

## Spring Is Termite Time; Don't Panic, Entomologist Advises

The termite probably scares more people in an economic sense, than any other insect. Yet they work slowly and the damage they do can be repaired, according to Dr. Dale Bray, chairman of the department of entomology and applied ecology at the University of Delaware.

The spring swarming of termites is often the first warning that termites may be non-paying guests in the home. In the spring some of the winged, reproductive members of each termite colony decide to start their own families, so they swarm to locate a place to settle down.

If you see swarms, look at some of the insects closely. If their bodies are "pinched" in the middle they probably are ants and you can relax, Bray says. The body of a termite is about the same thickness from one end to the other. Examine the wings also; ants usually have a dark spot on each of the front wings but termites do not.

Termites actually live in the soil but wood is their only food. They build a network of tiny tunnels to reach the wood in the house, unless the wood is in direct contact with the soil. The beams in the cellar, the sill under the front door or any part of the house made of wood is exactly what they are looking for. They will go through a concrete block wall with ease, if there is a tiny crack.

Since termites remain hidden except when forming new colonies in the spring, these swarms may be your only visible warning of their presence. Termites seldom break through the surface of the wood on which they feed, so you can't tell if they're around by simply looking at the wooden parts of the house.

Nonetheless, there are other ways to check for termite infestation, Bray points out. Mud-like tubes on foundation walls, about one-quarter inch wide, are their way of getting from their home into yours. If you find these tubes, break them and look for worker termites, small white insects without wings.

Also, check all points of the house where wood touches the ground or the concrete slab meets the walls of the house. Use an ice pick to check for places where the pick will go into the wood easily. If it does, termites may be in the wood.

Sawdust-like powder around the tunnels is not left by termites; those insects usually are not as destructive as termites.

If you are sure your home does have termites, have it treated to get rid of them, recommends Bray. The homeowner can do it himself, but it's difficult to do a thorough job.

For this reason, deal only with reliable exterminators, cautions Bray. The job should be done within a few weeks after you discover the insects. But don't be rushed. Termites work slowly, there is no great hurry, provided you do something within a few weeks. Don't panic. Avoid operators

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Some inexpensive evergreens may grow too tall very rapidly within a short time. Such plants may become a liability to your home and add nothing to its appearance. It is always best to have the advice of an experienced, reputable nurseryman when selecting and placing ornamental plants.

to be careful in the selection of a pest control firm to do the job. Beware of operators who talk about secret formulas and special treatment — there is only one good standard treatment and that is to poison the soil with Aldrin, Dieldrin, Heptachlor or Chlordane.

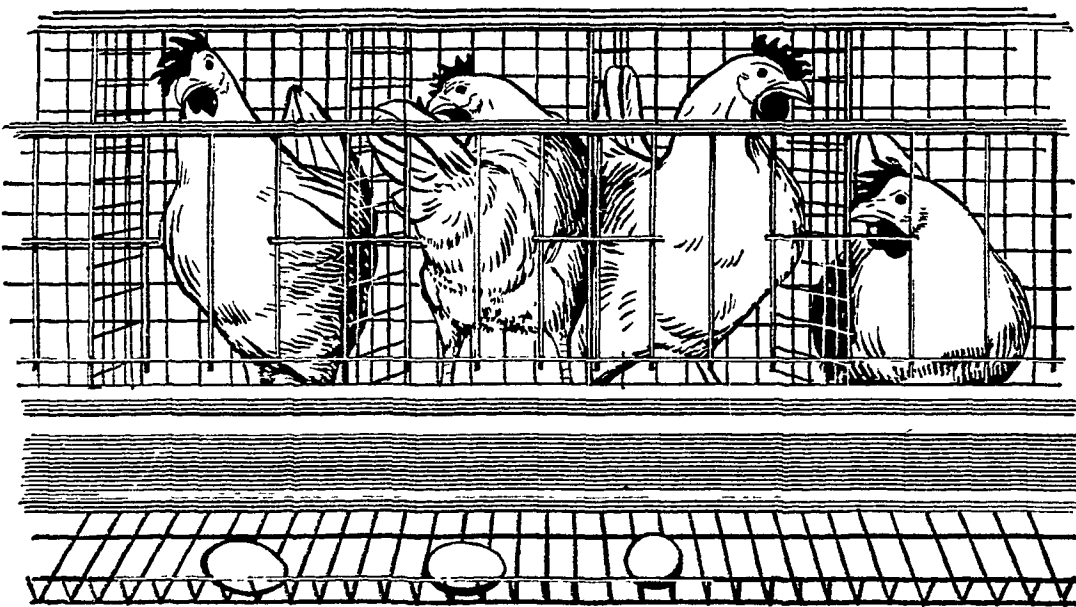
Choose a pest control operator who will guarantee his work, and will recheck the house after six months or a year to be sure all the termites are gone.

"Beware of door-to-door

salesmen; many of them disappear after taking your money. You probably won't be able to locate them when you discover your house is re-infested because the company did not do the job right in the first place," Bray warns.

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