

Subterranean Termites



Termite swarm (Susan Ellis/IPM
Images)



Termite damage (Gary Alpert/IPM
Images)



Termite worker (Gary Alpert/IPM
Images)

Typical Location When Observed: Winged adults are found swarming in or around homes. Damaged wood is found near soil or associated with mud tunnels leading from soil.

Importance/Damage: Termites feed on wood and can cause significant damage to homes by damaging structural wood.

Distinguishing Features: Termites are similar to ants in size (2/5 inch including wings) and appearance, except they have straight antennae and do not have any constrictions at the “waist”. Also, the front and hind wings are equal in length.

Look-Alikes: Carpenter ants

General Life History and Habits: Termites live in colonies in the soil and feed on wood and wood products. In these colonies, different individual types or castes, with distinctive appearances, are responsible for specific tasks involved in colony maintenance. Swarms of winged adults usually appear in the spring or fall. This represents a mating flight, resulting in mated queens that will form new colonies. A swarm inside a structure indicates that an infestation is present. A swarm outside a structure may have come from nearby nonstructural wood.

Resources: More details may be found in Extension Fact Sheet 5.532, *Termites*.

Scientific Name: *Reticulitermes flavipes* (and others)

Order: Isoptera (termites)

Family: Rhinotermitidae (subterranean termites)

Actual Length

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