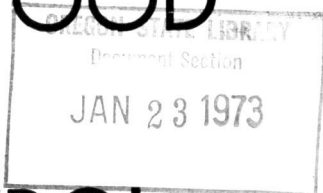


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# MPWOOD MITE CONTROL



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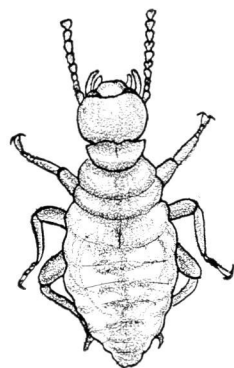


# DAMPWOOD TERMITE CONTROL

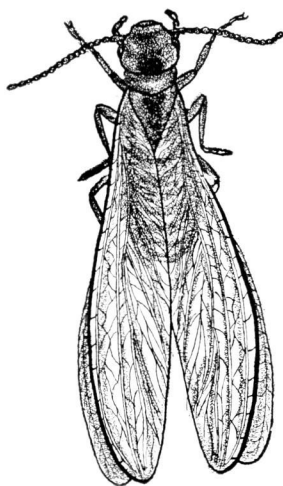
## Description

Dampwood termites, *Zootermopsis angusticollis* (Hagen), are found in western Oregon. They often occur in stumps, fallen trees, and old logs, and they may invade houses and other buildings. Dampwood termites usually gain a foothold where timbers are in direct contact with the soil, but may occur where wood stays wet from poor drainage or faulty plumbing. Their presence frequently indicates that a more serious structural fault exists due to moisture and rot.

Termites are insects having simple or gradual metamorphosis. That is, the eggs hatch into nymphs, similar to adult termites except for size. The nymphs are whitish or cream-colored. The work of the dampwood termite colony is conducted by nymphs. This species of termite does not have a worker caste.



Dampwood termite nymph



Winged dampwood termite

The soldier of the termite colony can be recognized easily by its large brown head, which is armed with a pair of long, dark-colored mandibles. Protection of the colony from attack by other insects is a function of the soldiers.

The winger, reproductive caste includes both males and females. These are frequently seen in the late summer and early fall evenings, particularly after the early rains, when they are often attracted to lights. The winged forms are brownish in color and nearly one inch long. Both pairs of wings are of equal length and about twice the length of the body.

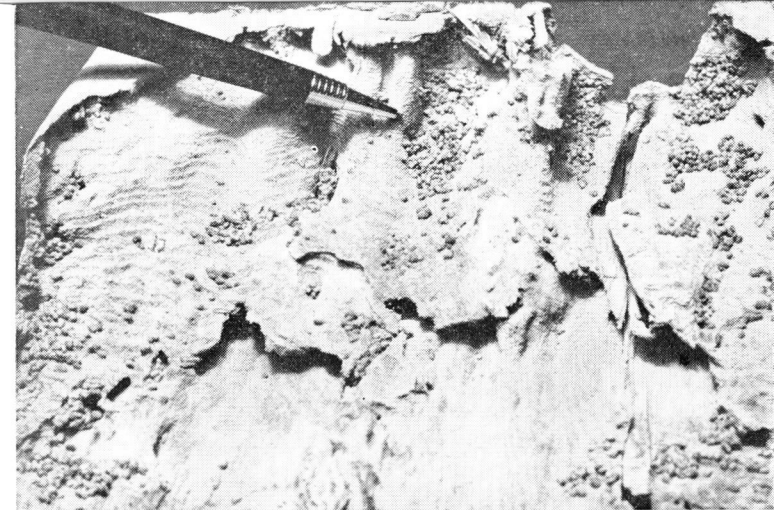
## Be Sure of Identification

Winged ants are sometimes confused with termites, but can be readily distinguished from them because the two pairs of wings of ants are of unequal length. Ants also have the typical "wasp-like" waist, which termites do not.

Carpenter ants are large black ants that commonly mine in logs, stumps, and hollow trees. They become pests when they move indoors. Sometimes the damage they do is confused with that of termites. Carpenter ants bore in wood to provide living quarters, but they do not feed on it. They expel their borings as sawdust from their mines.

In contrast, termites consume the wood in which they live, hence no "sawdust" marks their presence. If carpenter ants are a problem, the homeowner will find Oregon State University Extension Circular 627, *Carpenter Ant Control*, a useful publication.

