



LET'S FIGHT SMARTER AGAINST TERMITES: CHECK YOUR HOMES FOR AST!

Asian Subterranean Termite (AST) is an intelligent insect pest which tunnels its way through the soil to its food source. This hardy pest lives approximately 6-18 feet underground making it almost impossible to detect unless their damage signs become apparent on buildings and other types of wooden structures or vegetation.

AST are found in parts of Lautoka and Labasa districts, however, areas around these two districts must take extreme precaution to ensure AST does not spread to other parts of Fiji. Be cautious when travelling to Lautoka and Labasa - when leaving, check your personal belongings and vehicles (tyres, storage trunks and hard to see places) to make absolutely sure you are not giving AST a free ride to your home!



AST are voracious feeders and consume wood, cardboard and paper and sometimes even fabric. They feed on all sorts of cellulose-containing materials and drill holes in such materials as rubber, plastic and styrofoam in their search for food. They also attack living trees by consuming the heartwood which weakens the trees and can bring them down in a storm.

AST enter buildings through cracks, expansion joints and utility conduits. They sometimes form foraging tubes along the surface of the ground and the outside surfaces of structures. They eat structural timbers from the inside out, leaving a thin film of surface wood which may display a blistered appearance.



BAF Officer conducting road-blocks and inspection of vehicles carrying timber to make sure they are AST-free.

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) through its AST Project Teams in Lautoka and Labasa are working strenuously to contain and control the spread of this dreaded pest, however, we need your support! Please do not move AST host materials (all types of wood/timber and wooden products, pot plants and root crops) out of Lautoka and Labasa without prior inspection and approval from BAF! Also, check your home for AST infestation by following the guidelines provided below.

How to check your homes for termites?

Inspect the following carefully:

- Any wooden parts of the basement and crawl space (if present).
- All sills, sub floors, joists, support posts, supporting piers, basement window frames and wood under porches. Pay close attention to places where concrete: steps, porches, or slabs join the wooden structure.
- All the hollow blocks, cracks in cement or brick construction and expansion joints.
- Any scrap wood on the exterior, old tree stumps, fence posts and exterior frames of basement windows.



Termite officers remove damaged flooring to treat for AST infestation



AST damage on the inside of walls at an office building in Lautoka

BAF conducts treatment of infested sites (houses, dwellings, trees and many more) which are reported through the complaints registered at our Lautoka and Labasa Office. Once the initial treatments have been administered, BAF officers conduct monitoring periodically to simply ensure that all AST infestation and risks have been eliminated from the concerned site. If you suspect AST infestation in your home, do not wait, inform BAF immediately!

Adhere to the following advice:

- Inspect your homes for mud tracks, bloated walls and unaccounted timber destruction - if you believe there is AST damage - contact BAF right away!
- Expose the interior of your homes to adequate sunlight and wind which may discourage any termite infestation from building inside the house.
- Leave the surrounding of the house clean and dry.
- Avoid having gardens or flower beds too close to the house as they retain moisture which aids termite infestation.
- Occasionally change the internal arrangements of the house to disturb any possibility of termite infestation and for early detection of termites.
- Do not leave firewood or timbers around the house in direct contact with the soil; instead properly stack them on blocks or other structures.



One termite colony can affect several homes. Encourage your neighbours to follow BAF advice also. Picture credit: Leyton Pest Control



Picture credit: World of Termites

For Further Information, Please Contact:

Biosecurity Authority of Fiji on 3312512 or Short Codes: General Enquiries - 5994, Termites - 5996 Lautoka/ 5993 Labasa, Giant Invasive Iguana (GII) - 5995, Animal Disease Surveillance - 5997 or email info@baf.com.fj, visit BAF website www.baf.com.fj