefer lofty homes like tree canopies, dense shrubs, and climbing vines. They begin searching for food shortly after sunset, using trees, utility lines, downspouts, and fences to gain access to attics, overhead garage storage, woodpiles, and other sources for shelter and food. They are nocturnal and scurrying sounds in the attic at night are often the first sign of a palm rat infestation in a home.

If you have a palm tree within three feet of your roofline, then it will be easy for these rodents to jump from the tree onto your roof, so try to keep your palm trees from touching your house. If the openings on your roof are not properly sealed, then the rats will gladly move into your attic. Any vent on your roof that has an unobstructed opening of over half an inch is an open door into your home. Likewise, you should try and use an obstruction in your downspouts like the one linked for your convenience. [AMAZON DOWNSPOUT](#) Be mindful of how easy an open door is, and keep your garage door(s) closed, especially at dusk and dawn.

Once you have palm rats in your attic, they will proceed to chew insulation and wiring, defecate all over the place, and make scurrying sounds that will drive you crazy in the early morning hours. In general, the rats will stay in the attic, but will occasionally move into the walls of your home. Be vigilant if you see evidence of feces in and around your home. (See image 2)

Salmonella, leptospirosis, and rat-bite fever are among the dozens of diseases spread by palm rats. When foraging for food, palm rats contaminate food meant for humans, pets, and livestock. Palm rats are omnivores, eating both plants and animals, and are very fond of citrus fruit. They also favor pet food, pet feces, birdseed, meat, and grease (check your storage boxes and BBQs). Besides spreading disease, Palm rats may cause extensive damage when nesting in walls and attics. Chewed, exposed wires inside walls can spark, causing interior walls to catch fire.

Should you find yourself with an infestation, you will most likely need to reach out to a local animal and wildlife trapper or exterminator.

Image 2

