



HEALTHY HOME PROS

As one of your biggest financial investments, protecting your home should be a high priority. Termites cost USA homeowners billions of dollars each year. Everyone who owns a home owes it to themselves to be able to recognize a termite problem and know what to do about it.

What do termites look like?

While there are different types of termites occurring in the United States and throughout the world, the ones that cause damage in Kentucky are the subterranean termites. Social insects, they live in large underground colonies that are divided into castes; their exact appearance depends on which caste they are a part of and which job they perform for the colony.



Workers

The largest group of a termite colony, termite workers are responsible for finding food for the colony. They also take care of eggs, nymphs, and even groom other termites in the nest. They are cream colored, soft-bodied, and do not have wings. Should you discover termite infested wood in your home, it's likely going to be termite workers as they are the ones that leave the colony to forage.

Soldiers (pictured above)

As their name suggests, termite soldiers are tasked with defending the colony. They are similar in appearance to workers but have large strong jaws and elongated yellowish or brownish colored heads.

Reproductives

More often referred to as termite swarmers, it is the job of this caste to reproduce and to create new termite colonies. Reproductives will leave their colony in order to pair up and establish another colony nearby. Unlike other termites in their colony, these swarmers have two pairs of wings that are equal in length. After mating, they will lose their wings.

When do termite swarms occur in Kentucky?

A termite swarm is when the reproductive members of a mature termite colony leave or "swarm" from their colony in order to find a mate and start a new nest in a new location. In Kentucky, termite swarms usually occur after a rainstorm in March, April, and May; and while it is not as common termites in Kentucky may swarm during the fall months as well.

What does termite damage look like?

Termites work continuously, but slowly; finding termite damages means that termites have most likely been at work for weeks, months, or even years in your home or structure. Termite damage can appear similar to water (moisture not water) damage.

Exterior signs of termite damage include:

- Buckling of wood
- Swollen floors and ceilings
- Blistered paint
- Warped doorways

Inside of a piece of wood that has been damaged by termites it will look similar to a piece of honeycomb. The tunnels that they have created throughout the wood are rough and filled with dried mud and other debris.

Why do I have a termite problem?

Termites often enter homes and buildings while they are foraging for food. Workers will create mud tubes that allow them to travel from their colony to their food source undisturbed and without losing the moisture they need to survive. Structures that have been infested by termites often have mud tubes going along the foundation walls.

What are the signs of a termite infestation?

In addition to the termite damage and mud tubes mentioned above, signs of termite activity often include:

- Walls that sound hollow when tapped on
- Termite swarm inside your home or in your yard
- Discarded wings around windows and on the floor
- Mud or dirt on the walls