



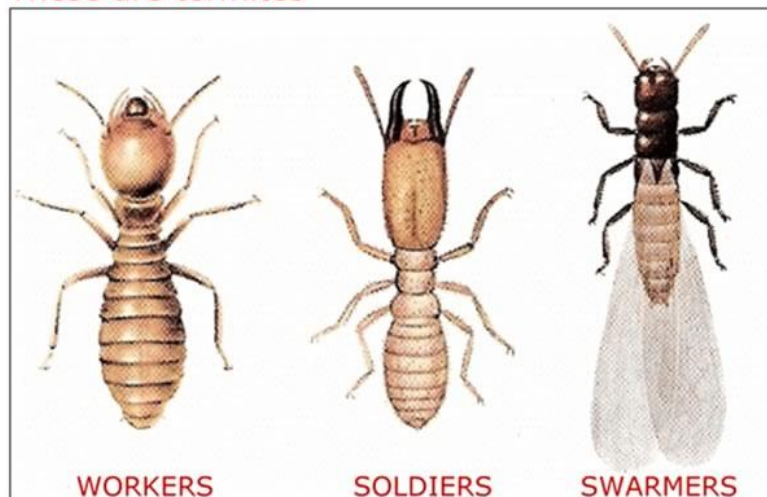
PROTECT YOUR PROPERTIES FROM FLYING TERMITES

The Biosecurity Authority of Fiji (BAF) under its mandate and national obligation has assumed the responsibility for the containment and control of Asian Subterranean Termites (AST). Subsequently, BAF has put in place measures to prevent the spread of AST from the Lautoka and Labasa districts to other parts of Fiji. Lautoka and Labasa districts are currently known as AST hot spots.

BAF would like to notify all Fijians residing in and around the two infested districts that the termite swarming season (August to October) is about to begin. You may observe significantly more than usual termites during this period. The swarming period occurs every year and therefore the public in AST zones are requested to remain calm and take heed of the information and advises provided in this article.

Termite swarms mark the start of the termite season. A termite colony is divided into groups known as castes. Each caste has a particular role in the colony. The three castes of a termite colony are "workers", "soldiers" and "alates". Of the three, it is only the alates which possess wings and can fly. These are the only termites which are sexually developed and may become future kings and queens of the next season's termite colonies. The flying patterns and habits of termites are known as "swarms".

These are termites



Source: Centraltermite.net

Why do termites swarm?

Termites swarm to breed and start new colonies. A termite swarm marks the beginning of the termite life cycle. During this period the sexually developed male and female winged termites leave their nests and take flight. This is often referred to as "nuptial flight". After leaving their nest, the winged termites congregate in the air (swarms) and mate with termites of the same species from other colonies. After they have successfully mated, the termites land then shed their wings and start the process of creating a new colony.

When do termites swarm?

AST in Fiji normally swarm during mid-August to October. Winged termites are highly attracted to sources of light such as street lamps and can often be found swarming around these sources. Termites aren't very good fliers and generally rely on the wind to help with air mileage. Because of this, termite swarms don't last long, and can be found close to the originating nests. However, if the wind is strong, the future king and queen termites will often travel far before beginning the process of starting a new colony.

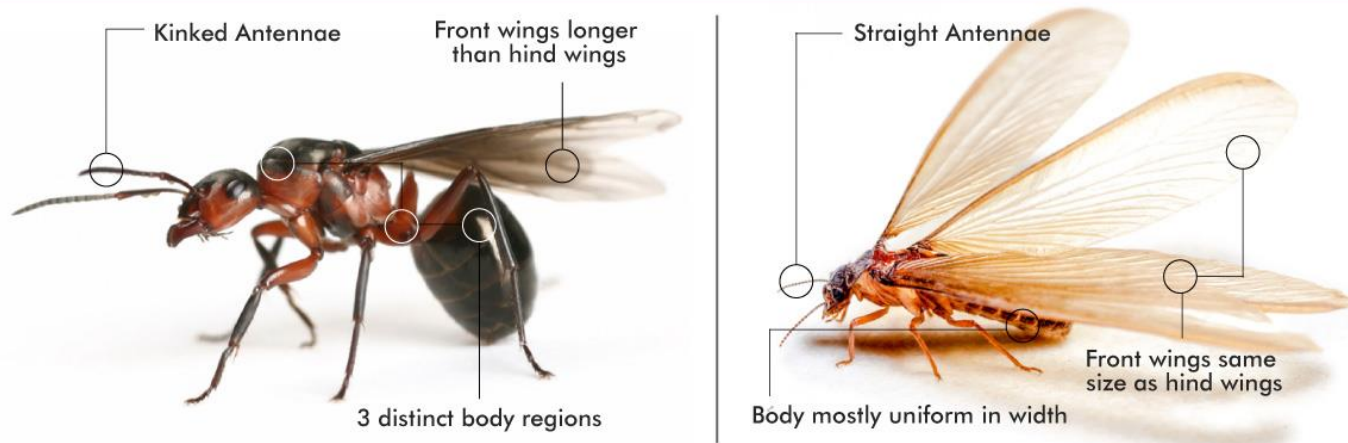
What does a flying termite look like?

