

Best practices to prevent termites.

Termites can cause costly structural damage to homes and businesses, often before visible signs appear. Learn what to watch for and how to help reduce your property's risk.

Identification and behavior.

- Worker termites are the most common in a colony. They are usually ¼- to ⅜-inch long and creamy white to yellowish white.
- Swarming termites are often confused with flying ants, but termites have straight antennae and equal-length wings.
- Termites feed on cellulose, found in wood, paper, cardboard, insulation, and other common building or storage materials.

Common locations and trouble spots.

- Signs of damage may appear before termites are visible.
- With subterranean termites, mud tubes may appear on foundation walls or other surfaces.
- Swarmers may gather near lights in warm weather.
- Hollow-sounding wood can be a sign of hidden termite activity.



Best practices for prevention.

- Repair leaks, plumbing issues, and HVAC condensation quickly to help reduce moisture conditions that are favorable to termites.
- Pull mulch, soil and other cellulose materials back from foundations, siding and exterior walls.
- Avoid wood-to-soil contact around buildings, since soil moisture can compromise wood and create easier access for termites.
- Clear away unused wood near the property, including leftover lumber, fallen branches, tree stumps and exposed roots.
- Help deter termite problems by using treated wood in renovations, additions, or construction.

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Different roles of termites.

Termites live in colonies with different roles, including workers, soldiers and reproductive swarmers. Each plays a part in how termites feed, protect the colony and spread.

 **Workers**	• White • Soft-bodied • Wingless • Most abundant of the termite types	• Primary labor force of a colony • Build tunnels and clear galleries • Tend to eggs and young • Acquire food • Care for and repair the nest
 **Soldiers**	• Large head • Two large jaws • Wingless	• Protect the colony from pest invaders • Stand guard to allow swarmers to emerge • Use their jaws to wound invaders • Warn other termites of danger by banging their head against the side of galleries • Some soldier termites can emit a white, glue-like liquid that incapacitates intruders
 **Reproductive swarmers**	• Winged • Have two pairs of wings of equal size • Attracted to light	• Swarmers are sexually mature and emerge when a colony has grown large enough • Emerge from holes in ground, wood, or cracks in structures • Can swarm in large numbers • Will drop their wings after they land and pair off to attempt to start a new colony

Termite activity in the United States.

These are the primary species of concern and activity zones:



Eastern subterranean termite
Reticulitermes flavipes
Eastern, Midwestern, and Southern U.S.



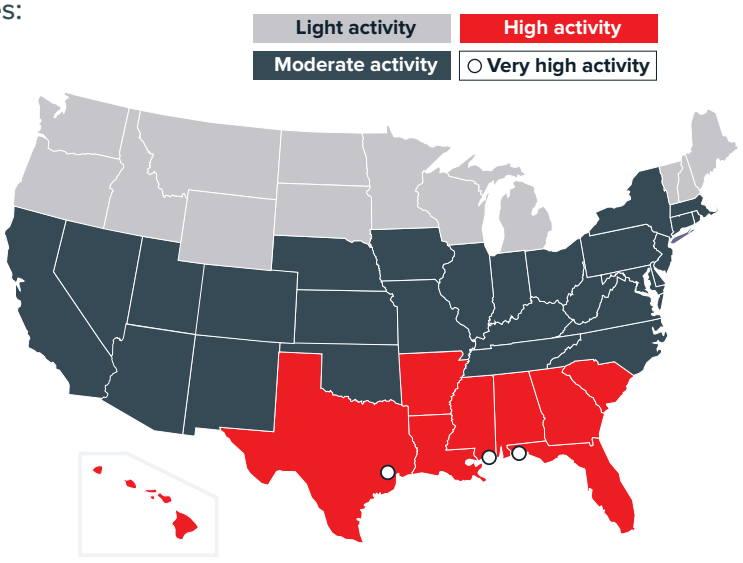
Western drywood termite
Incisitermes minor
Western U.S.



Tropical drywood termite
Cryptotermes spp.
Southeastern U.S. and Atlantic Coast



Formosan and Asian subterranean termites
Coptotermes spp.
Southeastern U.S., Texas and Hawaii



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