

# Meet Redwood Grove's Smallest Architects



Have you ever seen a nest like this one? Woodrats build these complex homes from sticks, rocks, and other natural materials.

Woodrats' sleeping quarters are nestled safely under large branches or rocks. They line their beds with soft shredded bark and bay leaves, which release oils that kill parasites like fleas.

Another area of the nest is used to store food such as fungi, seeds, fruits, leaves, and bark. Many of their favorite leaves grow on trees found here at Redwood Grove: poison oak, toyon, coffeeberry, coast live oak, and bay laurel.

Woodrats create trail networks between nests to link their communities. They also pass nests from generation to generation.

Woodrat nests are best explored from a distance. Touching them or getting too close can disturb these critters, and their droppings carry viruses that can be harmful to humans.

Dusky-footed woodrats (*Neotoma fuscipes*) thrive in California's forests. Their signature features are long whiskers, round ears, furry tails, and - true to their name - dark brown feet.

A woodrat family's spacious nest can be up to 5 feet tall and 8 feet wide. Their nests are divided into rooms with various purposes.



Vacated woodrat nests provide homes for other creatures like mice and snakes. Habitat restoration at Redwood Grove is helping to ensure that there are plenty of resources for all native critters to thrive.

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