

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Selecting A Pest Control Professional

(NAPSA)—According to the National Association of Realtors, more than 6,400,000 new and existing homes were sold in the U.S. in 2002.

Yet, many homeowners who are concerned about maintaining the value of a home—and protecting their largest single investment—often ignore the issue of pest control.

In addition to some disease-carrying pests posing a threat to health, it's estimated the global cost of damage and treatment due to termites, for example, is \$2 billion—with more than \$1.5 billion spent in the U.S. alone.

That's why a growing number of buyers and sellers are turning to pest control professionals to help them determine whether a home is termite free or damaged.

"No pest is more threatening to a structure than termites," said Cindy Mannes, director of public affairs for the National Pest Management Association. According to Mannes, "Trained and licensed professionals can help identify the termites, determine the extent of the infestation and recommend a prompt, effective control program."

Mannes offers the following tips when it comes to hiring a pest control professional:

- A good place to start is to ask someone who has used pest control services. Inquire about the type of pest problem encountered and how satisfied they were with the service.

- Membership in the national, and state or local pest control associations is a good indicator that the company has access to



Pest management can play an important role in protecting a major investment—your home.

modern technical information and is committed to further education.

- Once you select a pest control professional, reach a complete understanding with the company before work starts. Find out what the pest is, how the problem will be treated, how long the period of treatment will be and what results can be expected. And make sure you know which services and results are guaranteed and which are not.

Many professionals now use what's known as an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategy. This approach controls pests by getting rid of the three things they need to survive: food, shelter and water. A typical IPM program includes inspection, identification of the pest, employment of several control methods, evaluation and follow-up inspections to determine effectiveness.

To learn more, visit the Web site at www.pestworld.org.