

TIMELY INFORMATION

Agriculture & Natural Resources

Customers need to be reminded of termite swarming and treatment

Xing Ping Hu, Extension Specialist of Entomology

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Swarming termites and mud tubes are the two most distinct visible signs bring awareness to the homeowners. As it warms up, termites are going to fly often in search for new habitats, and to actively build mud tubes in searching for food.

The swarm is generally considered a sign of a healthy and mature termite colony, a way to build up new colonies in new locations.

Termite populations neither like drought conditions nor too much rain. Termites are very dependent on a high level of humidity within their colony structure to survive. These extreme climatic conditions place stress on once-healthy termite populations. Therefore, termite activity may go through a down-population cycle during dry or wet seasons, but will rebound as environmental conditions improve.

Swarming termites bring awareness to the homeowners, an awareness they sometimes do not realize. However, homeowners do not always think about termites after swarm season ends but that assumption can prove costly.

Termites are still there and they are still being destructive.



Fig. 1. Formosan Subterranean termite swarmer



Fig. 2. Native subterranean termite swarmer

You may be often asked “which is better way of termite control? Bait or barrier treatment?”.

Whether to use termite baits shouldn't always be an either/or decision. There are many situations where baits and traditional barrier treatments or spot treatment can be used together.

There are also certain problem accounts especially suitable for bait programs, such as:

1. Buildings have wells or cisterns close to the structure and slab-on-grade buildings with heating/air conditioning ductwork in or under the slab and plenum construction, posing higher-than-average risk of pesticide contamination from conventional treatment.
2. Buildings have inaccessible crawlspaces, rubble stone foundations or foamboard insulations, stucco, siding extending below grade, etc, making it difficult to treat with conventional insecticides.
3. Customer object to application of liquid pesticide by drilling and injecting.
4. When there is no requirement for immediate control. A baiting program can take month to show results.
5. When the customers are chemically sensitive or chemophobic.

There are advantages and disadvantages to termite bait programs.

The biggest advantage to termite baiting is that it is customer friendly and pest-control-operator friendly.

The biggest disadvantage is that it can take month for the bait to work on termites, because it can be difficult to get termites at first to find the bait and then to actively and continuously feed on it.

Use liquid termiticide treatment under the following situations:

1. If there is an active infestation and the customer demands quick results, or for real estate transaction.
2. If cost is the major factor
3. If the structure is surrounded by concrete
4. If only one unit of a townhouse, duplex, fourplex, etc. is being treated.