

Destroying termite colonies

These termites have previously been found at a number of locations in New Zealand and all colonies have been successfully eradicated.

Biosecurity New Zealand is currently treating a couple of locations in Greenlane, Auckland, where the termites were detected in November 2021.

Treatment is with an insecticide bait that does not harm humans or animals. This bait is set out in tamper-proof containers at points where the termites are active, as well as buried in tamper-proof containers underground.

Baiting and monitoring continues until no further termite activity is detected, at which point elimination is declared. Surveillance for five years clear of termite activity follows before eradication can be declared.



Biosecurity New Zealand

Ministry for Primary Industries
Manatū Ahu Matua

What should I do if I see signs of these termites?

If you suspect you have seen these termites or their damage, do not disturb them or attempt to kill them as this will make eradication by experts more difficult.

Instead, call us immediately on 0800 80 99 66

If you have any questions about this termite or would like more information, please email: termites@mpi.govt.nz

Alternatively please visit: www.biosecurity.govt.nz/termites

Contacts

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Have you seen signs of termites?

Subterranean termites can cause structural damage to wood in any form, including timber house framing, furniture, fences, wooden landscaping and trees.



You can help

Look out for signs of termites/damage and note the location, take photos if possible, and report it to us on 0800 80 99 66.

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Occasionally these introduced termites are found in New Zealand and Biosecurity New Zealand is keen to identify any populations and eradicate them.

Please let us know if you have seen any sign of these termites.

What type of termite are we looking for?

The termite in question is *Coptotermes acinaciformis*, an Australian subterranean termite, which is a widespread and destructive timber pest in Australia. New Zealand has three species of native termites that are not considered to be destructive and do not form large colonies.



What do these particular termites look like?

The Australian subterranean termite is similar in appearance to a white ant but slightly larger and does not have a small ant-like waist.

Like ants, it lives in groups, known as colonies. These termites have different forms within a colony – king, queen, workers, and soldiers. In the warmer summer months the termites have a flying form known as alates. At this life stage they leave the colony on warm evenings in search of mates and a location to start a new colony.

Soldiers are 5–7mm long with brown heads and long jaws. Workers are all white. Alates are brown with two sets of light brown wings and are about 12mm long at rest with wings laid flat.



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What do I look out for?

You are likely to notice signs of termite activity before you see termites themselves. You may see evidence of subterranean termite “mudding” – which is where termites pack mud into gaps in timber. Or you may see mud tunnels up walls or across open ground.



Subterranean termite ‘mudding’ – termites pack mud into gaps in the timber.

These termites are most likely to be associated with imported wood products such as Australian hardwood railway sleepers which are commonly used in landscaping. Import requirements have changed to reduce the risk of further introductions of termites on these products.

When termites are in their flying stage they are attracted to light, so you may find them around your windows or inside your house on warm humid evenings.