

Disaster Recovery



Keep Formosan Subterranean Termites From Spreading After Hurricanes

Cleaning up wood debris after a hurricane or other severe wind storm can inadvertently spread one of Louisiana's most destructive pests – the Formosan subterranean termite. The highest concentrations of this termite in the continental United States are in Lake Charles and New Orleans, cities flooded following Hurricanes Rita and Katrina. Any cellulose material (wood, paper or products made from them) can contain termites.

Do Not Move Termites – Do Not Provide Food For Termites

- Wood-to-ground contact is a condition that can attract termites. Debris should be picked up around the house as quickly as possible to avoid having termites relocate near your home.
- Wet wood or wallboard also can attract termites, especially if brown rot sets in; brown rot fungi produce attractants that termites move toward.
- Formosan subterranean termites in wood (including trees) or other locations above water will certainly survive. As soon as the floods recede, termites will move back down to lower levels to resume foraging.
- Wood taken from damaged buildings and other structures could be infested with termites. Lumber and other cellulose-containing material could become infested with termites if left on the ground too long.

- Any salvaged wood to be saved should be stored off the ground and away from the house.
- Any untreated wood in Southeast and Southwest Louisiana should be considered as potentially infested with termites, especially Formosan subterranean termites.
- Keep all salvaged items made of wood, paper and their products from being transported in state or out of state until they are inspected by a termite inspector.
- Downed trees, limbs and other woody plant material may be infested with termites or become infested if they remain on the ground too long.

Dispose of Termite-infested Wood

- Painted wood from construction before 1978 is probably lead-contaminated and should not be incinerated; this wood needs to be taken to a facility for proper disposal.
- Don't bury wood. Even pesticide treatments won't prevent buried wood from eventually becoming infested with termites; buried debris will provide food for termites that will seek new food sources when the buried wood is exhausted.
- Downed trees and large shrubs on the ground should be cut into movable segments and taken to a facility for proper disposal.

Leaves and small branches can be bagged to be taken to the landfill or composted and used as mulch. Keep in mind that mulch is termite food.

Inspect for Termites

- A house inspection for subterranean termites is best done by a pest control operator, and a good inspection can only occur after debris is picked up and the silt is pulled away from the house so the foundation can be viewed.
- All termite treatments that were flooded, including liquid trenching and bait systems, are compromised by a flood. New treatments may be required, but get the advice of a professional. Don't rush into a treatment, because it may not be needed. This is a house-by-house decision.

Prevent Termites

- Pressure-treated wood is not eaten by subterranean termites, and wood being replaced from a flood should be replaced with treated wood. These treatments also stop fungus from attacking the wood.
- Many wood building components, such as paper backing on drywall, cannot be pressure-treated and should be treated with an approved spray-on product.

Formosan Subterranean Termite Facts

- The Formosan subterranean termite is one of several subterranean termites in Louisiana, but by far the most destructive.
- Formosan subterranean termite colonies can include as many as 10 million members.
- Formosan subterranean termites will chew through many substances in their pursuit of cellulose, including buried electrical cables.

Signs of Formosan Subterranean Termites

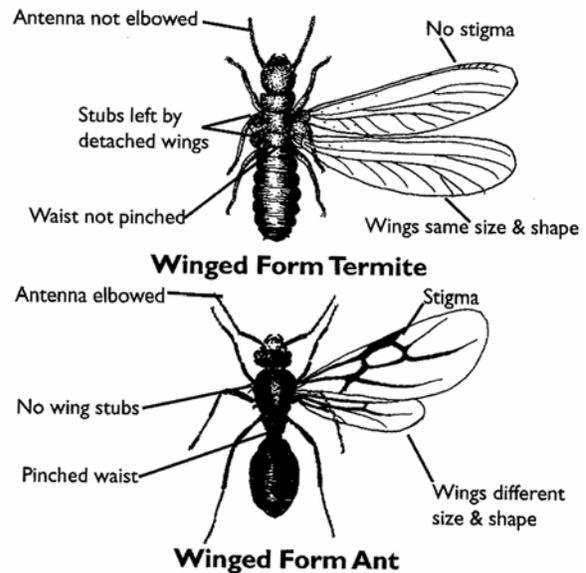
Inside a house

- Carton nests showing on door frames, edges of walls, floors, ceilings, stairs or other areas.
- Distortion of floor, window or door frames.

Outside a house

- Mud tubes over foundation walls, bark of trees, piers and edges of concrete slabs.
- Trees with carton nests near the base and showing on the bark.
- Damaged fences, utility poles and landscaping timbers.

Differences Between Termites and Ants



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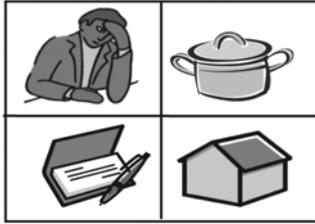
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