

# Hints *For* Homeowners

## Don't Try to Save by Skipping on Pest Control

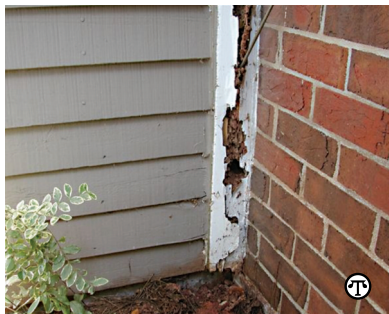
(NAPSA)—As Americans look for ways to reduce costs in the recession, more homeowners are scrutinizing household maintenance expenses to cut out the luxuries. While some home maintenance is a matter of do-it-yourself determination, other upkeep requires the training and skills of a professional.

Structure-damaging pests, such as termites, carpenter bees and carpenter ants, can cause serious damage to homes. In fact, termite damage costs American homeowners more than \$5 billion each year—an expense that can be reduced or prevented through regular inspections from a trained expert.

“Every successful pest control program begins with a partnership between the homeowners and the professionals,” said Ron Harrison, Ph.D., technical director for Orkin, Inc. “Routine inspections and effective treatment, especially for destructive pests like termites, require a trusted professional who has been trained in pest identification, behavior and control methods.”

According to [www.termites101.org](http://www.termites101.org), two main species of termites threaten U.S. homes—subterranean termites that build colonies in the soil, and drywood termites that live in the framing, furniture and hardwood flooring of homes. Many homeowners believe that termites are active only in the warmer months, but actually termites can live in and around your home year-round. Some signs of activity, such as swarms, are easy to detect, while other signs—like termite damage in crawl spaces—require an expert inspection.

Often mistaken for termites, carpenter ants are another wood-destroying insect commonly found in homes and are most visible dur-



**A trained pest management professional can help protect your home from damage caused by wood-destroying pests, such as termites.**

ing the warmer months. Like termites, they tunnel inside wood, and can thrive and cause damage in your home without visible signs of activity. Carpenter bees, on the other hand, burrow into wood, leaving perfectly round holes that are often visible from the outside. Both carpenter ants and carpenter bees are frequently found in porch pillars, roofs, windowsills, telephone poles and dead trees.

Harrison says homeowners should call a professional at the first sign of activity:

- Large piles of dirt or sawdust underneath windowsills.
- Swarms of winged insects in and around the home.
- Wood that sounds hollow when tapped.
- Mud tubes on exterior walls or the home's foundation.

It is important to contact a trusted pest management professional if you suspect termites, carpenter ants or carpenter bees have taken up residence in your home. For more information on pest behavior and treatment, visit [www.orkin.com/learningcenter](http://www.orkin.com/learningcenter).