

Protecting your home against varmint access:

During Tropical Storm Debby, I mentioned in the electronic neighborhood watch emails (Kenwoodalert@aol.com) that it was a good idea to go up in your attic and check for leaks after we had over 10 inches of rain. As expected, many people did have leaks and the number of roofing companies all over the neighborhood was quite evident.

When going up into my attic, I did not find leaks, however I did find evidence of rats/mice chewing into my air conditioning duct work. They do this to get cool air and sometimes they will just live in them. Smart little buggers. Once extracting the unwelcomed guest from my attic (choose your own method), I needed to stop them from coming back. My foundation vents and crawl space opening did not have screens, so I created some by using plastic lattice and ½" hard ware cloth.

Below is my crawl space opening after removing the 4 concrete blocks from the hole. The blocks were not sufficient in keeping mice out, so I needed to make covers for all of the openings.



Creating these covers was quite easy. You can buy all of the materials at our local Home Depot.

Basically, all you have to do is buy the plastic lattice (which cuts easily with jigsaw or hand saw) and ½" hardware cloth (cuts easily with tin snips) which all can be found in the fencing department, then cut it to size, caulk it and let it dry.



You will have to make sure you put some clamps or weights on the fence after caulking so that the caulk can adhere to the plastic lattice work and the hardware cloth.

You can attach it in many ways, but since this is my crawl space, I will make sure I can attach it so it allows me easy access when needed, yet keeps the varmints out. The vent covers were permanently mounted with concrete screws, after pre-drilling. Tip: Buy the really good concrete drill bits or you will spend your day trying to drill the holes.

Once installed, the white fencing will be painted so that it does not stand out. It was left unpainted here for contrast.



Don't forget to cover any large gaps and/or AC unit access that mice/rats could use to find another way into your attic or walls. They are quite resourceful. Keep in mind; this will prevent other animals from

crawling under your house to live like raccoons, opossums, feral cats, armadillos, etc. Make sure you run all of the varmints out before sealing them or you may cause more problems for yourself. Once installed, then you can lightly paint the hardware cloth to blend in with the foundation.



Rat/mice will climb up anywhere they can get into the walls or attic. So look around and make covers.



I hope this helps you out. If you have any helpful home maintenance tips, please send them in to the Knewoodalert@aol.com so that we all may benefit from your knowledge or experience by sharing them in the electronic email and/or the HKNA newsletter.

Thanks,

Paul Dickens