

Termites: Hungry Home Wreckers

Most folks have heard about the destructive nature of subterranean termites. The two species common in South Louisiana are Eastern (Native) Subterranean termites and Formosan termites. Many know that these termites can damage their home, but many do nothing to protect their investment. **Just a few facts:**

- There are 8-12 colonies of Native subterranean termites per acre in South Louisiana. Each colony may contain over 300,000 termites. A mature colony can consume over 100 pounds of wood a year.
- Formosan termite colonies are not as numerous, but a large colony can contain over 10 million termites and can eat over 1000 pounds of wood a year.
- According to the LSU Ag Center web site, over 1 billion dollars in termite damage is caused every year by Native and Formosan termites. **Homeowner's insurance does not cover the cost of termite damage repairs.**
- You are more likely to have a termite infestation at your home than you are to have a fire, flood or tornado. Yet, I speak with homeowners every week who have termites but did not have their home treated, or they did not maintain the termite contract after the home was treated.

What can you do to protect your home?

- Have your home treated by a licensed professional termite company. Ask if the company offers termite damage repair warranties. Research the company and get references. Some termiticides are more effective and last longer in the soil than others. Ask what product the company will use to treat your home and then research that product. Maintain the annual inspection and renewal agreement with the company you choose.
- If you live in a slab home, keep at least 3 inches of the slab showing at all times. This allows for detection of the small mud tunnels used by termites to attack your home.
- Never use pine bark or any wood mulch within 12 inches of your foundation slab. Placing decaying wood (mulch) next to your home is a sure way to attract termites. Rocks or pine straw are the only safe materials to use.
- Once your home is treated, do not disturb the soil, or add new soil, within 12 inches of your foundation slab. Planting or digging in the chemically treated soil will disrupt the barrier and increase the probability of infestation.
- Do not make additions to your home without having the soil treated by a termite company.
- Most companies perform free inspections and estimates. You should call one today.

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