



## Cookstown residents concerned about rat invasion

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*Cookstown resident Irene Cartwright is hoping someone will step up to eradicate the rats that have been crawling around her community. - Janis Ramsay/Metroland*

A handful of Cookstown residents are concerned about rodents scurrying around their homes.

“It could be one, or a dozen rats,” Royal Oak Estates resident Irene Cartwright, 94, said. “The first one I’ve seen was in February, going along the cement at the back of the house.”

Nearby construction has started a block away from her home and she is dismayed no one is helping the residents of the retirement community.

“The rats have left their habitat because it’s all been chewed up.”

One of her last encounters was as she was in her TV room.

“He was in that planter (outside). I opened the door and he went up the gazebo. I yelled ‘get out of here’ and jumped six feet onto the lawn.”

Fortunately, Cartwright isn’t afraid of rats. But she is concerned they will find a way inside her home.

“All of a sudden, it’s an invasion,” she said.

Neighbour Glenda Hagerman watched as rats ate birdseed scattered on the ground.

“We sit out here and see them through the day. When you attract them, you attract coyotes,” Hagerman said.

She’s lived there for 10 years and her solution is to put Irish Spring soap around her home to keep the rodents at bay.

“I know rats can do a lot more than people think,” she added.

She’s contacted her landlord, the Royal Oak Estates residents’ association, and hasn’t been given an answer over who’s going to fix it.

“I assume you know that Royal Oak Estates is a land lease community, where the tenants own their own homes,” owner Sabi Ahsan said. “Royal Oak just owns the land and maintains common areas. It is not practical to lay out poison all over the park where cats, dogs, birds etc. could ingest it by accident.”

He added the rats were displaced by the development, as there weren’t any complaints before construction began.

“The tenants have also complained to the town who is responsible for ensuring that any new development does not affect neighbours.”

Town spokesperson Johnny Keogh said staff was going to set up traps this month to confirm if there’s a problem.