



Our Insect Enemies



The Termite: Tackling This Tenacious Pest

(NAPSA)—What insect outlived the dinosaurs and now causes more damage than ever before? That pest is the termite, an ancient insect group, which dined on trees during the dinosaur ages, and now munches on modern homes. In the U.S., termites cause more than \$2.5 billion in damages per year.

When termites infest buildings, they damage lumber, wood panels, flooring, sheetrock, wallpaper, plastics, paper products and fabric made of plant fibers. Their hard, saw-toothed jaws work 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.

Scientists say it takes three to eight years of normal termite feeding activity to cause measurable damage. Under ideal conditions, a termite colony of 60,000 workers could consume one foot of 2-inch by 4-inch pine in 157 to 188 days.

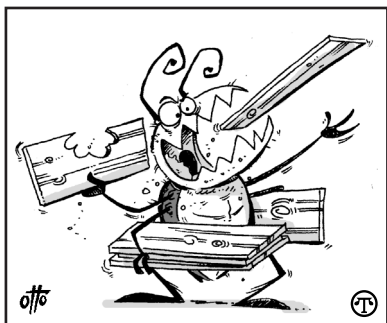
Experts from the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) propose several tips to avoid termite infestation:

- Avoid water accumulation near your home's foundation. Divert water away with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Quickly repair house damage from a leaky roof or window.

- Reduce humidity in crawl spaces with proper ventilation. Prevent shrubs, vines and other vegetation from growing over and covering vents.

- Never bury wood scraps or waste lumber in the yard, especially near the building. Remove old tree stumps and roots around and beneath the building.

- Most importantly, eliminate



Under ideal conditions a termite colony can consume a couple of feet of pine in a year.

any wood contact with the soil. Maintain a one-inch gap between the soil and wood portions of the building.

Be aware of infestation warning signs:

- Swarming of winged forms in the fall and spring—termites can easily be confused with flying ants.

- Evidence of mud tunneling in, over and under wood structures.

- Wooden structures exhibiting darkening or blistering.

- Damaged wood becomes extremely thin and can be easily punctured by a knife or a screwdriver.

Experts recommend calling a pest control professional to protect your home. Professionals offer the specialized skills necessary to rid a home of termite infestation: knowledge of building construction, an ability to identify termite species and the knowledge of applicable methods of termite control.

For more information, visit www.pestworld.org or contact a pest control professional.