



The Facts on SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES

Q: WHAT ARE SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES?

A: The eastern subterranean termite is the most common termite found in North America. These termites are the most economically important wood destroying insects in the United States and are classified as pests. They feed on cellulose material such as the structural wood in buildings, wooden fixtures, paper, books and cotton. A mature colony can range from 20,000 workers to as high as 5 million workers and the primary queen of the colony lays 5,000 to 10,000 eggs per year to add to this total.



Termite workers are pale, soft-bodied insects about one-quarter of an inch or less in length. They appear to have a head and body because their thorax is broadly joined to their abdomen. Their antennae are straight. Termites are mistakenly called white ants, but they are not ant-like in their appearance. Winged termites, also known as swarmers, have pigmented bodies with broad waists and two pair of wings that are equal in size and shape. Subterranean termite swarmers have bodies about one-quarter of an inch in length. The swarmers quickly shed their wings after a brief flight.

Q: WHAT ARE SOME COMMON SIGNS OF TERMITES?

A: Termites can cause up to thousands of dollars of damages to families in the United States in a year. Because most of the damage caused by termites is within an inner wall of a structure, it can be difficult to know if you have a termite problem. However, there are some things you could look for. Winged termites are often the first sign of a termite infestation. Swarming termites are attracted to light and are often found near windows, doors, vents, and light fixtures. Experiencing a swarm is the first sign that your property has a termite problem. Mud tubes or tunnels provide shelter for termites and have a muddy, flattened appearance approximately the width of a drinking straw. Look for these tunnels or tubes along cracks, beneath flooring, around baseboards, on pipes, chimneys, behind siding, and other fixtures. They may also extend over the structure's foundations and other exposed surfaces. Another way to check for termite infestation is to tap wood along the walls, baseboards, and windowsills. Damaged wood from termites will sound hollow and in severely damaged places, may break. It is quite possible you may see worker termites inside if they are active.

Q: HOW DO TERMITES ENTER MY HOME?

A: Subterranean termites don't need much room to squeeze inside your home. Subterranean termite colonies live underground. They typically enter homes at ground level or below, but they can build mud tubes or tunnels to enter spots several feet above ground level. One of the most common ways termites get in your home is through wood to ground contact, including doorframes, deck posts, and porch steps or supports. They can also enter homes through cracks in the foundation and cracks in brick mortar. Sometimes, they even use the holes in concrete blocks to travel through foundation walls.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP PREVENT TERMITE INFESTATION

WHAT TO DO:

- ✓ Keep mulch, wood debris, scrap lumber, sawdust and firewood away from your home. If firewood is kept outside your home in the winter, keep it raised and off the ground.
- ✓ Trim all shrubs, bushes, and dense greenery away from the foundation of your home.
- ✓ Remove infested trees and stumps.
- ✓ Eliminate or reduce moisture in or around the home by repairing leaking faucets and water lines, indoors and outdoors.
- ✓ Repair leaky roofs and gutters.
- ✓ Repair fascia, soffits, and rotted roof shingles.
- ✓ Replace weather stripping and loose mortar around basement foundation and windows.
- ✓ Don't allow leaves to accumulate in gutters and drains.
- ✓ Ventilate crawl spaces and attics to reduce humidity.
- ✓ Don't affix wooden trellises to exterior walls.
- ✓ Remove all wood to soil contact.
- ✓ Seal all cracks and holes in your home's foundation, which may provide a handy access point for termites.
- ✓ Schedule a professional inspection annually by calling Preferred Pest Control at 816-279-2000.