

Frequently Asked Termite Questions

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- Don't termites most often attack older buildings?
- Are there different kinds of termites?
- What's the difference?
- Where are termites found in the U.S.?
- Are termites seasonal or do I need to look out all year long?
- What should I do to help prevent termites?
- If my neighbor gets termites, does that mean I have them too?
- What if I find termites in wood outside near the house (landscape, firewood, etc.) does that mean I have termites in my house?
- How do I know whether I have termites or ants?
- How can I tell if I have a termite problem? And, if so, what kind?
- What do termites look like?
- If none of these signs is present, does that mean my home is free of termites?
- If termite company inspections are done correctly will they find all the termites that are there?
- How often should I get my home inspected for termites by a professional?
- What will an inspection cost?
- What does such an inspection involve?

Q: Don't termites most often attack older buildings?

A: Termites have been found in buildings as early as four days after construction. Every building containing wood is a potential target of termites. Chemical or mechanical barriers can be established in the construction stage, however, to prevent or discourage termite infestations in new homes.

Q: Are there different kinds of termites?

A: Entomologists have identified over 2000 species, 55 of which exist in the United States. But there are only two kinds, basically, that homeowners have to worry about: subterranean termites and drywood termites.

Q: What's the difference?

A: Both types are quite similar. All termites live on cellulose, which they get from wood. And all termites are social insects, much like ants. But subterranean termites usually live outside the house in underground nests. They need the moisture in the earth to survive. Since they also need cellulose, they often tunnel into nearby homes to get it. Occasionally some uncommon event, such as an AC leaking into an interior structure can allow subterranean termites to nest inside structures rather than outside in the soil. Drywood termites, on the other hand, need no contact with the earth. They live right inside the homes that they devour.

Q: Where are termites found in the U.S.?

A: Subterranean termites inhabit 48 states and Hawaii, but are most common in the southern two-thirds of the U.S. Drywood termites are not as widespread as subterranean termites. There are more termites in Florida than in most other states.

Q: Are termites seasonal or do I need to look out all year long?

A: Termites are active all year in warmer climates. They generally swarm to start a new colony in the spring or summer but this isn't a hard and fast rule. As long as they have warmth, moisture and food the colony will continue to expand (...as in **EAT your home**)

Q: What should I do to help prevent termites?

A: There are many practices to termite prevention that include barrier, moisture control and anti-harboring measures for new buildings. In an existing structure it is typically recommended that you use a chemical barrier to prevent infestation after the structure is treated from any existing termite population – a termite professional, such as **Florida Bug Inspectors** will make recommendations specific to your property.

Q: If my neighbor gets termites, does that mean I have them too?

A: If your neighbor's home is infested with termites, that doesn't mean that you have them too, but the chances of infestation are certainly higher.

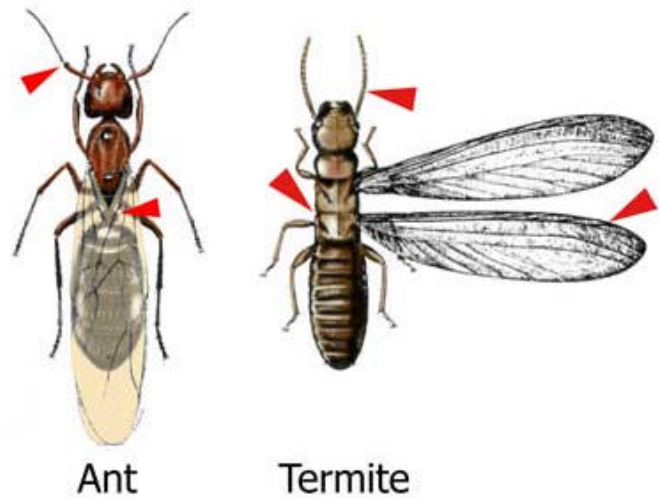
Q: What if I find termites in wood outside near the house (landscape, firewood, etc.) does that mean I have termites in my house?

A: Your home may not necessarily be infested, but termites in the area means that your home is at high risk because each time the colony swarms, or grows, your home may be a prime target for the swarmers to start a new colony in or around your home.