Flying termites differ in appearance from other flying insects and can be identified by close examination of body features. They have two antennae which are often straight with a slight curve and have two sets of wings which are equal in length and white and translucent in color with vein like structures. Termites, in general, can be defined by their body shape. Both flying termites and wingless termites have a thick body made up of one part. Termites do not have a constriction between their thorax and abdomen like ants do.

What is the difference between a Flying Termite and a Flying Ant?

Flying ants and termites often get confused with one another to the untrained eye. There have been many instances where termites have been dismissed as white ants. In reality, there is no such pest as white ants, and they are, in fact, termites. Flying members of these two insects appear similar in shape, size and color.

SPOTTING THE DIFFERENCE



FLYING ANT VS TERMITE SWARMER

Source: Truly Nolen

Other essential differences:

1. Flying ant wings have few well defined veins. Termite swarmers have more and finer veins in wings which creates a lace like appearance
2. Flying ants have pinched waists while termite swarmers have broad waists
3. Flying ants have long legs while termite swarmers have short legs

What should you do if you see a termite swarm?

Swarmers or flying termites are often seen near garage doors, other house doors or window frames, columns supporting porches, dirt-filled porches and expansion joints. When termites swarm indoors, they will come out of walls or wooden construction (baseboards, door frames, posts, etc.) through small holes. These are called "exit holes" and were created by worker termites.

A termite swarm will last about 30-40 minutes and the swarming termites will fly toward a light source, typically collecting around windows and sliding glass doors. If these termites cannot find soil, they will die in a few hours from dehydration. Often, homeowners come home from work to find many dead swarmers (or sometimes just their wings) on window sills, counter tops, around furniture, etc. This is the aftermath of a termite swarm.

Most of the time, a termite swarm is the only time homeowners actually see termites or find out they have termites before damage is discovered. Mature termite colonies will produce winged reproductive termites that will fly off from the colony in great numbers. This is nature's way of termites spreading and establishing new colonies. Termite swarms can occur both indoors and outside.

Some tips to handle a termite swarm:

DO NOT:

1. Panic
2. Spray the swarmers with any type of insecticide
3. Try to seal exit holes – as swarmers must escape, sealing the holes with tape will only cause them to make new holes to escape from

INSTEAD:

It is recommended to all the house owners living in the AST infested areas of Lautoka and Labasa to turn off all the lights in and around their house at dusk (if required to, use minimal lights). Termite swarmers are attracted to light during their flight and if lights are kept on than unfortunately there new home just might be your home!

The public is requested to close all windows and doors from 6.30pm to 8pm and light small fires in a controlled area outside their homes so that the termites can get attracted to it and burn (to death) themselves in the fire. While lights are off, you can light small and supervised fires outside and away from the house which will attract the swarmers and will see their demise. This is an effective way of killing flying termites which will help to reduce their population and emerging colonies. People should also switch off all lights outside their homes and use minimal lightings inside. This is a proactive measure recommended to prevent termite infestation.

If you see detached wings in or out of your house next morning, it is an indication that AST may be possibly establishing their nest close to your house. People should take precautionary measures to stop the swarm from entering and forming new colonies in their homes. Once termites enter homes, they are likely to shed their wings and establish new colonies which would be very destructive for home owners.

The public should act responsibly during this period and assist the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji - Termites Operations Unit to contain and control the spread of AST. Any termite activity noted by the residents must be reported to BAF for further actioning.

How to check for infestation?

