



Pest of the Week: An Information Source

Pest of the Week ...

But first, a Definition: When you say “Pest,” you may think the term refers to large groups of spiders in your home, the neighbor’s cat or your son’s best friend. Those are a nuisance to you, but not considered a “pest” in the classical sense of the word. But for government officials and concerned citizens, the word “pest” means a species that is detrimental to public health, food supplies or to the environment. Sometimes it is a native species that is the problem. Most of the time, the pest is a species that has been moved to another place and is thriving in the new home to the detriment of the native species already present. It is not just a California problem, or a United States problem, or only a North America problem, but invasive species are a World Wide problem. To make this even more confusing, different parts of a country or different parts of the world have a different group of species that are considered “pests.” But all have the same concern: How to keep THAT pest out of our home. This concern is further heightened by the fact that exotic species are moving faster, further, more frequently **and** are surviving the journey, thanks to modern transportation and travel.

Worldwide, there are many lists of “Pests,” such as “The 100 Worst Pests in the World,” “The Top Ten Pests,” “Public Enemy #1” and many more. (If you do an Internet search on “invasive species,” you will see what I mean.) There are also up and coming pests that have experts worried, but not necessarily listed on an official “list,” that they must use to focus resources on. The “Pest of the Week” concept is to help the public know what a pest of concern is (or might be) and what it looks like. So, we begin this series with an insect. Over the weeks, the highlight will be rotated between insects, plants, animals, or diseases. These are species that are not necessarily on the official prohibited lists, but have experts in California Departments of Food and Agriculture, Fish and Wildlife and Public Health (YES, Public Health!), as well as Extension, the UC California scientists and environmental groups worrying over, and trying, to keep out. You can help by reporting what you see to officials. Go to “[Whatisthisbug.org](http://www.whatisthisbug.org)” and see the “[How Can You Help](#)” section, to learn more.

For a quick reference, here is a list for you to report something you do not recognize:

- County agricultural commissioner contact list: www.cdffa.ca.gov/exec/county/countymap/
- University of California Extension Offices: http://ucanr.edu/county_offices
- Report a Pest App: www.whatisthisbug.org/apps.html