

5 Most Dangerous Pests and How Survivalists Can Manage Them

Some of the most dangerous pests you'll run into are also some of the most common. Unfortunately, while there may not be a surefire way to eliminate the problems that can spread diseases or lead to severe symptoms, there are ways to fight against bites and stings, as well as the illnesses they might bring.

Learning to combat these threatening animals and insects in an SHTF scenario can help save your life. You likely won't have as much access to the resources that would help you or your family fight the infections or illnesses they can bring. Here are some of the most important pests you should look for, whether they're dangerous themselves or spread life-threatening diseases.

1. Flies and Mosquitoes

While flies and mosquitoes are normally just irritating, they could spread several diseases, all depending on where you are. Mosquitoes alone [can carry dangerous illnesses](#), like the Zika virus or malaria. Unfortunately, you can never really detect which mosquito or fly is infected with bacteria or a virus, so you should take precautions no matter where you are.

Mosquitoes and flies spread bacteria through their bites. When you're outside and these pests are prevalent, you need to take measures to protect yourself and your loved ones. Wearing thick, long sleeves can make you look less like a target to these insects. If you've found evidence of them indoors, throw away anything with standing water – that's where mosquitoes love to lay their eggs.

What to Do

Usually, insect repellent will be enough to keep flies and mosquitoes away from you for a time. Remember that flies can bite through lightweight clothing, so if you anticipate being outdoors for a long time, you must ensure your clothing is thick enough to help you resist these pests. When adventuring, stick to marked paths, as there may be swarms of flies, gnats or mosquitoes in another direction.

You need to monitor your symptoms if you get a bite from one of these buzzing insects. The most severe reactions can occur in people who haven't been bitten by a certain species before. While it might be rare to contract something from a bite, you need to keep your eyes open for any worsening condition.

Thoroughly wash the bite with soap and water. Then, create a paste of baking soda and water, and apply it to the area. After about ten minutes, wash off the paste. You can follow up with a histamine cream to ensure you won't be itching after the bite. If you don't have the cream on hand, use a cold compress to take some of the itch out.

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2. Giant Japanese Hornet

You may have heard about these pests before, thanks to their nickname of "murder hornet." Though the name sounds like fearmongering, these pests are pretty terrifying, especially since they're around two inches long. While just one sting from a Giant Japanese Hornet can kill a human being, it isn't very common. Still, you should take care whenever planning to handle these pests, as they won't hesitate to sting when agitated and their stingers can pierce even thick beekeepers' clothes.

Other wasps and bees can also be pests. You'll find them

worldwide, but you often don't need to do much about them unless they build a hive in your home. They can cause damage to properties if left untreated, and a sting from one might cause an allergic reaction or an asthma flare-up. Always know what your group is at risk for.

What to Do

If you're bugging out in an area where Giant Japanese Hornets have been sighted or seem to be prevalent, try to make yourself look less attractive. Wear less perfume while traveling, and make sure you handle your food and beverages properly. Always cover them up when you're not actively consuming them and dispose of them as regulations say.

Do your best to not swat at a Giant Japanese Hornet if you come face to face with one. To avoid a swarm, try to get inside or dive into a bush to make it more difficult for the insects to get to you. They don't typically attack humans, but you should always take measures to feel safe.

You may not feel like you need medical attention after a sting, but if it's available, consider getting checked out. When treating your sting, you likely won't have any stinger to pull out. Just wash the affected area with soap and water, and monitor yourself for signs of allergic reactions.

3. Unwanted Rodents

While some people keep mice as pets, you may also notice some rodents wandering around all the places you travel. You might even be aware of rats or mice in your own home. Though rodents might seem more harmless than insects, they can [spread over 35 diseases](#) to you, your family and any traveling companions. You can contract these diseases by handling a rodent's waste or even by holding the rodent itself. They carry fleas, ticks and mites that can transfer to humans.

You may not always see rodents out and about in your home. However, you'll be able to see the signs – you'll likely see rodent droppings first, as well as gnaw marks or leftover crumbs. When you find these remnants of rodents, you need to deal with them immediately. Otherwise, you risk contracting diseases like leptospirosis – which can lead to kidney damage or meningitis – or rat-bite fever, which can be fatal.

What to Do

When living or traveling in an RV, make sure to proof your vehicle against mice. Even something as simple as scattering moth balls might be enough to repel rodents. Of course, you can always dispose of the trash efficiently and take the rodents' essentials away. That way, they may feel more inclined to move to another space with more accessible resources.

Luckily, rat bites are easy to treat at home. Unless you have an allergic reaction, you can find everything you need to help you in your first-aid kit. Wash the affected area thoroughly and cover it with an antibiotic ointment. Put a clean bandage over the wound and check on it periodically to ensure it's healing.

You'll know whether you've contracted rat-bite fever by monitoring your wound and looking out for any red or purple bumps, among other symptoms like joint pain and swollen lymph nodes. Get to a medical professional as soon as you're able to, as rat bites can turn into bad infections even when you may not have contracted an illness.

4. Cockroaches

Many people might think cockroaches aren't a big deal. They can invade older homes just as easily as places that aren't taken care of well, but they should still be dealt with as soon as you spot them. Cockroaches can be a health risk to

humans who live in the home since they can carry bacteria that lead to infections like salmonella and E. coli. These pests can also contribute to asthma attacks, making them a hazard for just about anyone in the home.

The bad thing is cockroaches are resilient to just about everything. You'll want to be careful when handling anything to do with roaches, whether it's their droppings or the pests themselves. Deal with any household issues that let them feel at home – fix any leaks that could lead to standing water and get rid of any crumbs or open containers that could offer them a feast.

What to Do

You can't always prevent cockroaches, but you can minimize the likelihood of them showing up in your home. When you clean regularly by sweeping and mopping, you'll be less likely to see roaches running around your house. You should also ensure your trash can lids have a seal and can't easily be accessed by pests. Keeping your home clean and not letting mess accumulate can reduce your chances of running into cockroaches.

5. Scorpion

If you've been camping all around the United States, you've probably seen a scorpion before. They can be small or large, and you might find them in newer houses due to a nest potentially being disturbed during building. They may also hide in the brush, which can be a major hazard if your group plans to camp outdoors that night.

Keep track of the people in your traveling party – older adults and young children are some of the people most susceptible to severe complications from a scorpion sting. Luckily, only one species of scorpion found in the Southwestern United States – the Bark Scorpion – is dangerous

enough to lead to severe symptoms or a fatality. Be on the lookout for scorpion sting symptoms to ensure they don't worsen. Pain and numbness are typical of most stings, but severe symptoms might include unusual movements or difficulty breathing.

What to Do

If you see a scorpion near your campsite, try to remove it using an empty container. Make sure you wear some sort of thick covering like gloves to protect your skin from a sting. Even if you're not at risk for severe symptoms, a sting still hurts and can cause swelling.

Before you settle in for the evening, clear your campsite of any brush that could conceal small creatures. Ensure everyone has their prescription medication handy just in case a scorpion does show up. Since about two-thirds of Americans have prescription medication, you should make it a packing priority. If severe symptoms develop, find a medical professional right away.

Prepare for Pests and You'll Help Everyone

You need to know what to do when you encounter pests when you're prepping for or in an SHTF scenario. Even though you might want to ignore some insects and other problem animals, they could pose serious health risks to your family. No matter where you go together, learn how to be vigilant and deal with threats before they come.



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