

Everything You Should Know About Flying Termites

The warm weather means that there is something crawling around outside that could end up costing you money. Termites are insidious creatures that can create their nests both above and underground in order to gain access to your home and cause costly property damage.

Termites can remain hidden, doing their damage and work for years. However, there is one key warning sign that you should be a lookout for - flying termites (also known as termite swarmers). Winged termites swarming around your home is the harbinger of a much bigger problem.

Can termites fly?

Yes, they can, but not all of them. Termites don't fall into the flying insects category like wasps and mosquitoes do as only a small set of termites can fly, and only do so for a short period of time before losing their wings.

A termite colony is split into groups known as castes. Each caste has a particular role in the colony. The 3 castes of a termite colony are:

- Workers
- Soldiers
- Alates

Out of the termite castes, it is only the alates which can fly, being the only ones equipped with wings. These are the only termites which are sexually developed and are the future kings and queens of the next season's termite colonies. The flying patterns and habits of termites are known as swarms.

Termite swarms

Termite swarms mark the start of termite season. They happen once a year during a select period of time which differs between each species and each country, with seasonality playing a big factor.

Why do termites swarm?

Termites swarm to breed and start new colonies. A termite swarm marks the beginning of the termite life cycle.

During this period the sexually developed male and female winged termites leave their nests and take flight. This is often referred to as 'nuptial flight' and is also common and practiced by other insects such as ants.

After leaving their nest, the winged termites congregate in the air (swarms) and mate with termites of the same species from other colonies. After they have successfully mated the termites land, shed their wings and start the process of creating a new colony.

When do termites swarm?

Termites usually start to swarm in the early days of spring when the weather is warm and after a rain shower. Termites use environmental cues as a signal to start swarming and also synchronized with other termite colonies of the same species to ensure the possibility of inbreeding is reduced.

The time of day termite swarms occur depends on the species of termites. The majority of subterranean termites swarm during the day while Formosan termites (a breed of subterranean termites) swarm during the night time.

Winged termites are highly attracted to sources of light such as street lamps and can often be found swarming around these sources.

Termites aren't very good fliers and generally rely on the wind to help with air mileage. Because of this, termite swarms don't last long, and can be found close to the originating nests. However, if the wind is strong the future king and queen termites will often travel far before beginning the process of starting a new colony.

Termite wings and swarmers could be a sign of a much larger problem. To determine if you have ants or termites, it's best to contact the professionals at Stellar Termite Services for assistance.

What does a flying termite look like?

Flying termites differ in appearance from other flying insects and can be identified by examining them closely.

Flying termites appear in a range of colors depending on the species. Generally, flying termites appear in the same beige/tan color as the other termite castes. They have two antennae which are often straight with a slight curve and have two sets of wings which are equal in length and white and translucent in color with a veiny appearance.

Termites, in general, can be defined by their body shape. Both flying termites and wingless termites have a thick body made up of one part. Termites do not have a constriction between their thorax and abdomen like ants do.

Flying termites vs. flying ants

Ants and termites often get confused with one another to the untrained eye. There have been many instances where termites have been dismissed as white ants. In reality, there is no such thing as white ants, and they are, in fact, termites.

Flying termites and flying ants are no exceptions to the matter. Both insects are similar in shape, size and color.

How to get rid of flying termites

As flying termites make up only a small percentage, the best way to get rid of flying termites is to exterminate all of the termites in general.

Eradicating termites from your property will not only deal with flying termites but also reduce and limit the spread, as well as the potential for future termite colonies in your area.

Termite removal

To remove termites from your home or business it is highly recommended you enlist the help of termite control specialists. Termites are both tricky to find and to eradicate. More often than not DIY attempts result in a termite infestation returning to a property.

Enlisting the help of a termite exterminator will help ensure a termite problem, along with flying termites, is dealt with successfully.

Termite treatment options

There are a handful of termite treatment options available to help eradicate termites from your home, they are:

- Termite local treatments
- Termite fumigation
- Termite full treatment spraying

Worried about flying termites and need an inspection? Get in contact with Stellar Termite Services today to find out how to protect your home from termite damage.