



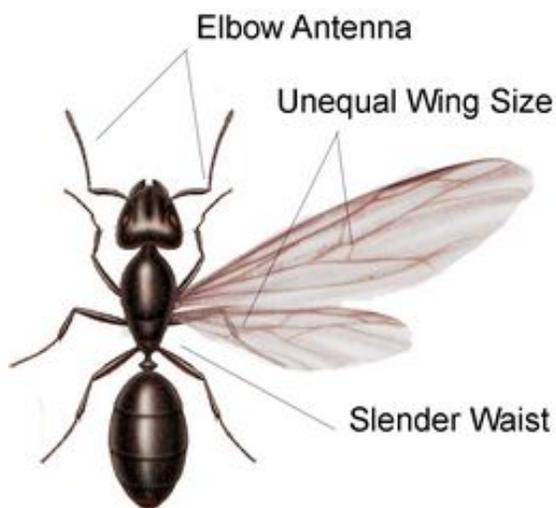
TEXAS A&M FOREST SERVICE

Tree Health Issues:

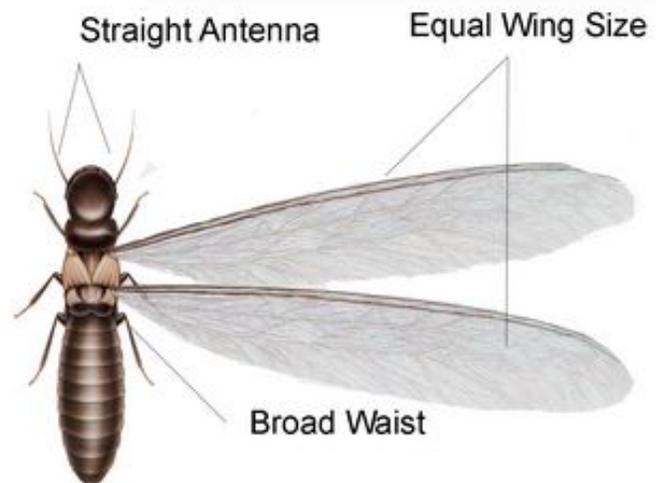
Termites

Termites are insects that feed on dead wood in trees and structures made of wood. They are in the taxonomic infraorder *Isoptera*, which is closely related to the cockroach. Contrary to common belief, they are not related to ants which have a different antenna, bodies, and wings. If you have termites in your tree, it means that they are feeding on the dead wood in that tree. Termites in your home, or other structures, are feeding on the wood and cellulose components.

Termites are often confused with carpenter ants. If you have either one of these insects in your tree, it is likely that you have dead wood in your tree. This could be natural decay of the heart wood in a mature tree or caused prematurely by diseases or other insects. Termites feed on cellulose which is found in wood, paper, and plant material. If you see a lot of termite activity on your tree, then you most certainly have dead wood contributing to your termite problem. Many termites live within the dead wood, but some termites, particularly those found in Africa, build large termite mounds (see photo on page 2).



Carpenter Ant



Termite

What species are affected?

All trees can be affected by termites since they all contain cellulose. Termites can feed on the wood in your house, plant material outside, cellulose in the soil, and of course trees. Termites' hard mandibles can chew through tough material like plastics and drywall.



How can Termites be treated?

Hiring an ISA Certified Arborist who is also certified to apply insecticides for termites is recommended. The arborist can also perform a risk assessment of your tree to determine how much of your tree is actually dead. Pruning away infected dead wood is a good way to begin to remove the food source for termites. Make sure that all of the wood is destroyed; this can most easily be done by burning it.

Termite traps can be purchased and installed around the tree, but make sure to follow all of the safety recommendations.

Always monitor your tree after any treatment to see if termite activity returns. Never store old wood piles near healthy trees, and be sure to remove any old rotting stumps