

Termites Take a Bite Out Of Budget

Glendora, CA : Drywood termite swarming season is about to begin and homeowners everywhere are preparing to open their wallets to protect their houses from structural damage.

"I have seen termite swarm eruptions in grocery store parking lots, the middle of a huge lawn and of course in nearly 18,000 homes," says Michael Allen, owner of Century Termite Control and author of the new book "Top Secrets of the Termite Industry; What Termite Companies Don't Want You to Know, That You Should Know."

The cost of tenting an American home to get rid of termites ranges from \$1,300 to over \$3,000 depending on the size of the home and the pest control company you choose. Allen says if homeowners know what signs to look for they shouldn't have to pay a penny to professionals.

"These chemical companies are multi-million dollar machines. They push their products to pest control companies which are supposed to push it to homeowners. The price keeps going up and there is just no reason for it. Termite companies aren't helping homeowners do anything they can't do by themselves."

On his website, www.centurytermite.com Allen has a list of the top 10 things you need to know about protecting your home from termites. Here are four of them:

1) Stop the Pheromones and You've Stopped the Termites. All termites line the tunnels they dig with pheromones, a scent that the bugs follow to get to and from your home. It's a way of communicating to the other termites to follow the scent and find food. "All you need to do is break that line of pheromones with store bought orange oil or a home made mixture and the termites won't know how to get to your house anymore. It will be as if they've lost the map and put up an electric fence."

2) The North Side Of Your Home Is Especially Vulnerable. Because the north side of your home gets the least amount of sun more moisture can accumulate in the wood (cellulose), softening it up for the termites to eat. Try to keep the north side as dry as possible by turning away sprinklers and trimming back trees and overgrown vegetation that are blocking the sun. Other than swarming these insects never leave the infected wood for water. They rely only on the trapped moisture in the cellulose for a complete life cycle.

3) Decorative Finishes Create Easy Access Points For Termites. Termites can enter where the brick or decorative finish material touches the ground. They crawl up between the gaps to get to the wood. This happens at the mudsill line. Get familiar with and measure your home's mudsill line.

4) Bait Stations Lead Termites to Your Home. Many unscrupulous pest control companies recommend putting bait stations in your home. But bait stations don't work. The smell from the bait attracts termites and encourages them to build underground roads and highways close to your home. While some may take the bait and die most of the insects will never get as far as the queen. There are millions of termites in an infected home. Killing even thousands a day will not make a dent. The remaining termites will just wind up feasting on what's close to the bait station -- your home. Any pest control company that wants to put a bait station in your house is not as interested in solving your termite problem as they are in forcing you to be a return customer.

"You can pay the pest control guys several thousand dollars," says Allen, "or you can put in a little elbow grease to get rid of the pests by yourself and keep those few thousand dollars in your own bank account!"

About the Author

Michael Allen has owned a termite company in Southern California for 19 years and currently owns Century Termite Control (www.centurytermite.com). He is the author of "Top Secrets of the Termite Industry." Allen began working in pest control straight after high school, attended the Advanced Institute of Pest Technology and is a licensed Master Graduate. Allen is originally from the suburbs of Chicago, but has now lived in Southern California for 21 years with his wife, Jeni, and his 15-year-old daughter.

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