



Help MPI locate termites in your neighbourhood

A small population of a pest drywood termite was found in a house in Waikanae, north of Wellington in 2011. The Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) immediately fumigated the house where the termites were found and set up a 10-year monitoring and surveillance programme to confirm the fumigation was successful. We need your help to report any signs of termites in the area.

The West Indian drywood termite (*Cryptotermes brevis*) lives within dry wooden materials, including all common building timbers, wooden furniture and even wooden

articles such as picture frames and ornaments. These termites can cause damage to wooden structures over very long periods of time.

MPI considers it is unlikely the termites have spread beyond the immediate affected house. To confirm this, MPI surveys neighbouring properties. If any new colonies are found, the earlier the detection, the greater the chance of successful eradication.

However, to be certain the pest is gone, we need your help.

How can you help?

Look out for the following signs of termite presence and report them to **MPI on 0800 80 99 66**



Droppings

The most obvious early indication of these termites would be the presence of small piles of droppings (known as frass) which the termites push out of tiny holes in the wood surface. The pellets are around 1mm long and accumulate in piles directly beneath the holes. They vary in colour from cream to red to black.



Winged termites

The West Indian drywood termite has a flying or swarming stage in its life cycle where winged termites (known as alates) leave the colony in search of mates and to establish new colonies. Termites swarm when a colony matures or is beginning to run out of food or has grown too large to live within an existing space. They generally fly in late spring and summer. In Waikanae, flying termites were noticed for the first time in the summer of 2010/2011.



Alate wings

While you are unlikely to see flying termites, if they have been present in your house or surrounds, you may find alate wings, which they discard after landing in a new location. Flying termites generally make very short flights of less than 100 metres.

If you think you have seen signs of the West Indian Drywood Termite **phone MPI on 0800 80 99 66**

About the West Indian drywood termite

The West Indian drywood termite is a serious wood boring insect classed as an unwanted pest and notifiable organism in New Zealand. This Waikanae detection is the first time it has been found here.

This termite is widespread in many tropical and subtropical countries. While it cannot survive outdoors in cooler climates, it can survive inside buildings.

As its name indicates, the West Indian drywood termite lives within wood materials, obtaining its nutrients and required water from wooden fibres. It will attack a range of timbers, requires very little moisture for survival, and multiple colonies can infest a single piece of suitable wood. These factors mean the West Indian drywood termite is easily transported by humans in furniture and other infested wooden items.

It lives in colonies similar to ants and bees, which include a king and queen, workers, soldiers and, at certain times of the year, alates (flying reproductive termites).

Termites fly in swarms from the colony during the warmer months in search of mates to establish new colonies. They swarm when a colony has matured or is beginning to run

out of food. The workers and soldiers remain inside the wood and are difficult to see.

What is MPI doing?

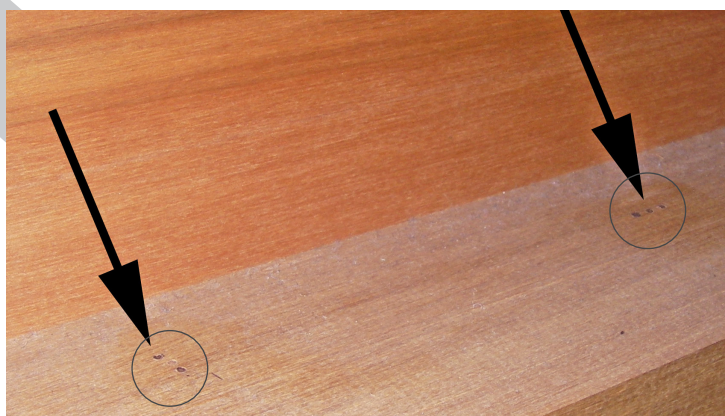
Initially MPI treated the affected building with a fumigant that destroyed any termites present.

The product has no associated human health concerns as it dissipates quickly after use. Now, MPI carries out regular checks on the property over a number of years to confirm that no termites remain. Follow-up surveillance includes routine checks of neighbouring properties and insect traps outside to capture any flying termites during summer. In the unlikely event that the termites are found in neighbouring properties, these too will be treated.

The population found in Waikanae was small and MPI is confident of complete eradication.

MPI is experienced in dealing with exotic termite incursions and has a proven track record of successful eradications.

If you have any questions on the small population of West Indian drywood termite found in Waikanae, please contact termite@mpi.govt.nz



Tiny holes in wood surface through which the termites push out the droppings.



Droppings accumulating beneath "push out" holes.



A pile of droppings beneath a "push out" hole.

If you think you have seen signs of the West Indian drywood termite, including droppings, shed wings or the flying alate form, please contact **MPI on 0800 80 99 66.**

www.mpi.govt.nz