

Rat Hunter Provides Needed Service In California

Jordan Reed gives his terriers an opportunity to do what they're inclined to do anyway - hunt and kill rats. He provides a needed service around Sonoma and nearby counties in northern California.

Through word of mouth and recent media attention, "Jreed and his Mongrol Hoard" have found plenty of demand for their services over the past 5 years. For about \$75 (and a case of beer) Reed and his dogs spend 3 or 4 hours diminishing rat problems for mostly small farmers with chickens, organic crops or composting facilities.

Concerns about rats are real, Reed says, noting they destroy feed, chew wiring and defecate in living spaces, spread diseases, steal eggs and kill chicks and other small animals. Rats thrive in California's warm climate, but many producers can't or don't want to use poison.

His rat hunting business evolved after a terrier he owned killed rats that were after Reed's chickens. Reed started encouraging other dogs to do the same.

While the dogs are good hunters, they need human help to choreograph where they go. When Reed is hired, he requests the customer provide a couple of adults or teens to help. If they can't, he brings a couple of friends along for an extra fee.

"I follow the lead of one adult dog. I'm like the ringmaster," Reed says, directing dogs. "I have experience to see how much food is available and how many rats there might be." He also knows where they're hiding - under pallets and bales, and in double walls, for example.

On average he and his dogs find and kill 20 to 30 rats on a hunt at a small farm. Reed's record was 121 rats at a compost facility, where owners thought it was rat-proof.

No place is rat-proof, Reed says, and he turns clients down who have filthy farms and poor animal husbandry practices or refuse to clean up their property and make necessary improvements - build coops 18 in. off the ground, eliminate double walls, store food in metal cans overnight, and don't store kitchen compost near housing, for example.

Norway rats also live in tunnels and can hold their breath a long time so drowning doesn't usually work. Exhaust from a chainsaw or vehicle is more effective to show where tunnels go. Then the strategy comes down to blocking exits and digging with a shovel.

Reed says property owners can use other breeds of working farm dogs to control rats on their own property.

"If you're looking for a rodent dog, get a terrier from a farm where its parents' behavior is observable. Mixed breeds and pound

dogs are good at this too," he explains. "You have to be interested in it yourself. You have to actively take a part in going after the rats on your farm - and your dog must be interested in following along."

Rat hunting is not for everyone, Reed admits and it's hard work - shoveling, moving things and keeping track of as many as 12 dogs at a time when he is working with others. But it's rewarding to see his dogs at work and enjoying it.

Contact Jordon through Facebook. Search: Jreed and his Mongrol Hoard



Jordan Reed trains terrier dogs to hunt and kill rats around northern California. On average, he and his dogs kill 20 to 30 rats on a hunt at a small farm.

Microwave Kit Lets You Extract Your Own Essential Oils

With a microwave oven and an EssenEx™-100 oil distillation kit, you can extract your own essential oils in 6 to 8 min. The most popular model by far is the \$180 complete lab kit, it pays for itself quickly considering the cost of oils. It's a smart investment for entrepreneurs who make soaps, creams and other products, and growers of crops such as lavender and mint can use the extractor to do their own lab work to determine optimum harvest times.

"Initially we created this for the home market, for do-it-yourselfers who grow small amounts of essential oil containing plants," says Bill Dean, one of the inventors. "As we started demonstrating our product, we found people with small acreages were able to assess the value of their crops by quickly extracting small samples for analysis."

The kit includes molds to freeze ice cores, which condenses the vapors produced when the plant material is in the microwave. The oil/water mix collects in a shielded beaker inside the extraction unit. When removed from the microwave, the oil containing liquid is poured into a separator flask to separate the oil and water. Processing 1/8 to 1/4 lbs. of plant material at a time can yield up to 3.5 grams of high-quality pure oil.

Most standard microwave ovens work as long as they are big enough to hold the 7 by 7-in. extractor unit and a mug of water that is also used in the process.

The EssenEx™-100 is the result of years of research by Bill and Dave and students of Oregon State University. The idea came from Dr. Dave Hackleman, (Co-Founder with Dean) who was doing research for extracting oil for mint growers. Using



With a microwave oven and this oil distillation kit, you can extract your own essential oils from crops such as lavender.



large, commercial microwave units for the process reduced emissions and extracted the oil very quickly. That led to working with standard microwave ovens and figuring out how to create a condenser that worked inside the oven.

Since first published in Farm Show, kits have been shipped throughout the USA and 42 countries!

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