

**Trim shrubbery and trees:**

- Keep palm tree fronds pruned or rats will nest in them.
- Prune climbing vegetation on your house to discourage roof rats.
- Store wood and lumber a foot away from structures and at least 18 inches above ground.
- Install rodent barriers as a prevention to climbing.

**Eliminate food and water sources that attract rodents:**

- Harvest your fruit and vegetables as they ripen.
- Pick up any fruit or nuts that have fallen on the ground.
- Fill pet bowls only with enough food that can be quickly consumed.
- Rid your garden of “escargot (a.k.a. snails), a favorite meal for vermin.
- Keep birdseed and pet food in metal containers.
- Repair leaky faucets.
- Empty containers of standing water.
- Secure garbage cans. Unfortunately rats will gnaw through bins and raccoons will open lids.

**Rodent Proof your house:**

- Check for openings larger than one-fourth inch in vents, screens, and foundation cracks. Patch the holes with one-fourth-inch galvanized hardware cloth.
- Use sheet metal collars around pipe entrances on wooden walls and use cement patch around pipes in brick, stucco or stone.
- Seal all gaps around electrical conduit.

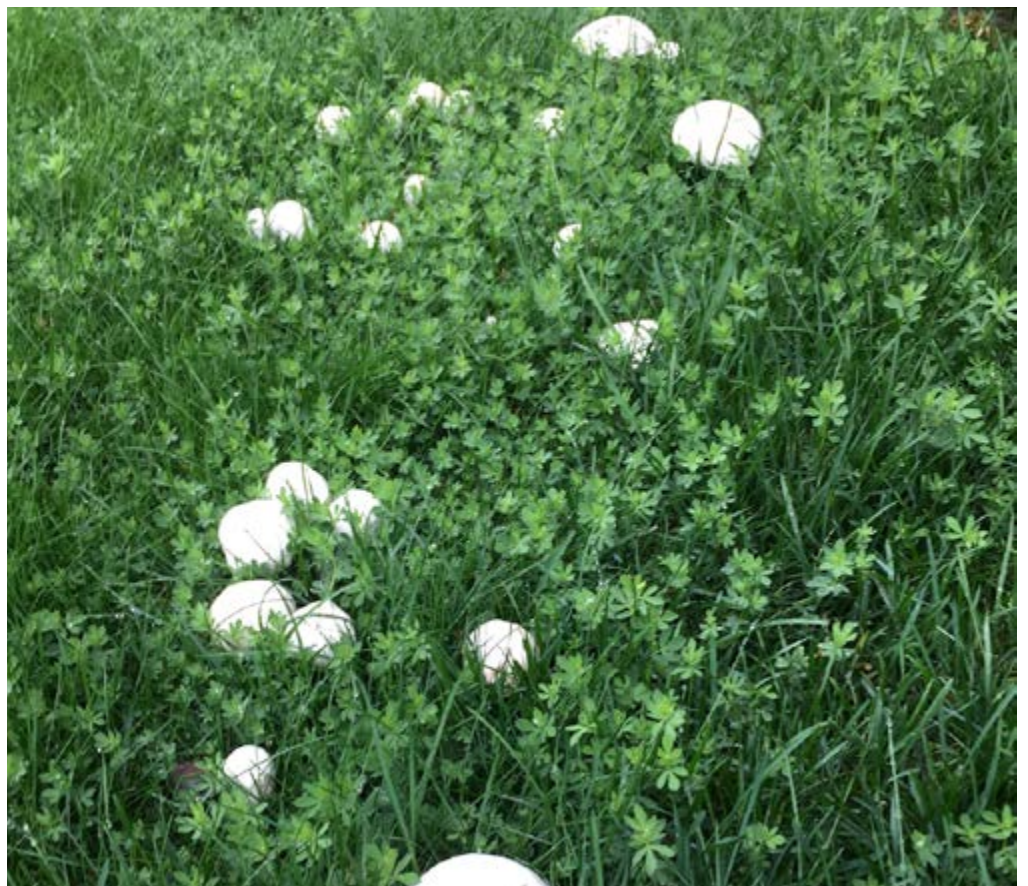
**Where the Wild Things Are!**

- Varmint Control: The Merriam Webster Dictionary considers “varmint” to be any animal that is considered problematic — rats, mice, skunks, raccoons, prairie dogs, etc.
- Skunks: Besides doing everything above to keep the varmint out of your home, if skunks are visiting your property you can buy skunk traps, which are specially made so that once a skunk has entered, it cannot spray. Vector Control will come to euthanize the skunk. Once skunks have been to your property, they may return. Scatter mothballs in the area and add a radio playing music to deter them.
- Rats and mice: Don't use the old fashioned wooden snap traps. They are too dangerous to humans and small pets. Available at hardware stores, power spring traps or easy, quick-set traps work best. A great way to assure that only the rodents get trapped is to set the trap with a dab of peanut butter placed under a larger plastic container. Cut a small hole in the container. I use a recycled flower pot. Place the container over the trap. Add a brick or rock to the top to keep it from toppling. You will catch the vermin.
- Raccoons: Follow all the instructions above. Add netting to ponds where raccoons will fish.

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*A skunk trap.*



*Mushrooms sprouting in the clover.*