

Termites vs Ants – Which Do I have?

It has been noted that, due to our warm and wet spring, that we will probably be faced with an increase in our insect populations. This is true of both the ant and termite groups or swarms. If you have a swarm of insects, before applying an insecticide or pesticide, you should identify the type insects causing the problem. This prevents you from applying the wrong insecticide or pesticide application.

It is very important on determining termite identification due to the amount of damage that can occur if the termites are not properly treated. There are two types of termites; Subterranean and Drywood, and each needs a different type of treatment.

The easiest way to determine one from the other is to look at their waists. Ants have a very tiny waist and termites do not have any significant waist. Both have antennae, but the ant's antennae is elbowed and the termite's is straight. Ant's will have longer legs than the termite. When wings are present, the wings of the Termite are the same length, but the front wings of the ant are longer than the back wings.

If you determine it is a termite problem, the type of treatment will differ from that used on the ants and, in most cases, professional help is used on termite treatments. If your problem is from ants, try to find where they are entering the house and use caulking to seal up their entry(s) points, then apply an ant insecticide. Also, you can use ant baits made for use in and around the house. Note that ant baits can also be used in and around the garden beds.

More information is available at our Master Gardeners office or on our web site. See OSU Fact Sheet [EPP-7312](#) (Household Pest Control)

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