Ground Termites Identification & Biology

By DoMyOwn staff

Also known as: Subterranean Termites

Physical Appearance

- Primary Reproductives- Black to pale yellow-brown in color; Wings are pale or smoky gray to brown in color with few visible veins; ¼ to 3/8 inch long.
- Secondary Reproductives- White to cream in color; wingless, or very short wings
- Workers- Making up the majority of a colony, workers are white in color, wingless, and ¼ to 3/8 inch long.
- Soldiers- Resemble workers in overall appearance, except with a slightly larger brownish head and more prominent mandibles or jaws.

Behavior & Habitat

Termites thrive in moderate to tropical climates. Ground termites live and forage in ground soil under normal circumstances, but may also build a nest above the soil if adequate moisture is available. Ground Termite colony size is LARGE, potentially containing from several thousand to over 7 million termites.

Feeding Habits

Ground Termites require wood or other cellulose materials to survive, and will travel up to 100 yards from the primary nest to locate a food source. Ground termites also require a source of consistent moisture outside the moisture present in the wood. This may be in the form of roof leaks, shower and toilet leaks, plumbing leaks, ect. Once a ground termite locates a food or water source, it will leave a pheromone trail behind that other termites in the colony can use to find food and water.

Damage

Ground termites usually cause more extensive damage over a shorter period of time than Drywood Termites, sometimes consuming up to 15 pounds of wood in a single week!

Signs of Infestation

1. Swarmers- the first sign of an infestation may be "swarmers" around window sills and lights

2. Wings - piles of discarded wings on window sills or in cobwebs

3. Mud Tunnels- appearing vertically on the interior or exterior of foundation walls

4. Damaged Wood - look for tunnels that follow the grain(see illustration for typical subterranean termite damage)

Suggested Treatments for Ground Termite Control

1. Mechanical Alteration- Prevent water from accumulating at the foundation of your home. There are several ways to do this include installing gutters, splash blocks, or downspouts. Creating an artificial slope will allow water to drain away from the structure. Humidity in crawl spaces may be reduced with proper ventilation.

2. Sanitation- Keep trees, vines, and trellises trimmed so they are not touching the structure, and never pile or bury extra wood scraps or lumber near the home.

3. Baiting Treatment- See **Termite Baiting Treatments**

4. Soil Treatment- Apply a **termite treatment** in the soil surrounding the structure to form a continuous barrier

5. Foundation Treatment- Similar to a soil treatment, but targets the actual**foundation** wall, including cracks and crevices.

6. **Wood Treating**- Treat infested wood directly with an insecticide borate preservative such as**Timbor** or **Boracare**. These products are also a great preventative treatment for wood that is not yet infested.

Recommended Products for Ground Termite Control:

- **FirstLine Termite Defense System Kit**- Complete Starter Kit for the Firstline Termite Defense System. Everything is included to provide your own Termite Control.

- **Advance Termite Monitor Bait Station**- Used to hold the Advance termite monitoring base and wood base to detect subterranean termites.
- **Timbor**- A wood preservative for the protection and treatment of lumber against fungal decay and wood destroying insects.
- **Termidor SC**- Termidor SC is one of the most effective termiticides and ant control products available today.
- **Premise 2 Termiticide**
- **Premise Foam Termiticide**

For more detailed information on Termite prevention and control, see**How To Get Rid of Termites**

Products
View all Termite Control Products

Liquid Termite Control

Termite Bait Systems