Image © Oregon State University Extension Service

Q: How do I know whether I have termites or ants?

A: Termite swarmers and ant swarmers look similar from a distance but there are some key things to look for to help you decide. Termites are poor flyers and their wings break off shortly after mating. Termites have straight antennae and an ant's are bent. Also termites have broad thick waists where an ant has a narrow waist.



Q: How can I tell if I have a termite problem? And, if so, what kind?

A: Subterranean termites are often detected during swarming, usually in the spring, when some fly from their nests to start new colonies. Other signs are tubes made mostly of mud on the surface of walls, joists, piers, chimneys, plumbing and other fixtures. Weak or broken wood, blistered wood and soil in cracks can also be evidence of subterranean termites. Drywood termites sometimes give themselves away by creating surface blisters on wood and leaving wings or piles of waste that look like sawdust on windowsills and floors.

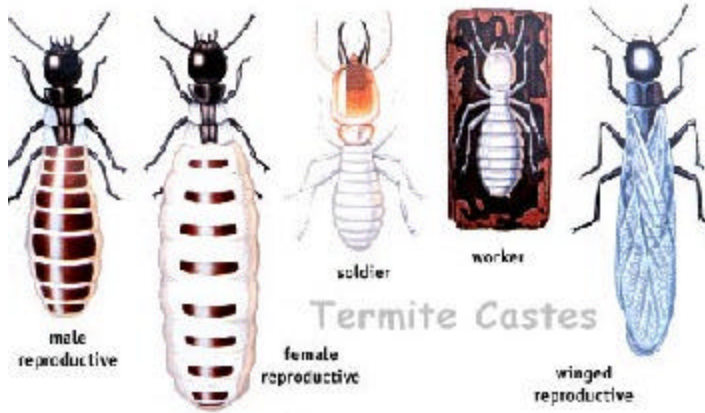


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Q: What do termites look like?

A: Subterranean termite colonies consist of three different castes--reproductives, workers and soldiers. All of the subterranean termites are generally creamy white in appearance and are translucent, looking very much in size, and shape as a grain of rice. The reproductives, or “swarmers,” have a pair of even-sized wings and are often mistaken for flying ants. The workers look similar to the “swarmers,” only they are a little smaller, don’t have wings and are lighter in color. The

soldiers are also similar except for their tan-colored oversized heads and large, crushing mandibles.

Q: If none of these signs is present, does that mean my home is free of termites?

A: Not necessarily. Termites work from the inside out and are very often hard to detect. Drywood termites have no link to the outside and spend their entire lives indoors - in walls, in roofs, etc. The only way you can be sure you’re not sharing your home with termites is to have it inspected by a professional inspector.

Q: If termite company inspections are done correctly will they find all the termites that are there?

A: It isn’t possible for an inspection to provide absolute certainty unless termites are found. There will usually be areas of a structure that cannot be evaluated due to inaccessibility for one reason or another. If you live in a high risk area (like Florida), preventative treatment may be an important option even if no termites are found.

Q: How often should I get my home inspected for termites by a professional?

A: Due to the high termite pressure for the whole state of Florida, an annual inspection is best. Maintaining a professional relationship with a professional termite specialist like Russ is wise.

Q: What will an inspection cost?

A: The cost of an inspection varies depending on the size and complexity of the structure. However, the fee is usually small. Keep in mind that even if termites aren’t present, your money wasn’t wasted. You’ve purchased peace of mind.

Q: What does such an inspection involve?

A: Because professional termite inspectors are typically highly trained with years of experience, they know exactly what to look for and exactly where to look. Therefore, the inspection is usually brief but thorough. They’ll identify evidence of any previous treatments or infestations, any wood-destroying organisms present, the damage caused, and any conditions that may make your property especially vulnerable to attack.

[Florida Bug Inspectors](#) serves customers in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Polk, Pasco and Manatee counties, including the communities of Tampa, Brandon, Temple Terrace, Plant City, Ruskin, St Petersburg, Clearwater, Largo, and Wesley Chapel. Contact Russ at 813-727-4758 or at Russ (at) inspection-termite.com