

# The Homeowners' Guide to **TERMITES**



**ARROW**  **TERMITE & PEST CONTROL Co.**

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# Introduction

Owning a home in the southern states requires a lot of general upkeep and prevention that isn't always necessary in the rest of the country. We are often required to purchase flood insurance as many homes are in flood zones, hurricanes and tropical storms mean we deal with roof damage more often, and last but not least, we deal with the increased risk of termite damage.

When it comes to major risks for homeowners, termite infestation and damage is second to none. Where storms and flooding are covered by most homeowners' insurance policies, termite damage is most likely not. Because of this, it's important for homeowners in the southern states to maintain an active termite protection plan to prevent possible infestation and the risk of major structural damages.

Termite infestations present a major financial obstacle for homeowners, as the financial damage caused by a termite infestation can be anywhere from \$10,000 to \$50,000 or more depending on the severity of the infestation and the length of time it has gone untreated.

This ebook was created to provide a basic guide to understanding termites and to cover some of the more commonly raised issues including:

- The different species of termites
- Where termites come from
- Why they infest homes
- How to prevent termite infestation
- How to treat termite infestations

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# What Are Termites?



In the simplest of terms, termites are one of the biggest enemies a homeowner can have. Right in line with burglars, fire damage and storm damage, termites present a major financial risk to anyone who owns a home. But what about them makes them so destructive?

Termites, much like ants, live in large colonies that can reach populations in the millions. During termite swarming season, which typically runs from March until June or July, swarms can reach huge populations and are seen swarming in areas near homes by the thousands. Formosan termites which are most common in southern regions of the U.S. are most active during spring and early summer and will swarm during evening hours.

To understand termites and why they are such a threat to homeowners, you have to understand the anatomy of a termite colony and what they require in order to thrive.

## The Anatomy of a Termite Colony

A typical termite colony consists of various different roles, performing various jobs to ensure that the colony continues to grow, finding new homes and spreading their reach. These include:

- **Workers:** Workers are some of the smallest termites in the colony, and are responsible for constructing the colonies home and providing food for the colony and queen.
- **Soldiers:** Some of the largest termites in the colony, these “soldiers” are responsible for protecting the colony from predators and have distinctive jaws that separate them visually from the rest of the colony.
- **Swamers/Scouts:** For simplicity sake, swarmers/scouts are termites that spawn wings and are responsible for seeking out new locations for colonies. They can be either male or female and are the termites you see swarming during the night looking for a new place to call home.
- **The Queen:** The queen is the backbone of the colony. Like an ant colony, the queen is the largest termite in the colony and spends her entire day laying new eggs to continue to grow the colony in size.

The termite colony consists of many small members, making up one giant collective organism that works in unison to survive and thrive.

## Characteristics of a Formosan Termite

There are several different species of termites across the world, but the most common and potentially one of the most destructive in the southern regions of the U.S. is the Formosan termite.

- **Color:** Yellow/Brown
- **Size & Shape:** Up to 1/2in, long/narrow oval shaped body
- **Features:** 6 legs, antennae and wings (shed during swarm season)

# What is Swarming Season?



Termite swarming season occurs every year and can happen between spring and summer months. Depending on your area, swarming season's time frame will vary. Swarming season is referred to as such, as it's the time of year when thousands of termites can be seen swarming any light source available during evening hours.

## Why Do Termites Swarm?

Swarming season occurs as a result of termites looking to expand their colonies and find new homes. During this time frame, termites will send out scouts with wings to look for potential areas that would be ideal for a new colony. During this time, it is crucial for homeowners to keep an eye out for possible signs of an infestation, these signs include:

- Termites swarming nearby or close to your home (around exterior lighting, etc)
- Mud tubes around the foundation of your home (or inside of it's structure)
- Damaged wood around your property or home

During this time, it's important to keep an eye out for these signs, as most infestations go completely unnoticed until the damage has already been done.



# How to Prevent Termite Infestation



The most crucial step to preventing damage to your home is to protect your home from becoming infested. There are many different ways that this can be done, but you can take several steps to help ensure that your home is a less than ideal home for a new colony of termites.

## **Eliminate Potential Termite Food Sources**

Just about everyone knows that termites feed off the wooden structures in and around our homes. What many people neglect are the sources of non-living wood that may be attracting termites.

- Remove rotting stumps, logs or tree limbs around your property
- Get rid of stacked firewood or rotting landscape timbers
- Avoid using wood mulch in gardens or areas close to your foundation

## Reduce High Moisture Areas

For a termite colony to survive they need a source of water. The moisture in and around your home can help create an ideal environment for a termite colony, so eliminating any source of moisture is essential in preventing termites.

