

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

What To Do When Termites “Spring” Into Action

(NAPSA)—As warm weather approaches, familiar sights and sounds signal the onset of spring—blossoming flowers, chirping birds and balmy afternoons among them. But another sure sign of spring’s arrival—termites—may go unnoticed by millions of Americans who could be affected.

During the winter months, the 13 or more subterranean termite colonies that inhabit the average acre of American soil reproduce rapidly. How rapidly? The queen of each colony lays an egg every 15 seconds. By spring, the millions of eager offspring have sprouted wings and are ready to take flight. When they do, their job is to pair off and establish new colonies, too often in our homes.

Research shows that termites take a bite out of more American structures than fires and storms combined. According to Orkin Pest Control, termite damage costs two million homeowners a combined \$2.5 billion a year in repairs. Because infestation is so common, typical homeowner’s insurance policies do not cover termite damage.

“Spring is the time to be vigilant about protecting our homes from termites,” says Orkin entomologist and noted termite expert Paul Hardy. “When termites swarm, our homes are more vulnerable than ever to infestation. Termite detection and prevention should be part of everyone’s spring cleaning.”

Because termite infestation can easily go unnoticed, the best way to identify an existing problem is to have a thorough home inspection by a pest control professional. Most national companies offer free termite inspections on request.



Each year, termites help mark the arrival of spring.

Depending on the severity of the problem, visible signs of infestation include:

- Pencil-sized mud tubes running across masonry from the ground to wood portions of the house;
- Distorted or bubbled areas of paint on wood surfaces; and
- Sagging wood structural elements, such as floor joists, beams or sills.

Homeowners can reduce their chances of termite damage by following these steps:

- Look for excessive moisture in and around the home, and eliminate it. Basements, crawl spaces and spaces under sinks are common problem areas;
- Trim siding or stucco at least six inches above the soil level;
- Maintain clean gutters and downspouts;
- Move firewood away from the house. Ideally, woodpiles should be off the ground as well;
- Eliminate points of entry for termites by sealing cracks in the foundation or siding; and
- Consider a bait and monitoring system.

For more on termite prevention, information and tips are available at www.orkin.com. Free inspections also are available by calling 1-800-800-ORKIN.