

From: owner-pabiodiv@webmail.upb.pitt.edu On Behalf Of Len Hess
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To: PABIODIV
Subject: PABIODIV: Spreading Termites

Posted to the website from Louisiana State University (<http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/termites/>).
Experts Warn Against Spreading Termites After Storms, News Release Distributed 10/12/05

A scourge of New Orleans and South Louisiana could find its way to other parts of the state and country if people move wood that's infested with Formosan subterranean termites. Experts know the termite was introduced into Ouachita Parish by being transported in infested railroad ties used for landscaping, and they suspect the pest has been introduced into countless homes through re-used architectural wood.

Because of the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Rita in across South Louisiana, LSU AgCenter entomologists are warning homeowners not to remove building materials from damaged homes and install them in new structures unless they are absolutely sure no termites are in them.

The best way to gain this assurance is through fumigation or heat treating, according to Dr. Dennis Ring, an entomologist with the LSU AgCenter. To try to prevent moving termites to other areas, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry on Oct. 3 imposed a quarantine for the Formosan subterranean termite in Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington parishes.

Ring said the quarantine has three objectives - to prevent spreading the Formosan subterranean termite to locations not currently infested, to prevent infesting existing structures that are not currently infested and to prevent infesting new and reconstructed structures. "The Formosan subterranean termite may be spread in any infested cellulose - wood, paper or other products," Ring said. He listed railroad ties, utility poles, used structural wood, lumber, pallets, landscape timbers and similar items.

The entomologist pointed out the quarantine specifies that all architectural components - including beams, doors and salvaged wood - cannot be sold or placed in any structure in any parish until they are fumigated or treated for Formosan subterranean termites.

"Do not move cellulose from infested areas unless you are sure the material is not infested," Ring emphasized. "Everyone has a responsibility to prevent the spread of the termite." Experts also warn about re-using wood from damaged buildings - unless you can be absolutely sure the wood is termite free. "To determine if material is infested, make a thorough inspection, looking for termites, damaged wood, soil, mud tubes and carton nests," Ring said.

Ring said because Formosan subterranean termites build above-ground nests, wood from buildings, trees and shrubs that have been standing in floodwaters may still be infested. In addition, lumber and other woody debris taken from damaged buildings can become termite-infested if left on the ground too long. The entomologist said burying wood is not a good idea because that would supply food for termites, which will then seek new food sources when the buried wood is gone.

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