



INTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Keep Termites Away From Home

(NAPSA)—Termites are chewing their way through homes across America and leaving major holes in homeowners' bank accounts. Although termites are more common in warm, humid climates, they can be found in 49 of the 50 states, bypassing Alaska, and cause an average of \$5 billion in damage each year to residential and commercial buildings.

Although it takes three to eight years of normal termite feeding activity to cause measurable damage, termites organize themselves into colonies to keep productive and efficient in destroying property.

It is a common misconception that termites only eat wood. In fact, termites will eat anything comprised of cellulose materials including lumber, wood panels, flooring, Sheetrock, wallpaper, plastics, paper products and fabric made of plant fibers.

There are more than 2,500 different types of termites classified into four main groups: dampwood, drywood, subterranean and mound builders. Subterranean termites are the most common and destructive species. These hungry pests live mainly in soil and require a moist environment. Although mound builders do not live in the U.S., the other species can be found dining on homes nationwide.

Experts from the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) offer several tips to avoid termite infestation:

- As most termites are attracted to moisture, avoid water accumulation near your home's foundation. Divert water away with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks, and quickly repair damage from a leaky roof or window.



- Reduce humidity in crawl spaces with proper ventilation. Prevent shrubs, vines and other vegetation from covering vents.

- Never bury wood scraps or waste lumber in the yard, especially near the building. Remove old tree stumps and roots around and beneath the building.

- Most importantly, eliminate any wood contact with the soil. Maintaining a one-inch gap between the soil and wood portions of the building is ideal.

Be aware of infestation warning signs:

- Swarming of winged forms in the fall and spring—termites can easily be confused with flying ants.

- Evidence of mud tunneling in, over and under wood structures

- Wooden structures that exhibit darkening or blistering

- Damaged wood that becomes thin and can be easily punctured

“Pest professionals have the specialized skills, training and products necessary to rid a home of termite infestations. Virtually all experts recommend homeowners call a professional to protect their largest investment from termite infestation,” says Cindy Mannes, NPMA Vice President of Public Affairs.

For more information on termites and other insects, visit www.pestworld.org or contact a pest professional in your area.