



Our Insect Enemies



Knowledge That Can Save Homeowners Thousands Of Dollars

(NAPSA)—How much do you know about the insects that threaten your home? Termites eat houses and cause U.S. homeowners over \$1 billion a year in damage. They wreak havoc below the earth's surface twenty-four hours a day, needing an opening as small as $\frac{1}{64}$ of an inch to invade a home. Termites can literally eat you out of house and home.

Warm moist weather conditions encourage termite infestations across the country. Termites establish colonies wherever soil, wood and moisture can be found. Learning the answers to a few commonly asked questions may help keep your insect enemies at bay and protect your home.

Q: Where are termites found?

A: Subterranean termites, the most common species, are found in every state except for Alaska. An average acre of land can sustain up to 14 termite colonies, each colony housing an average of one million termites. It has been said that there are two types of homes, those that have termites and those that will.

Q: How can homeowners tell if their home is infested with termites?

A: Termites have a low threshold for moving air and direct sunlight so they live underground and attack a home from below. A few indications of termite infestation are a scattering of narrow, transparent wings in window sills, walls or window frames, swarming termites in the house, especially near light sources, and mud tunnels on the home's foundation and wood trim.

Q: What steps can I take myself to reduce the risk of infestation?

A: Termites need moisture to live. Homeowners should check for leaky pipes, sprinklers and areas that stay moist for a long time and ensure that water flows away from the home's foundation. Eliminating



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wood to soil contact wherever possible and keeping wood 18 inches above ground level will also reduce the risk of infestation.

There are also products available at local home improvement centers that give homeowners a valuable and inexpensive way to reduce the risk of termite infestation such as do-it-yourself bait stakes. Bait stakes will not attract termites. However as termites forage for food, those that find the bait stakes feed on the "termite friendly" cellulose material inside the stakes placed around the perimeter of the home. Each of the bait stakes in a do-it-yourself termite baiting system, such as Spectracide Terminate™, has small holes that allow termites to enter the stake and feed on the treated material inside. The slow acting ingredient is ingested by the foraging termites and is taken back to the colony where other termites feed. Once termite activity is found in a stake, additional stakes are added nearby and the termites continue to feed on the treated stakes.

Termite killing stakes are not recommended for sole protection against termites, and for active infestations, homeowners should get professional inspections. For a free home inspection checklist, visit www.termitebites.com.