

When it rains cats and dogs, in come the mice



- 1 Squeaks behind the skirting board? The skitter of tiny feet on your laminate floor at night? Toothmarks in unexpected places? Hard cheese, you've got mice.
- 2 "There are a lot of them for the time of year," says Zeno Hoffmans, a consultant at pest control company De4 Nederland. "We haven't had a cold winter with hard frosts, so everything simply stays alive – it's like having an autumn that goes on for four months. Also it has been quite wet, and mice don't like wet weather, so they'll creep in at ground level, and work their way up the building."
- 3 Once mice find enough to eat, they're unstoppable. "A pair with an adequate food supply can produce 2,800 offspring in a year. They have six to twelve babies six times a year, and they all mate with their parents and siblings. It's like an inverted pyramid."
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- 5 Another tip: store food in 6-1. If mice can munch their way through insulating foam, they'll make short work of a cardboard box. Don't leave crumbs lying around toasters and 6-2, put dirty dishes straight in the dishwasher, and vacuum regularly, particularly behind the stove and cupboards if you can, though that's obviously not possible if you have 6-3. And even the squeakiest of squeaky-clean kitchens may offer another food source for mice: 6-4. Mice love pet food, it's nutritious to boot, and there's a reliable supply because it gets topped up every day or so. If I were a mouse, I'd make a beeline for the kitchen.

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