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WHAT'S THE BUZZ

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There is Nothing Cool About Mice in Your School

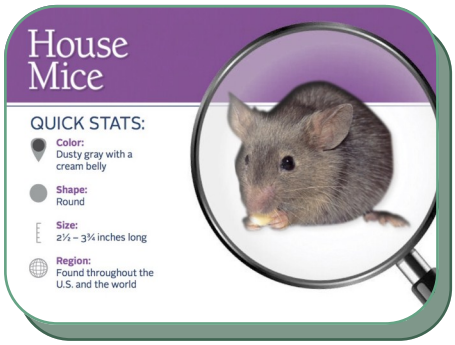
Mice invade dwellings and work places and cause significant economic damage to food stores and crops in agricultural areas. Mice consume and contaminate food meant for humans, pets, and livestock. They also damage property and structures, and are capable of transmitting diseases such as Salmonella.

The Deer Mouse

The deer or white-footed mouse (Peromyscus maniculatus) has a furry tail, white feet, and a gray to brown body that contrasts sharply with his white belly. Deer mice invade outbuildings in rural areas, and are less common in urban environments. The deer mouse is the primary reservoir host of Hantavirus.

The House Mouse

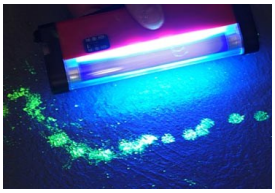
The house mouse (Mus musculus) is the most common rodent infesting schools. The house mouse is 5 to 8 inches long and light brown, grey, or sometimes black with a lighter belly, and a naked tail. The ears are larger than the related deer mouse.



How Can I Tell if Mice are Present?

Mice may be present if small, tapered fecal pellets are observed where the mouse feeds and food containers are damaged. Another sign of mice visitors are grease trails and smudge marks around wall skirting and entrance holes.

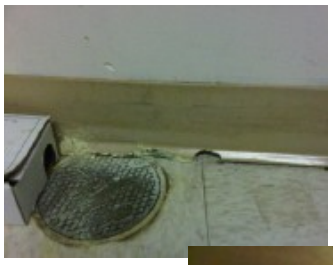
You can detect mouse urine, which fluoresces, by using a black light in an otherwise dark room.



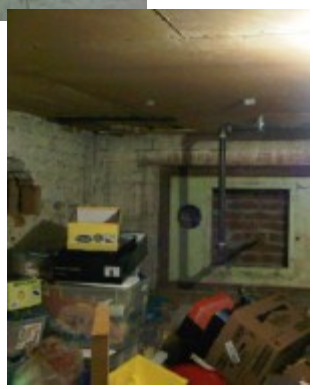
HOUSE MICE

- The house mouse is one of the most troublesome and economically important rodents in the United States.
- The house mouse can urinate several hundred to several thousand "micro droplets" per day.
- They can produce from 25 to 60 young each year.
- They are able to transmit Salmonella, a bacteria responsible for food poisoning.
- The house mouse can transmit parasites to humans and pets including ringworm, mites, tapeworm, and ticks.

How do they get in?



Left: Mouse hole in wall with box mouse trap on the left



Right: Cluttered, unorganized storage areas provide food and shelter for mice (Deborah Young, Colorado State University).

Mice are most likely to invade structures in the fall, looking for food and shelter from cold.

Mice can enter any hole ¼ inch or larger; if a pencil fits through a hole, then so does a mouse! This includes cracks and any openings around piping, air ducts, roofing, open windows, and doors. Like many pests, mice can be accidentally brought indoors in boxes (especially corrugated cardboard boxes) and pallets.

Arts & crafts supplies, blankets and clothes are all commonly stored materials with mice.

Mice can access building roofs via overhanging shrubs and trees, and will climb vertical surfaces and wires if need be.

Mice can survive on just about any kind of food and can go without water for considerable periods. They forage when humans are not present, making infestations hard to perceive until numbers are considerable.

** AN OPENING ¼" OR LARGER CAN ACCOMMODATE A MOUSE. IF YOU CAN STICK A PENCIL INTO A HOLE THIS SIZE ◯ THEN A MOUSE CAN ALSO GET THROUGH IT **

Managing the House Mouse with Integrated Pest Management

- Repair or seal all openings that allow entrance.
- Remove indoor and outdoor debris that could harbor mice.
- Clear high weeds that serve as food and shelter during warm weather.
- Inspect and organize storage often. Make sure items are stored in plastic containers and anything that is not needed is donated or discarded.
- Clean up food scraps and store foods in plastic containers with lids.
- Trim tree and shrub branches that may allow access to the building.

When Trapping Mice…

Use mechanical traps to control light to moderate infestations. Place traps along the base of walls and in corners of rooms. Set traps in the evening and collect them the following morning.

For additional information about the Aurora Public School's Integrated Pest Management Program, contact Andrew Nieman at atneiman@aps.k12.co.us