

IDENTIFYING TERMITE SWARMS IN THE SPRING

Swarming termites, or alates, have one sole purpose and that is to leave the colony, reproduce, and form a new colony. Termites are found in every one of the contiguous United States, except Alaska. So, that may be your next good reason to move... Hundreds of alates come out of the existing colony after 3 years of its' existence, but only a small percentage of them survive to start a new colony. Alates have no biting or chewing mouth parts to do any damage. Most termites are termed workers and are the chewing machines that damage structures as they feed, but these do not swarm.

Termites are found and attracted to decaying stumps, trees, wood debris, lumber and rotting wooden structures. They differ from flying ants, like carpenter ants, by having a straight antennae and wide bodies without pinched waists. Their coloring is black or dark brown and their wings are clear and are the same length. Ants have two pairs of wings that differ in size and are of a brown tint. Ants have elbowed antennae and pinched waists and their coloring can be black, brown or red. Carpenter ants inhabit wood but don't eat it to cause any damage, usually, but do eat nectar, seeds, other insects and food debris in and around your home. However, please note that both termites and ants swarm as part of their mating process.

To help prevent termites, first get rid of decayed lumber or firewood near the foundation of your home.

Next, divert excess water from foundations with properly functioning gutters, down spouts and splash blocks.

Also, repair any leaky water pipes and prevent excessive moisture in crawl spaces under the home.

Finally, adjust lawn and garden sprinklers to spray away from foundations.

If you think you may have termites, call a professional termite control specialist or . . . consider checking out Alaska!

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