

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Protecting Home Investment Against Termites

(NAPS)—A home is one of the biggest investments most people make. Homeowners insurance will help recover losses from fires, storms, and earthquakes, but it is impossible to carry insurance against termite infestation.

Termites eat away at American homes to the annual cost of \$2.5 billion in treatments and damages.

Homeowners can protect their investment in two ways, either by trying to control termites themselves or by hiring a trained and qualified pest management professional.

“Detecting and controlling termites is a job for the professional,” advises Greg Baumann, director of Technical and Field Services for the National Pest Management Association (NPMA), a trade association representing 80 percent of the professional pest management industry in the U.S., plus international affiliations.

According to Baumann, the cost of hiring a pest management professional to cope with termites or carpenter ants pales compared with the possible repercussions of not hiring a professional.

People may think that they can save money for the kids educations or family vacations by doing their own pest control. However, there may be more to pest control than they realize. If homeowners don't follow through with certain systems, they may not work.

Scientists and researchers agree that a thorough inspection by a termite-control specialist is the first and most important step in protecting property. A professional is trained to locate the specific areas in a structure where termite attack is likely to occur.

A recent Ohio State University Extension entomology report



**In most cases, says a recent report, an untrained person should not attempt termite treatment.**

states that in most cases, once a termite infestation has been found, control measures are best accomplished by a professional pest management firm rather than a do-it-yourselfer.

Termite treatments require special tools such as hammer drills, sub-slab injectors, rodding devices, engines equipped with pumps and protective equipment.

While many termites work slowly, Formosan termites can cause structural damage in as little as three months.

When choosing a pest management firm, get two or more cost estimates in writing and compare them. Ask about liability insurance. Verify that the firm you select is a member of your state Pest Control Association and the NPMA.

Ask friends and neighbors to recommend a firm and check the firm with the local Better Business Bureau.

Hiring a professional may be well worth it, say the experts, if you want to protect your home.

For more information on pest management, visit the NPMA Web site at [www.pestworld.org](http://www.pestworld.org).