



Our Insect Enemies



Don't Let Termites Enjoy Your Homemade Feast

(NAPSA)—This year, homeowners nationwide will host millions of houseguests with insatiable appetites. These intruders always turn up uninvited and threaten to eat their unsuspecting hosts “out of house and home.”

But unlike rowdy relatives who loudly overstay their welcome, these ambitious guests will invade quietly, maintaining a hidden lifestyle and thriving unnoticed for many years.

The pests are termites, a menace to homeowners across the country. Termites may be silent, but they never sleep; their colonies are active day and night, feasting on anything made of wood, plants or cotton.

Termites attack structures of all types, forcing homeowners and business owners to spend billions each year. According to the National Pest Management Association, annual termite damage and treatment costs \$5 billion worldwide. Because infestation is so common, the typical homeowner's insurance policy does not cover these expenses.

In the spring, warm weather signals the onset of swarm season, when termite colonies grow rapidly. During this part of the year, termite queens lay eggs every 15 seconds. According to Orkin, Inc., this is the most important time to protect your house from becoming a feast for a kingdom of termites.

“Termites travel far from their colonies in search of wooden food sources,” noted Paul Hardy, technical director for Orkin, Inc. “They can invade any home—even those covered in brick or stucco, which is essentially exterior ‘wall-paper’—and cause significant household damage.”

Vigilant homeowners can de-



Termites feast relentlessly on anything made of cellulose, including wood, plants, paper and even cotton.

tect some signs of severe termite invasion, such as pencil-sized mud tubes along masonry or concrete, distorted areas of paint on wood surfaces, and hollow-sounding wood.

However, most invasions are invisible to untrained eyes, so homeowners should schedule a free annual inspection with a trusted and experienced pest control company. Only licensed professionals can control termite problems, but tips for preventing infestation include:

- Shut down entry points. Termites can sneak through cracks as small as 1/64 of an inch.
- Elevate firewood piles and move them away from the house.
- Eliminate moisture, which is essential to termite survival, around the home, especially in basements, crawl spaces and near plumbing.
- Keep gutters and downspouts clear and trim siding or stucco at least two inches above soil level.

For more on termite prevention, visit www.orkin.com. Free inspections are also available by calling (800) 800-ORKIN.