Formosan Termite Tactics: 10 Ways to Win
Tactics:

• 1. Know your enemy
• 2. Know what your enemy can do
• 3. Team up with Pest Control
• 4. Know your contract coverage
• 5. Reduce moisture
• 6. Keep plant material away
• 7. No wood/siding to soil contact
• 8. Repair cracks
• 9. Don’t disturb your treatment
• 10. Take action now!
Tactic #1:
Know your enemy!
The Formosan Termite
(*Coptotermes formosanus*)

- Native to China, “House termite”
- Invaded during WWII to our Southern ports on wood packing material
Formosan termite distribution
Formosan termite colonies

- Contain millions of individuals

- Caste systems:
  - Worker (Damager)
  - Soldier (Defender)
  - King and Queen (Reproductives)
    - Mature queens can lay up to 3,000 eggs/day
Formosans are Subterranean termites

- Live and invade from the underground
- Hidden habits
- Can cover up to 1 acre

Jane Medley, University of Florida
Formosans Need Moisture!

- Need **MOISTURE** to survive and thrive
Formosan Soldiers

- Up to 20% of the colony
  - Native termite up to 2%
- Very aggressive
- Oval head with curved mandibles
  - Secrete a white defensive chemical
Swarms

- Winged termites swarm April to July
  - Mother’s Day is the typical start

- At dusk on warm (80°F), calm, humid nights
  - Especially after rain

- Attracted to lights
  - Turn lights off or use a yellow bug light
Swarms
Trapping
ID: Termite or Ant?
ID: Termite or Ant?

Antennae straight or curved with segments beadlike

Middle part of body broad

Wings similar in size and shape

Termite

Antennae bent or "elbowed"

Middle part of body narrow

wings unlike in size and shape

Ant

http://www.inspectny.com/images/ft_termite_vs_Ant.jpg
Tactic #2: Know what your enemy is capable of
Formosan termite damage

- Over $1 Billion a year in the US
- Will eat anything wood based
- Create mud tubes and carton nests
- Prefer height and main structural

Remember: Colonies in the Millions that need and thrive on MOISTURE
Formosan termite damage

Carton Nest

Mud tubes
Formosan termite damage
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Tactic #3: Team up with a licensed pest control company
Formosan termite protection

• Prevention is the BEST protection!
• New Construction:
  • Chemical barrier treatment
  • Borate wood treatment
  • Bait system
New Construction Treatment

- Chemical Pre-treatment
  - Before concrete slab poured
  - Horizontal surface barrier
  - Plumbing penetrations

- Chemical Post-treatment
  - Trenching/drilling
  - Exterior vertical barrier
  - After house/landscape complete
Wood treatment

- Applied after ALL wood framing is complete, before insulation
- Borate salts
- Nontoxic to humans/animals
- Permanent barrier
Bait systems

- New or existing construction
- Installed around perimeter of home after completion
- Requires an ACTIVE baiting termite contract!
Formosan termite protection

- Existing Construction:
  - Trenching/drilling chemical treatment
  - Foam treatment in walls/voids
  - Bait system
FL Law and Termites

• Chapter 482: Pest Control
• Chapter 5E-14: Pest Control Regulations
• Licensing and enforcement by:
  • Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (FDACS)
  • Division of Agricultural Environmental Services
Tactic #4: Know your termite contract coverage
WDO Termite Contracts

- WDO=Wood Destroying Organism
- Formosan termites specifically
- Retreat, retreat/repair, spot treatment
- Structures covered, duration
- Hardwood flooring
- Aerial infestations
WDO Termite Contracts

• Costs of repair or demolition
• Contract transferrable
• Spray foam insulation
• Existing conducive conditions:
  • Water leaks, wood to ground contact, foundation cracks, vegetation or firewood by foundation
• Have an attorney review
Tactic #5: Reduce moisture
Reduce Moisture

- Proper grading of home so water flows away
- Effective gutter and drainage systems
  - Extend 1 ft from home
Reduce Moisture

• Keep gutters clean and maintained
Reduce Moisture

- No sprinklers “watering” the home, direct spray away
Reduce Moisture

- Repair all leaks
  - Especially check around windows
  - Blown in/foam insulation can retain moisture
Reduce Moisture

- Adequate ventilation in crawl space
Tactic #6: 
Keep plant material away
Keep plant material away

- Keep landscaping 6 inches to 1 ft from foundation
Keep plant material away

- Keep woodpiles as far away as possible
Keep plant material away

• Remove tree stumps/roots
Keep plant material away

- Trim tree limbs
Keep plant material away
Keep Plant Material Away
Tactic #7: No wood or siding to ground contact
No wood/stucco to ground contact

- Keep stucco/exposed wood 6” from soil
- Includes decks!
No wood/stucco to ground contact

- Stucco and exposed wood 6” from soil
Tactic #8: Repair cracks
Repair cracks

- Repair cracks and holes in foundation and all around exterior
  - $\frac{1}{64}$th of an inch for termite to invade
Repair cracks

- Keep stucco repaired and sealed tight
Tactic #9: Don’t disturb your termite treatment
Don’t disturb treatment

• Don’t remove treated soil directly around the foundation
Don’t disturb treatment

- For a borate treated home, make sure if new wood is added, it is ALL borate treated
Tactic #10: Take action now!
Take action now!
Take action now!
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Pest Control Complaints:

FDACS-AES: Agricultural Environmental Services

- Form: FDACS 13621
- Phone #: (850) 617-7996
- File online: http://www.freshfromflorida.com/Divisions-Offices/Agricultural-Environmental-Services/Consumer-Resources
For more info:

• FL Dept. of Ag Formosan Termite:
  • www.freshfromflorida.com Search: Formosan

• FL Dept. of Ag Termite Help:
  • www.floridatermitehelp.org

• University of Florida Featured Creatures:
  • http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/termites/formosan_termite.htm

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