



Our Insect Enemies



Eco-Friendly Steps To Protect Your Home from Termites

(NAPSA)—If you live in the “termite belt,” from Virginia to California and as far north as New York, it’s hard to ignore the damage hungry wood-seeking termites can do to a home. In fact, termites cause an estimated \$5 billion in damage annually to homes and buildings according to The national Pest Management Association.

There are several steps you can take to protect your home from termites, according to Dr. Gary Bennett, Professor of Entomology at Purdue University and a self-described “termite guy.” “The most important thing to do is keep your house from being a ‘food source’ for termites. That means eliminate cellulose and wood products in and around your home from having direct contact with soil. Watch for moisture build-up too, as termites are attracted to warm, moist areas.” Bennett offers these tips to help keep termites away:

1. Don’t store wood or boards in crawl spaces.
2. Don’t leave lumber or fire wood next to your foundation.
3. Don’t install trellises or fence posts against your home.
4. Check decks and landscape timbers, as wood preservatives will eventually break down.
5. Avoid placing mulch directly next to your foundation.

It’s also important to have your home inspected and monitored for signs of termite activity and properly protected. For years, homeowners had only one option in fighting termites. The conventional method required injecting several hundreds gallons of liquid pesticide solution into the soil sur-



Bait systems use small amounts of chemical to kill off termite colonies.

rounding a home and into holes drilled in slabs and foundations. But today, homeowners intent on protecting their home, and concerned about protecting the environment and their family, may find termite bait systems a welcome alternative to the heavy use of chemicals necessitated by traditional liquid treatments.

“Baits are considered environmentally friendly because you’re not putting a lot of chemicals around or underneath a home,” notes Bennett. The tamper-resistant stations generally contain a combination of materials designed to be a preferred food source for termites. “The bait process starts by placing discreet monitoring stations around the outside of a house. If termites ‘hit’ a monitoring station, infestation of a structure is highly likely.”

“When termites are detected, a small amount of chemical is put in the stations so that as the termites feed on the bait, they take

it back to the colony to feed it to their young. This eventually kills off the entire colony.”

Many consumers prefer this less-invasive termite monitoring and treatment system over traditional liquid treatments. “A lot of people are concerned about where the chemical from a liquid treatment ends up once it is injected into the soil and pressure-treated into walls, boards, foundations and slabs,” says Bennett.

Even the new “perimeter-only” liquid treatments require injecting chemical solutions into the soil—albeit, significantly less chemicals than the amount used with traditional liquid treatments. Bennett notes, “With any liquid chemical treatment, it’s hard to de-contaminate the soil once it has been treated. Really, the only way to remove it, is to remove the soil. With baits, you know exactly where the chemical is, and you can easily remove it if you wish.”

While there are several do-it-yourself treatments, both liquids and baits, Bennett suggests calling in the professionals. “To protect a home from termite infestation takes time and careful monitoring. It’s somewhat complicated, so it is important to have someone who is trained, certified and knowledgeable about the process.”

While summer is prime time for termites, in warm, moist climates termites can feed year-round. Be sure you take the necessary steps to protect your home—and your family—to keep those hungry critters from feeding on your house.