

Rodents eating away farm produce at Pachamalai

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Farmers say the problem becomes acute at the time of harvest

The rodent menace has been posing a challenge to the tribal farmers of Pachamalai as the produce is being destroyed by rats causing extensive loss to them. Paddy cultivators are the worst hit in the hills as they have to take extra care to protect the crop.

Paddy fields are spread over different hamlets across the hills and do not form a continuous cluster. Farmers adopt different strategy to protect the paddy from the rodent menace.

Paddy cultivators adopt conventional methods of killing the rats inside the burrows. They keep a pot around the rat hole. “We fill the pot with dry leaves and ignite it before keeping it at the rat hole. Smoke from the pot kills the rat instantly,” says T. Ponnusamy, a farmer at Top Sengtattupatti. Farmers, however, want more advanced techniques to be introduced on hills to trap the rats as at least 10 per cent of paddy is damaged because of the rodent menace. “The problem is more acute during the time when the field is ready for harvest,” says Nallathangal, another farm worker.