



TERMITE

IDENTIFICATION CHART

KC METRO

05/10

2026 EDITION

KC is high-risk termite country. Know what a swarm looks like and what a mud tube means.

THE KANSAS CITY TERMITE

Eastern subterranean

The whole metro is high-risk. Colonies live in soil and reach homes through tubes, cracks and wet wood.

SWARM SEASON

March - May

Swarms fly on warm, humid mornings after rain – often the first sign a homeowner sees.

J F M A M J J A S O N D

DAMAGE PACE

Silent, 24 hours a day

A mature colony has 60,000+ workers feeding year-round. Damage can stay hidden for years.

PROTECTION

Liquid barrier

Non-repellent liquid (Termidor) applied around the foundation – plus annual inspection.



INSIDE THE COLONY

Reticulitermes flavipes

IN SOIL STRUCTURAL

- Lives underground and needs moisture – never exposed to open air
- Travels inside mud tubes to reach wood above ground
- One colony can forage across several yards
- Follows moisture up inside walls – a second-floor leak can feed them

Where: Soil around foundations, stumps, buried wood, under slabs



WORKER

Does the damage

1/8" EATS WOOD

- Creamy white, soft-bodied, blind; looks like a grain of rice with legs
- The only caste that eats wood – feeds the whole colony
- Eats the soft springwood, leaving layered, mud-packed galleries
- Seen when a tube or damaged board is broken open

Where: Mud tubes, sill plates, subfloors, damaged framing



SOLDIER

Defends the colony

1/4" DEFENDER

- Large amber-orange head with dark, pincer-like jaws
- Rushes out to guard a broken tube
- Can't feed itself – fed by workers
- Few in number compared to workers

Where: Inside tubes and galleries with the workers



SWARMER (ALATE)

Starts new colonies

3/8" WITH WINGS ACTIVE COLONY

- Dark brown-black body; four equal, milky wings
- Flies on warm, humid mornings after rain, March-May
- Sheds its wings after landing – piles of wings on sills
- Swarmer inside = a colony in or under the house

Where: Windows, doors, light fixtures, basement walls in spring

! SIGNS OF TERMITES



MUD TUBES

Pencil-width soil tunnels on foundations, piers, plumbing and walls.



SHED WINGS

Piles of equal-sized wings on window sills and in spider webs.



HOLLOW WOOD

Wood that sounds papery or gives when probed; layered galleries.



BLISTERED PAINT

Bubbled paint or drywall, mud in cracks, pinholes with dirt.



STICKING DOORS

Windows and doors that bind as damaged frames swell or shift.

? TERMITE SWARMER OR FLYING ANT?



TERMITE

- Straight, beaded antennae
- Thick waist, no pinch
- Four equal wings, shed easily



FLYING ANT

- Elbowed antennae
- Pinched waist
- Front wings longer than back

Save a few in a bag or take a close photo – we can confirm from an image.

! CONDITIONS THAT INVITE TERMITES

- × Wood-to-soil contact: deck posts, siding or trim below grade, buried scrap lumber
- × Mulch, soil or firewood piled against the foundation
- × Moisture: leaking hose bibs, downspouts dumping at the foundation, AC drip lines
- × Foam board, stucco or brick veneer running below grade; cracks in slabs & expansion joints
- × Earth-filled porches and planters attached to the house

✓ WHAT A TERMITE INSPECTION COVERS

- ✓ Full exterior foundation walk and interior sill plates, basement and crawl space
- ✓ Probing and sounding accessible wood; moisture readings in problem areas
- ✓ Evidence of previous treatment, damage or conducive conditions
- ✓ Written report – NPMA-33 Wood Destroying Insect report for real estate closings
- ✓ A treatment or monitoring plan sized to the house, not a one-size quote

KC FIELD NOTE Termite swarmer inside the house – especially near windows, or piles of wings on sills – mean an active infestation in or under the structure. Save a few in a bag and call the same day. Swarmer outside near stumps, mulch or fence posts are common in spring and may not involve the house – but it's worth an inspection.



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