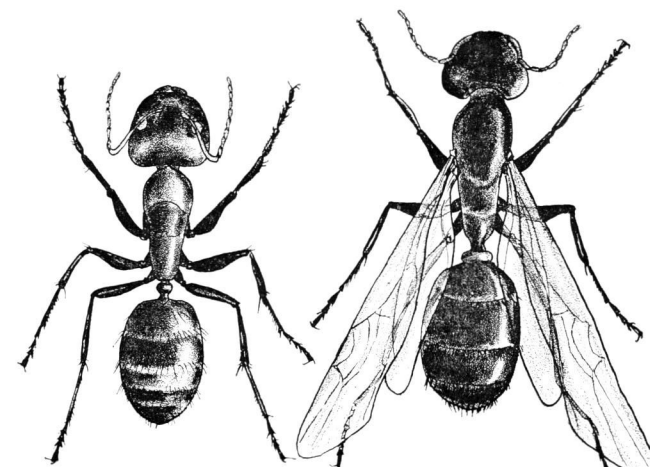
The subterranean termite occurs in the Willamette Valley and throughout eastern Oregon, but its habits are different from those of the dampwood termite. The winged forms of this species are much smaller than the dampwood termite and are black in color. U. S. Department of Agriculture publications dealing with the control of this species of termite can be obtained from county Extension offices or by writing directly to Oregon State University.



2" x 6" board badly damaged by dampwood termites. Note typical pellet-like excrement.

Dampwood termites are associated with wood decay, and are most damaging where timbers are moist and poorly ventilated. Their nests are in the wood itself and not in the soil. Damage is usually to buildings that have been standing for a number of years.

The presence of an occasional winged termite about the home during the migratory period should not necessarily cause alarm unless there is evidence of termites having emerged from the building. Large numbers of winged termites appearing around the outside edges of the home may indicate the presence of a colony in siding or understructure. Winged termites may emerge through flooring, indicating an active colony in supporting timbers.



Carpenter ant worker

Winger carpenter ant

## Control Methods

Dampwood termite control is primarily a problem of moisture control. Improve ventilation under the building and correct other conditions responsible for the attack. If moisture conditions cannot be corrected, lumber pressure treated in accordance with the specifications of the American Wood Preserver's Association should be used for replacing badly damaged timbers. Pressure-treated lumber gives the greatest protection and can be ordered through most dealers. If treated wood is not available, application of wood preservatives by flooding or soaking will give some protection. Cuts made in pressure-treated wood should be flooded with wood preservative.

Remove scraps of lumber from the crawl space beneath the house. Wood used in construction of forms for concrete piers or foundations also should be removed. Pieces of wood such as this may be the focal point from which termites may later progress to other parts of the building.

Occasionally insecticides can be used to advantage to help destroy existing colonies of dampwood termites which have been uncovered under old wood, paper, in old forms, etc. Following removal and disposal of such objects, chlordane, lindane, or dieldrin, applied to the area beneath infested objects will kill termites coming in contact with the insecticide.

## Suggestions for Home Owners

If you suspect the presence of dampwood termites, first of all, don't become alarmed. Get the facts before you contract to have an expensive job done. Have the insects and their damage identified. You can take them to your county agricultural Extension agent who may send them to the Department of Entomology, Oregon State University.

Some termite situations can be corrected by the homeowner at little cost. Others may require extensive replacement of wood or structural changes. If your job is one requiring professional help, deal with an established, reputable contractor or pest control operator in your community.

## Pesticides Can Be Used Safely

The pesticides suggested in this leaflet can be used safely if reasonable precautions are observed.

Follow the manufacturer's precautions on the pesticide label. These are not intended to frighten the user, but to impress upon him the need for careful use of pesticides.

- Store pesticides in a safe place, out of reach of children.
- Destroy empty containers or those without labels.
- Do not keep pesticides in beverage bottles or other containers which previously have been used for food or drink.
- When mixing and using pesticides, avoid getting them on your skin. Wash your hands after spraying.
- Do not use household sprays near an open flame.
- If household sprays get on asphalt tile floors, wipe up immediately.



*This circular was prepared by R. L. Goulding, associate professor of entomology, and R. W. Every, Extension entomology specialist, Oregon State University.*

Cooperative Extension work in Agriculture and Home Economics, Lee Kolmer, director, Oregon State University and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Printed and distributed in furtherance of Acts of Congress of May 8 and June 30, 1914.