



## Termites

*Eusocial insects*

Summary:

**Termite (Soldier)**



This wood-boring insect can damage both softwoods and hardwoods. The larvae of the beetle bore through the wood digesting the cellulose. After about 3 years they form a pupal chamber near the surface and there change into adult beetles. In the summer, they bite their way out to the surface, forming the characteristic round flight-holes 1.5mm in diameter. After mating, the females lay their eggs (up to

80) in cracks, crevices or old flight-holes. The eggs hatch and a new generation begins a fresh life cycle. The life cycle can be as short as 3 years in damp timber predigested by a wood-rotting fungus.

**Termite (Worker)**



Commonly but erroneously called 'white ants' termites are the most destructive of wood-boring insects. They do not occur in the United Kingdom, but are widespread throughout the Tropics, the United States, Australasia and to a lesser extent Continental Europe. In addition to timber some species also attack standing trees, food crops and many other materials including plastics and rubber. Broadly

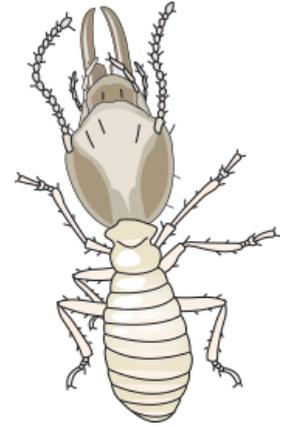
speaking, they fall into two main groups: Its presence may therefore be accompanied by serious structural collapse of timber due to fungal decay.

**Termite (Queen)**



This wood-boring insect is related to the Common Furniture Beetle, but is much larger. Its flight-hole is large and round (3mm diameter) and its bore dust is coarse and bun shaped. The larvae of this beetle are usually found in decaying oak, and the life cycle from egg to adult can be as short as four years. In dry, sound wood the larvae may tunnel for up to twelve years before pupation, and the cycle starts again. The

Queen lays up to 30,000 eggs a day.



## Contact Info

Contacts for further information:

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# SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES

FAMILY RHINOTERMITIDAE

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**Colour:** Creamy white to dark brown / black

**Shape:** Long, narrow and oval

**Size:** 1/8 inch long

## Overview

Subterranean termite colonies are organized into casts depending on tasks – workers, soldiers and reproductive. The characteristics of a subterranean termite are dependent on the termite’s role in the colony. Worker subterranean termites are 1/8 to 3/8 inch long. Soldier subterranean termites are of a similar body in length, but are distinguished by their powerful mandibles and large brown heads. Reproductive subterranean termites are approximately 1/2 inch long.

## Habits

Subterranean termites live in underground colonies or in moist secluded areas above ground. They build distinctive “mud tubes” to gain access to food sources and to protect themselves from open air. Like other termite species, they feed on products containing cellulose. Subterranean termites swarm in the spring when groups of reproductive termites go off to start new colonies.

## Threats:

Subterranean termites are by far the most destructive termite species. The hard, saw-toothed jaws of termites work like shears and can bite off extremely small fragments of wood, one piece at a time. They can cause severe property damage.

## Prevention

- Divert water away from your homes’ foundation with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Repair leaking faucets, water pipes and AC units on the outside of the home.
- Reduce humidity in crawl spaces, attics and basement with proper ventilation.
- Store firewood at least 20 feet away from the house and 5 inches off the ground
- Keep mulch at least 15 inches from the foundation
- Routinely inspect the foundation of your home for signs of mud tubes, cracked or bubbling paint and wood that sounds hollow when tapped.
- Treat all timber frames, doors, window frames, etc. with a wood preservative that will prevent termites attacking any timber.

## Did you Know?

- Live in colonies with as many as two million members
- Use their scissor-like jaws to eat wood 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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# FORMOSAN TERMITES

FORMOSANUS

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**Colour:** Creamy white to brown

**Shape:** Long, narrow and oval

**Size:** ½ inch long

## Overview

Originally from China, Formosan termites are an extremely aggressive and destructive termite species. Formosan termites are a subterranean species of termites. Swarmer Formosan termites are about ½ inch in overall length, including their wings.