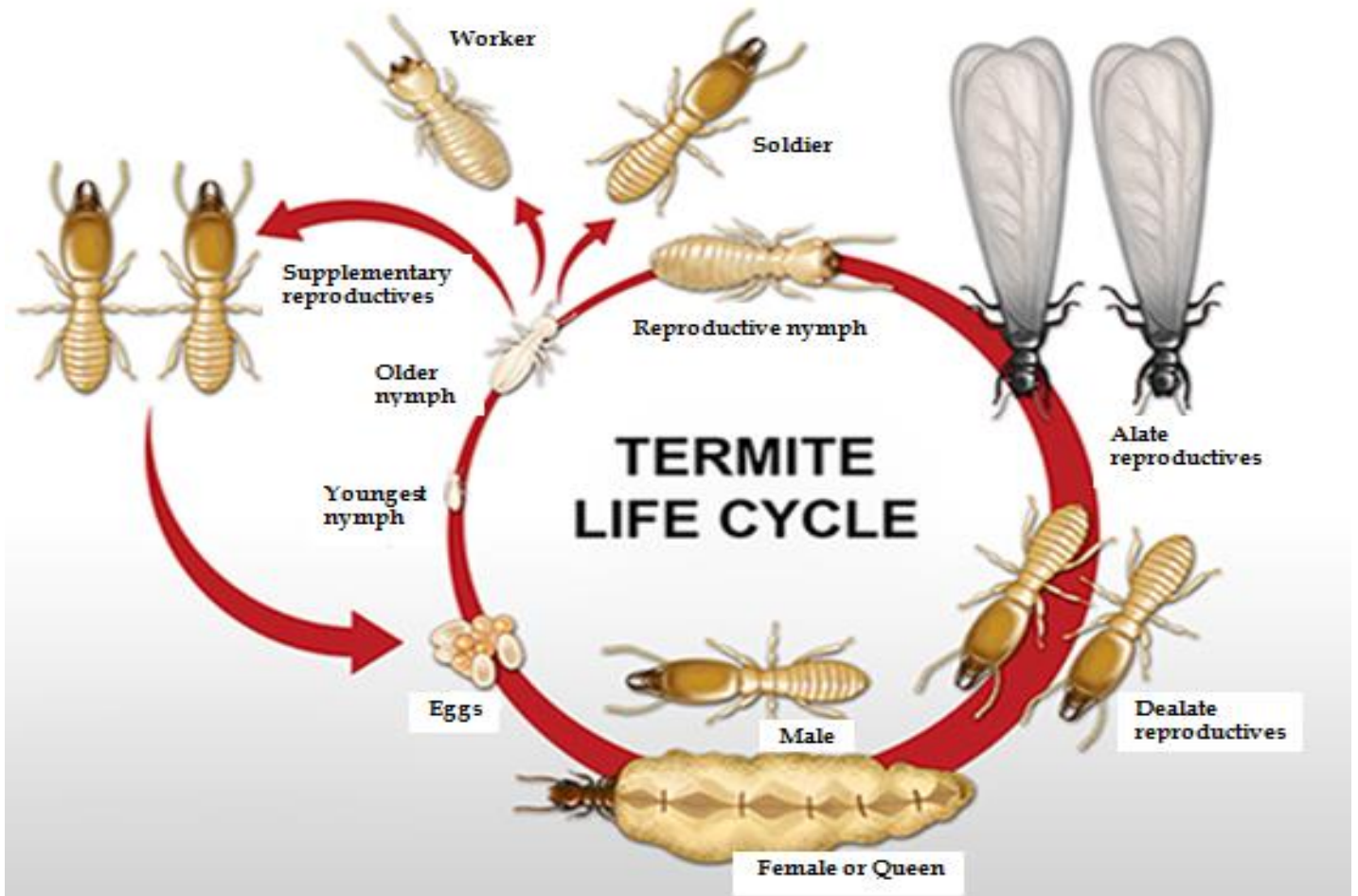
Because termite swarms indicate that a current colony is flourishing nearby, it is important to inspect your home and property if you see a swarm close to your house. If you think you may have termite activity, be sure to visit or inform BAF's Termite Control Unit at BAF Lautoka and Labasa Office or any other Biosecurity Authority of Fiji Office for residents outside Lautoka and Labasa to lodge your complaint following which BAF officials will schedule an inspection. Currently, BAF inspection and treatment for AST infestation is free of charge.



Swarming termites



Termite swarms attracted to light



Source: Man vs Pest

For Further Information, Please Contact:

Biosecurity Authority of Fiji on 3312512 or Short Codes:

General Enquiries - 5994, Termites - 5996,

Giant Invasive Iguana (GII) - 5995, Animal Disease Surveillance - 5997

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