

EAST

Mosquitoes

Besides a nuisance, “mosquitoes are the deadliest animal on the planet” as they can transmit disease; plus, controlling them has become “a more important part of what pest management firms are offering to their clients,” said Jim Fredericks, NPMA, who considers this an underrated contender.

House Mouse

“We do more calls and have more concerns with the house mouse than we do any individual species of rat,” said Paul Curtis, Terminix International. The ubiquitous pest cannot be overlooked given the “sheer number of calls” they generate and the health issues they raise, agreed Jim Fredericks, NPMA.

Bed Bug

It’s hard to know just how deep this pest’s bench — er, bed — is given its cryptic, adaptable offense. The strategy has worked for nearly two decades; total elimination remains a challenge. “If you don’t make a slam dunk on bed bugs you’ll have to rely on free throws,” said Kevin Hathorne, Terminix Service.

Ticks

Look for ticks to move up in coming years, said Paul Curtis, Terminix International. “They are vectors of a lot of bad pathogens” and their distribution has increased significantly, he said. More than 1 million online searches for ticks were made in 2017, found a Terminix study.

WEST

Wolf/Cellar Spiders

Spiders are Americans’ second-ranking pest worry in 2018 and the number one concern in the West and Midwest, according to the Arrow Exterminators survey. They were the third most-searched pest online in 2017 and the most-cited pest in social media in the state of Washington, found the Terminix study.

Argentine Ant

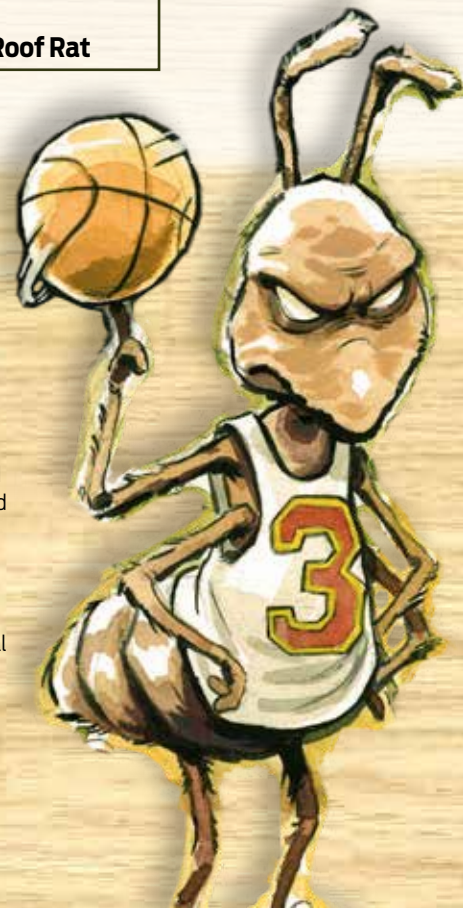
This tough ant has a deep bench and home court advantage in the South and West. It is “our number one pest by far” and is what “keeps our phones ringing,” said Darren Van Steenwyck, Clark Pest Control. It will put the “full court press on your home,” said Mark Ringlstetter, Truly Nolen.

Scorpions

PMPs may not consider it a top contender, but Americans searched online about this pest more than 2.5 million times last year, second only to bed bugs, according to a Terminix study. And it is ranked the 11th most worrisome in 2018 in a survey from Arrow Exterminators.

Roof Rat

It’s wily, a good climber and no longer just a coastal pest. “We’re seeing them all over the place now,” said Judy Black, Rentokil Steritech. They’re “much, much smarter” than many will admit, said Darren Van Steenwyck, Clark Pest Control.



WINNER ARGENTINE ANT

Eastern Subterranean Termite

It is widespread, commonly encountered and causes billions in damage each year. “The tools that we’ve developed over the past two decades have made termite control easier but it certainly hasn’t stopped them,” said Jim Fredericks, NPMA, who thought this pest “could go all the way.”

Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

This expansion team grabbed headlines in Chicago last summer; Terminix Services’ Kevin Hathorne expects it to become a bigger issue farther south as well. An Arrow Exterminators survey found occasional invaders like stink bugs are consumers’ seventh top pest concern in 2018.

NORTH

Odorous House Ant

Over the past decade, it’s become “a prominent ant in a lot of different areas of the country,” particularly the Northeast, Central U.S. and parts of the South, said Judy Black, Rentokil Steritech. Ants in general “generate the majority of our calls,” she said.

Filth Flies

“They’re buzzing with energy and they’re relentless; they just keep coming back again and again and again,” said Mark Beavers, Rollins. They prefer to play where it’s less than clean and foul everything they touch. Nebraskans post more about flies on social than others, found the Terminix study.

German Cockroach

Adaptable and prolific, this pest prefers night games and dominates the commercial court. Beating them takes persistence or they quickly can gain the upper hand. They play to win: Roaches have survived millennia and “will be here long after we’re gone,” said Charlie Jones, Arrow Exterminators.

Norway Rat

Found across North America, this rat dominates municipal and commercial courts and looks for every opportunity to find a hole and play inside. Like all rodents, they’re shrewd and difficult to control because of “how well they associate with human beings,” said Mark Beavers, Rollins.

SOUTH

American Cockroach

The peridomestic roach makes the phone ring, especially in the South where it tops the list of homeowner pest worries and is a bigger residential problem than its German counterpart, said Charlie Jones, Arrow Exterminators. He picked this pest as a top four competitor.

Tawny Crazy Ant

With its large colonies and aggressive expansion, this ant “scares me a little,” admitted Stephen Gates, Cook’s Pest Control. “I don’t even know if control is the word you can use with them,” added Judy Black, Rentokil Steritech. It’s “one tough hombre,” said Randy McCarty, ABC Home & Commercial.