## Habits

Formosan termites live in huge underground colonies, with an average of 350,000 workers, but can contain as many as several million termites. Formosan termites build intricate mud nests in the ground. In addition to structures, they are also known to infest trees, shrubs, utility poles, timber, railroad trusses and even boats.

## Threats:

A mature colony of Formosan termites can cause severe structural damage to a home in as little as six months. Prevention is key with this species. If dealing with an existing infestation, talk to a pest professional about Formosan termite treatment.

## Prevention

- Divert water away from your homes' foundation with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Repair leaking faucets, water pipes and AC units on the outside of the home.
- Reduce humidity in crawl spaces, attics and basement with proper ventilation.
- Store firewood at least 20 feet away from the house and 5 inches off the ground
- Maintain a one-inch gap between
- Routinely inspect the foundation of your home for signs of mud tubes, cracked or bubbling paint and wood that sounds hollow when tapped.
- Treat all timber frames, doors, window frames, etc. with a wood preservative that will prevent termites attacking any timber.

## Did you Know?

- Live in colonies with as many as two million members
- Use their scissor-like jaws to eat wood 24 hours a day, seven days a week.



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# DAMPWOOD TERMITES

FAMILY HODOTERMITIDAE

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**Colour:** Creamy white to brownish

**Shape:** Long, narrow and oval

**Size:**  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch long

## Overview

As the name suggests, dampwood termites infest wood with a high moisture content. Dampwood termites are normally larger than other termite species. Bodies of king and queen dampwood termites range in size from  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch to  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch long and have two pairs of wings that are equal in size and shape, extending beyond their abdomen. Nymphs can be as long as  $\frac{5}{8}$  inch and worker dampwood termites are up to  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch in size.

## Habits

Dampwood termite colonies, like drywood termites, have no worker caste. The nymph dampwood termites take care of the kings and queens of the colony and feed the soldier caste. Drywood termites are usually found in logs, stumps, dead trees, fence posts and utility poles.

## Threats:

Because of their need for excessive moisture, dampwood termites are not often found in structures. However, these termites will infest sound wood if moisture is maintained, especially where wood is in contact with the ground or there is a moisture supply such as a leaky pipe. Care must be taken to avoid attracting dampwood termites to a structure as they can cause serious property damage.

## Prevention

- Eliminate sources of moisture by diverting water away from your home's foundation with properly functioning downspouts, gutters and splash blocks. Repair leaking faucets, water pipes and AC units on the outside of the home.
- Reduce humidity in crawl spaces, attics and basements with proper ventilation.
- Store firewood at least 20 feet away from the house and 5 inches off the ground
- Keep mulch at least 15 inches from the foundation and avoid wood-to-ground contact.
- Replace any damp or damaged wood on your home's exterior.

## Did you Know?

- Eat wood across the grain
- Create a series of chambers in wood, which are connected by tunnels with smooth walls, as if sandpapered.



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# DRYWOOD TERMITES

FAMILY KALOTERMITIDAE

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**Colour:** Creamy white to light brown

**Shape:** Long, narrow and oval

**Size:**  $\frac{3}{8}$  - 1 inch long

## Overview

Drywood termites are social insects. They infest dry wood, like that found in attic framing. Unlike most termite species, drywood termites do not require contact with the soil. Swarming drywood termites fly into structures and infest wood directly.

## Habits

Drywood termites form colonies of up to 2,500 members. Unlike subterranean termites, drywood termite colonies do not have a worker caste. The work is done by immature termites before they reach adulthood.

## Threats:

Drywood termites can infest structures and cause significant structural damage. They can chew through support beams, floors and walls, causing expensive repairs.

## Prevention

- Avoid wood-to-ground contact around the perimeter of your home
- Routinely inspect your home for signs of drywood termites. Pay special attention to window / door frames, trim, eaves, sliding and attics.

## Did you Know?

- Can be transported to new location via an infested piece of furniture, a picture frame, etc.
- Usually swarm on sunny, warm days after a sudden rise in temperature.

