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Protecting Your Home Against Termites

Spring's arrival brings a smile to most, but warmer weather can also bring homeowner concerns in the form of unwanted guests. With the start of the spring housing market, we reached out to our Specialty Services partner, Orkin Canada, to help educate clients about termites and why it is necessary to be aware of these damaging insects.

One of the major things termites require to thrive is warm temperatures. As the temperature rises, it is important to recognize the conditions conducive to termite infestation and how you can protect your property. Dan Dawson, National Marketing Manager at Orkin Canada explains the magnitude of the threat posed by termites: "Subterranean termites typically cause the most structural damage and are most prevalent in the southern coastal areas, the dry climate of the Okanagan areas of British Columbia, southern Ontario, southern Quebec, and the Maritime provinces."

Enjoy our interview with Dan below to learn more about termites and how to protect your home.

Carson Dunlop (CD): What are the most common neighborhoods for termites in the Greater Toronto Area?

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Dan Dawson (DD): "Termites can be found throughout the GTA. Though each species of termite thrives in different climates and eats different types of food, all termites require four things to survive:

1. Food
2. Moisture
3. Shelter
4. Optimal Temperatures

These conditions can be found in all buildings, regardless of their construction type. However, older homes typically face increased termite threats as wood rot is more common in them."



CD: What simple steps can homeowners take to prevent termite infestation?

DD: "Known as the 'silent destroyer', termites can be very difficult to detect. Like other pests, the best way to prevent a termite infestation is to reduce access to food and water sources. For termites, this means eliminating moisture and removing wood sources, including wood piles and mulch close to the home. Rotted wood is by far the most common way for termites to gain entry into the home. The soft, pulpy material gives termites easy access to both food and moisture. Tips to keep in mind include:

- Remove all wood debris in contact with the soil, and store any firewood away from the house and off the ground
- Fix any leaks in pipes and drains. Damp wood creates ideal conditions for a healthy, large and robust termite colony
- Make sure the soil around the structure is sloped away from the home and drainage from the roof doesn't collect near the property
- Dense vegetation should never grow against siding or the foundation of a home
- High humidity in the crawl space can lead to termite problems. Insulate or put down a moisture barrier to help reduce humidity and condensation
- Replace mulch that is close to the home with

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gravel. If mulch is used around the home, make certain to keep the mulch layer as shallow as possible. Thick mulch beds create soil moisture conditions that encourage termite activity

It is highly recommended to schedule an annual inspection with a licensed pest control provider to ensure that termites don't invade your home."

CD: What are some signs that you might have termites in your home?

DD: "Termites are very hard to detect compared to other common pests. With the exception of annual swarms, when reproductive termites move to start to new colonies, they live entirely out of sight, chewing their way silently through the home's infrastructure. However, there are some signs of termite presence that can be found in and around the home, including:

- Hollow-sounding wood: If wood sounds hollow when tapped, it may be because termites are eating the wood from the inside out.
- "Swarms" (a group of winged insects) or discarded wings: Reproductive termites called swarmers take flight to create new colonies. Subterranean termites typically swarm in the spring. A swarm of insects or groups of discarded wings is typically a sign of termite presence.
- Mud tubes on walls: Termites construct mud tubes to travel between their home in the soil and the wood that they feed on. These tubes also provide moisture while they search for food.
- Frass: Termites produce wood-colored droppings as they eat their way through wood rot. This is another sign of their presence."



CD: What is the average cost and process for a

termite extermination?

DD: "Termites can cause the most structural damage of any insect and, based on the extent of damage, remediation costs can run well into the thousands of dollars. Once termites find their way into a structure, they can be very difficult to control, so preventative steps and measures are recommended. Treatment methods vary based on the species of termite, size of infestation, and other factors. The required chemicals for termite treatment are not for sale to the public and must be used under strictly controlled conditions. Your licensed pest management professional can set up the best corrective steps if you have a termite infestation."

As a professional Home Inspection consulting company, our aim is to help homeowners stay safe, warm and dry. We believe that knowledge is the best tool when it comes to protecting one of the biggest investments of your life - your home. Our recently launched Specialty Services program helps us to provide our clients and real estate partners with fast, easy and cost-effective access to qualified specialists, like Orkin Canada, all with a single call. To learn more about the Carson Dunlop Specialty Services program, please [click here](#), or call [800.268.7070](tel:800.268.7070) to schedule a termite inspection.



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