- Divert water away from the home with gutters and downspouts
- Eliminate leaking plumbing
- Ensure that crawl spaces and attics have adequate ventilation



## Trim & Remove Heavy Brush or Vegetation from Your Yard

Heavy vegetation growth near your home helps to create a moist environment and can act as a source of moisture for a termite colony. Clear heavy brush and vegetation from around your home, cut back bushes and clean garden areas regularly.

## Perform Routine Home Inspections

While it is always a good idea to have a professional home inspection done and routine treatments performed, you can perform certain inspections of your home to let you know whether or not your home is infested.

Inspect the exterior of your home, looking around the foundation and near light or water sources for:

- Mud tubes leading into or around the home
- Discarded wings from swarming termites
- Damaged interior or exterior wood surfaces
- Droppings from termites (look like tiny brown pebbles)

We'll discuss these signs in more detail on subsequent pages.

## Have Your Home Inspected by a Termite Control Company

While there are many simple steps that you can take to help prevent a termite infestation, the best method of prevention is to have your home professionally inspected and if needed, treated by a termite control company. Professionals are trained to find the telltale signs of a termite infestation, and have the tools and treatments necessary to ensure that your home is protected.

To truly protect your home from termite infestation requires professional inspection and treatment. If you think your home may have termites or want professional protection, contact Arrow Termite & Pest Control today.



# Signs That Your Home is Infested



One of the dangers homeowners need to be concerned with is Termites, as they can cause tremendous damage both inside and outside of the home. According to Realtor.com, termites are considered the biggest threat to wood-based structures, ahead of both fires and flooding.

Fortunately, termite damage is preventable, it's simply a matter of knowing what to look for, properly preparing your home and making sure your home has been professionally inspected/treated by a termite control company.

In order to properly protect your home, you have to know how to prepare your property and furthermore, know what to look for to identify a termite problem.

### **Groups of Winged Insects or Discarded Wings**

When termite season begins, swarms of termites take to the skies in search of places to build their colonies. Once they've found a suitable location, they will settle in and begin building, leaving behind their wings in the process. When inspecting your property, keep an eye out for the discarded wings of termites, this is a telltale sign that there may already be a colony of termites nearby.

### **Mud Tubes on Walls or Structures**

When subterranean termites build their colonies, they create mud tubes (or shelter tubes) as they move from the ground into structures and homes. Their mud tubes can appear in corners and joints between surfaces and allow the termites to travel throughout their growing colonies. If you notice abnormal buildups or mud/dirt in abnormal places, it may be a sign that termites have made their way into your home.

### **Bubbling or Cracked Paint on Walls & Ceilings**

When inspecting the inside of the home, take a look at your drywall and along baseboards in the home. Should you notice any bubbling or flaking of paint, or "honeycombing" on baseboards, this may be a sign of a termite problem. Internal damage on drywall and ceilings can often resemble minor water damage and can often be overlooked.

### **Termite Droppings aka Frass**

Termites produce a large amount of droppings, referred to as frass, when they are eating through wood inside of a home. These droppings accumulate in various areas and look like wood-colored pellets, and may resemble a pile of tiny bird seed at first glance.

### **Damaged or Hollow Sounding Wood**

While the wooden structure in the home may appear to be in good condition visually, on the opposite side there may be damage hiding. As termites prefer to be in dark, damp places, they very rarely let their work be visible inside of your home. Simply tapping on surfaces and listening for a hollow sound can be a good indicator that termite damage may be present. Wood and surfaces without damage should produce a solid sound, wood that has termite damage may produce a more hollow sound depending on the extent of the damage.

As always, the best way to know for sure is to have your home professionally inspected. Arrow Termite & Pest Control has the skills and technology necessary to properly assess your home for termite damage and can help provide you with protection and peace of mind.



### About Arrow Termite & Pest Control

Arrow Termite & Pest Control was founded in Northern Louisiana in 1958 by the Cohn family. After many years working in the pest control industry, Mike Cohn came to Baton Rouge in 1978 to start his own company. Since then, Arrow Termite & Pest Control has grown to become one of the premier pest control companies in the south, providing services across most of the Gulf Coast region including Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, with sister companies in both Florida and Alabama.

### Our Mission

Arrow Termite and Pest Control strives to provide quality services and consumer satisfaction to keep families, businesses, and non-profits pest free. Our goal is total customer satisfaction by maintaining a pest free environment in the Residential, Commercial and Industrial settings. We guarantee that we will design and implement an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plan specifically for each customer. We also guarantee that we will research and implement new and better products that are on the market to provide even more comprehensive and environmentally friendly services.

## CLAIM YOUR FREE TERMITE INSPECTION TODAY

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NEW TERMITE TREATMENT

**ARROW**  
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**SPECIAL OFFER**

**SAVE \$50 ON TERMITE CONTROL & PROTECT YOUR HOME TODAY.**

Termite inspection from Arrow Pest Control can not only help you treat an existing termite infestation, but can help you prevent an infestation in the future.  
*Cannot be combined with others offers. Some restrictions may apply.*