

# HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

## Wet, Warm, Swarm: Springtime Means Termites

(NAPS)—Flowers and plants aren't the only things that "spring up" at the end of March and beginning of April. Although timing varies by region, termites swarm in the spring when the weather starts to warm up and conditions become wet.

A termite "swarm" refers to the time when large numbers of winged "reproductive" termites leave their present colony in an attempt to establish a new colony. The problem is, they may try to make your house their next meal.

Although subterranean termites are most active in the southeastern United States, unless you live in Alaska, your home is at risk. Termites are found in 49 of the 50 states and cause more than \$1.2 billion in damage each year.

In order to stop these invaders from destroying your home, education is key. There are many different types, but the most common is the subterranean termite. These swarming termites are often confused with ants that also swarm in the spring.

However, just because you don't see termites in your home does not mean that they are not taking a bite out of your biggest investment. It takes the common variety of subterranean termite colony years to cause noticeable damage to a home. Formosan colonies are larger and do more damage in less time. There are things that you can look for to determine if there is a termite infestation problem including:

- A scattering of narrow, transparent wings on a windowsill in early spring.
- Mud tunnels—slightly smaller than a number two pencil—visible in the soil on the home's foundation.
- Wood trim, window frames or walls that suddenly give way, revealing the damage within.
- Flying or swarming termites in the house, especially near light sources.



**Some termites swarm in early spring, while the aggressive Formosans tend to show up later.**

The latest technology in termite prevention—bait stakes—gives homeowners a valuable way to reduce the risk of termite infestation. Now available in a do-it-yourself system, termite bait stakes use treated materials inside a plastic stake to infect foraging termites.

Worker termites search for food for themselves and the colony 24 hours a day. As they forage, termites find the bait stakes placed around the perimeter of the home and feed on the "termite friendly" material inside. The workers ingest the slow-acting ingredient and take it back to the colony, where other termites feed. Once termite activity is found in a stake, additional stakes are placed nearby. The number of stakes needed depends on the size of the home.

Do-it-yourself versions of bait stakes, such as Spectracide Terminate, are available at home centers, hardware stores and most mass merchants.

Certified inspectors also alert you to signs of termite activity. For a free home inspection checklist, visit [www.termitebites.com](http://www.termitebites.com) or call 1-888-545-5837.

Additional information on how to inspect your home, guidelines to detecting termite infestations and termite treatment options is available at [www.termitebites.com](http://www.termitebites.com). To request a free brochure, "A Layman's Guide to Termite Control," write: Termites, 8825 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, MO 63114 or call 1-888-545-5837.