

TERMITE DETECTION - What you need to know...

"In most cases when you see the evidence of termites the infestation has already settled in. In most cases evidence will be bulging paint on door frames or window frames. Also small brown spots of dirt can be seen coming out of joints or along the top of baseboards. If they have been in for some time the wings can be seen from termite swarmers during the rainy season.

If termites are found you should not spray them but get a pest control person in to identify the species."

Kieran Hendricken, Cayman Pest Solutions

What to look out for...

Termites are tiny, usually only about a quarter of an inch to a half inch in length. But one single termite usually means a colony of thousands more nearby. So while the damage that one termite can do is minor, a whole colony of termites can cause significant



damage to building structures. This makes it critical for early detection to avoid significant structural repairs.

A termite colony is a complex social network consisting of a queen, workers, soldiers, and other reproductive termites. Depending on the species and each termite's social status, a termite's life cycle can last anywhere from two to 50 years, and a termite colony can survive indefinitely. A colony of termites can have over a million individual members, hungrily munching away at any wood they get close to.

How do you know if you have termites? What is a termite infestation?

A termite infestation is when members of a termite colony enter a residence or other structure. Termites' diet primarily consists of cellulose found in wood, paper, and cardboard. In nature, termites help clean up dead trees and other plant material, feeding off the cellulose in these materials. However, when present in homes and structures, a termite's appetite for cellulose can cause severe damage. In our climate, it is unavoidable to remove all termites from trees and plants, but we reduce the risk by trimming back foliage from the buildings. If you notice a tree growing close to your building, please report it and we will have it trimmed back.

1. Buckling or blisters in wood flooring

If your wood flooring is buckling or has blister spots, this could be evidence of termites. Subterranean Termites can cause damage to the subfloor, which can make your wood flooring look discolored or have a wavy appearance on the surface. Termites prefer the softer subfloor wood or supports, so you may not notice their presence until they have done quite a bit of damage below the surface.

2. Hollowed or damaged wood

Wood damage from termites can be found below and behind surfaces like walls and floors. Termites eat your walls from the inside out, which is why they can be difficult to spot. These tiny pests hollow out wood studs within walls without emerging causing them to sound empty when you tap on them. Termites chew through wood to remove the cellulose, leaving behind long grooves. The grooves may resemble a maze inside your walls or take the form of a honeycomb pattern. Over time, these grooves may weaken the wood and create structural damage.



3. Swarmers (flying termites)

Swarmers are flying termites that branched off from their colony to find mates and begin new colonies. Swarming happens at certain times of the year (typically spring), and there may be hundreds or even thousands of flying termites in a swarm. If you notice a swarm of flying termites in or near your property, it is an indication that termites may

have lived in the vicinity for several years but were dormant.



4. Discarded termite wings

Discarded termite wings can be found near closed windows, doors, and other home-access points. Termites fly toward the windows as they are attracted to the light from outside. They intentionally twist their wings off when they land because they won't need them again. You may notice piles of these discarded wings, but that doesn't mean the termites are dead—they may be busy trying to build a new colony nearby.

5. Hard to open doors and windows

When the termites eat through the wood in search of cellulose, they cause damage to the wood, causing it to buckle or warp. This damage can make opening and closing your doors and windows difficult. Stuck windows and doors that won't fully close could be early warning signs of a termite infestation.

6. Mud tubes

Subterranean termites nest underground and forage up to their food source, which is often a house structure. Pencil-sized “mud tubes” can be found where the ground meets your house, or any other possible food source, like a tree or shed. This termite species requires certain temperatures and humidity levels to survive, and their tunnels help block out cool, dry air, effectively turning your home into an environment where they can thrive.



7. Drywood termite droppings (frass)

Drywood termites (very common in Cayman) nest inside of wood. While tunneling and eating the wood they're infesting, they create galleries. To keep these galleries clean, they create kick out holes where they remove their droppings, landing on window sills or floors and can create small mounds of pellets. These mounds of pellets, resembling sawdust or coffee grounds, may indicate the presence of drywood termites.



8. Live termites found during remodeling

If you're remodeling your home, keep an eye out for termites living in the wood you're tearing out. One of the most common ways termites are found in homes comes from renovations or remodeling. It's important to keep in mind that removing the damaged wood will not remove the infestation. They can be found in the soil around your home, in rotting or damp wood components of your house, or anywhere on your property where they can feed on organic matter that contains cellulose, such as tree stumps and firewood piles.

9. Damaged drywall, bubbling under paint or wallpaper

Drywall contains paper – and paper contains cellulose, a termite's primary food source. As termites chew, they will leave behind small trails, both on the surface of and inside drywall. You may notice pin sized holes in your drywall or wallpaper where the termites have eaten their way through. Termite pinholes in drywall are capped with a small speck of dirt, and the bubbling beneath your wallpaper or paint can be evidence of termites.

How fast can termites cause damage?

Termite damage happens slowly and over time. Once a termite colony makes itself at home in your home, it can stay there unnoticed and continue to feed on your wood for several years.

Termite damage can be extensive and expensive to repair—especially when termites damage the structural integrity of a home. Unfortunately, even if you don't see signs of termites, that doesn't mean they're not there. Termite damage can go unnoticed, and significant structural damage may already be done by the time damage is noticed.

If you notice any signs of termites or damage to windows, doors, baseboard or walls, please contact your Pest Control provider or your Property Manager right away.