

BUILDING DIVISION

RESIDENTS IN THE TERMITE MANAGEMENT AREAS 2004 NEWSLETTER

PURPOSE

This Newsletter is produced for all property owners and occupants located within the City of Guelph's Termite Management Areas for the purpose of educating all the residents.

TERMITES

The termites in Ontario are called "eastern subterranean termites". They occur in large colonies that live underground and feed on available wood. They like moist conditions and will build "shelter tubes" to travel through when they have to cross an exposed area in order to maintain suitably humid and dark conditions for themselves. They are always digging exploratory tunnels and searching for new food sources.

Are you providing a haven for the enemy?

Stumps, dead trees and wood mulch are the most important resource for termites and therefore the greatest liability and should be removed. These items contain a large amount of wood with moist, sheltered conditions; ideal for termites to feed on and nest in.

Subterranean termites tend to favour softwoods (pines, spruces) and faster growing hardwoods (silver maple). Don't be misled by claims that termites don't feed on cedar; it might not be their first choice of food but they will feed upon it if that is the only available wood! Other building materials such as rigid polystyrene insulation boards, plaster, soft plastics, and underground cables, may be penetrated by foraging termites even though they do not feed on these materials.

Termites can enter a structure by tunnelling through wood, by building shelter tubes or through cracks in foundation walls.

Recognising live termites



Subterranean termites are small insects, approximately the size of a grain of rice. Worker and soldiers are creamy white in colour and soldiers have a darkened head capsule. Unlike maggots, termites have six legs and are more like ants, though without a constricted "waist".

Recognising termite damage

Evidence of new activity is the presence of live termites or new shelter tubes.

Further information can be found on this web site:

<http://www.utoronto.ca/forest/termite/termite.htm>

HOME AND YARD INSPECTION FOR EVIDENCE OF SUBTERRANEAN TERMITES

Inspection outside the structure

During the months of May through November, you should conduct an inspection starting in the yard. Any moveable wood in soil contact, such as firewood, lumber, cardboard boxes, barrels, planting boxes, etc., should be lifted and placed on a product to break soil contact (i.e. concrete blocks) and then examined. Any stumps in the yard should be examined using a pocket-knife to separate the bark from the wood. Also, you should carefully examine crevices in the bark of any large trees; compost bins; garages; crawl spaces under porches and decks; and exposed foundation walls.

Inspection inside the structure

Check the house starting in the basement using a flashlight, flat-edge screwdriver, pocket-knife and/or putty knife. If shelter tubes are found they should be carefully examined along their length. If the ends of shelter tubes are still wet this indicates they were recently built, and probably still have termite activity. If the shelter tubes show no cracks or damage this is also a good indication that they may still be active.

Cleaning up your act!

If you are within an area that has termites, you should look for ways to minimize the risk of getting termites established on your property.

Discarding infested wood, trees, stumps, wood chips and mulch

The method of removal of these items from your property are important in preventing termite spread and must be disposed of in a manner and at a designated place authorized by the City.

Contractors often use wood grindings for mulches on the property or take them away and use them elsewhere. This is not allowed.

City staff must be contacted 24 hours in advance for an inspection, prior to removal of wood and/or soils for properties located within the Termite Management Areas.

Municipal Contacts:

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