

Insects Set To Surge, Thanks To Active El Niño Weather Pattern

(NAPSA)—El Niño—the wet-weather pattern blamed for this winter’s record snowfall in the East and mudslides in the West—is expected to wreak more havoc this summer with a surge in insects.

Just how bad your pest problem will be depends on several factors, explained Dr. Bob Davis, entomologist and scientist with BASF, the world’s largest chemical company. Dr. Davis offered the following pest problem outlook for specific U.S. regions.

The South

With its hot, humid summers and temperate winters, the South offers ideal conditions for a wide range of pests, including many species of ant. Ant populations are expected to grow across the South this year, bolstered by an influx of foreign invaders, including the “Caribbean crazy ant,” which had only recently been seen in Texas but has begun to spread to multiple counties in Southeast Texas and may now be in the neighboring state of Louisiana. The threat of termite infestations could also intensify this summer, with forecasts predicting average temperatures in Florida, Georgia and other surrounding states and above-average to average precipitation.

The West

Colder-than-normal temperatures and heavy precipitation hit many areas of the Western states this past winter. February packed a punch of precipitation and, in March, California officials said the average water content in the Sierra mountains’ snowpack had reached 107 percent of normal seasonal levels. One frequent menace is the Western subterranean



Pest control professionals apply a liquid treatment to the soil around a home to protect it from termites.

termite. This native pest can enter structures through cracks less than one-thirty-second of an inch wide, including the tiny openings in concrete slabs, around drain-pipes and between the slab and a home’s foundation.

The Midwest

States from Missouri to Iowa to Wisconsin saw more flooding last year, with thousands of homes damaged by water. The residual effect this year could be a proliferation of household pests that thrive in damp conditions, such as silverfish and spiders. Moisture also increases the odds for termite invasions, especially in Midwestern states such as Missouri, Iowa, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. In the colder Northern-tier states, carpenter ants are a greater threat to homeowners. Carpenter ants prefer to nest in trees and wood next to homes, but they’ll come inside to nest if the opportunity arises.

The Northeast

With record snowfall in the Northeast, wet conditions will likely persist. Combined with the warming temperatures, this will create attractive conditions for a variety of bugs. Common culprits include the Eastern subterranean termite and the black carpenter ant.

Beware the Bedbug

Though we can’t blame El Niño, another pest that continues to attract headlines along the East Coast is the bedbug. Once believed to be virtually eliminated from the United States, this ancient enemy is back and New York and other Midwestern to Eastern cities have been especially hard hit. Scientists aren’t exactly sure why but they suspect one cause is a rise in international travel to countries where bedbugs are still prevalent.

Preventive Measures

Homeowners may help ward off pest invasions by following these steps:

- Keep shrubbery, firewood and lumber away from direct contact with your house.
- Seal cracks and holes on the outside of your home.
- Keep attics, basements and crawl spaces well ventilated and dry.
- Store food in airtight containers and dispose of garbage regularly.
- Thoroughly inspect luggage during and after your travels.

If you suspect an infestation of any type, Davis recommends you call a professional pest control expert. For more information, visit termiteinstitute.com, antinstitute.com or bedbuginstitute.com.