

By Stu Lowe



Traditional Termite Treatments vs. Alternative Green Methods

Any homeowner who has had termites knows how frustrating the situation can be. How did they get into my home? How long have they been here? How do I get rid of them?

There are many different treatment options when it comes to termite control. In Orange County, there are two different types of termites: Subterranean and drywood.

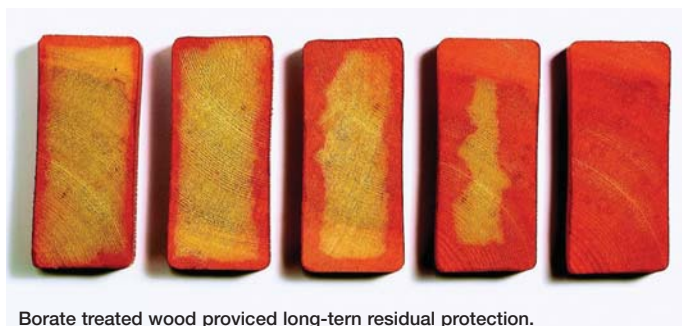
Subterranean termites attack the structure from the ground and must maintain moisture in order to survive. They build mud tubes up the walls to maintain moisture and to reach the wood in the structure. Drywood termites, on the other hand, do not need this constant moisture so they can attack your home from anywhere. They usually gain entry to homes through cracks around windows and doors or come through vents and set up shop in the attic. The colony will grow and consume wood for up to five years before the winged alates will “swarm” to establish a new colony. It’s important to remember that the rest of the colony is still there doing damage. Swarmers resemble flying ants, but with these key differences: Ants have a bent antennae, larger front wing, and thin waist while termites sport straight antennae and the same-sized wings.

Treatment methods

Traditional treatment options include tenting for drywood termites and liquid soil treatments for the subterranean variety.

These two options are very effective, but they do have drawbacks as well. When you tent or fumigate a house, it needs to be empty for at least two to three days. While the procedure will kill the termites, it does not prevent them from coming back.

With liquid treatments, it is necessary to treat all the soil around the foundation of your home. This is done by either drilling holes or digging a small trench at the edge of the foundation wall. As the termites forage through the soil they will come in contact with the treated soil and pass it along to other members in their colonies, thus eliminating the entire colony.



Borate treated wood provided long-term residual protection.

Because of the different obstacles associated with these traditional treatments, many of my customers are looking for additional treatment choices when dealing with potential termite problems.

Alternative options

Borates have long been used as an alternative to synthetic chemical pesticides. The pesticidal qualities of borates have been known for at least 300 years, but were even familiar to the ancient Egyptians!

To stop decay or insects, builders and homeowners can apply a borate-based product directly to structural wood, and not into the soil. One widely used product is Bora-Care, which has Disodium Octaborate Tetrahydrate (DOT) as its active ingredient. DOT is a borate mineral salt that is deadly to insect pests, and because it is a mineral salt, it will not break down over time. When the product is sprayed on the wood, it remains there for years, providing long-term residual protection.

Borate-based products in different forms using different application techniques are also used to control ants, cockroaches, crickets and silverfish, among other pests. For example, borate products can be used as a liquid spray, in granular baits and as a contact dust. Scientists believe insects die when borates enter their systems after consuming the product, sharing it as food or grooming it from their bodies. Borates kill termites and other wood-destroying organisms by interfering with the metabolic process the pest needs to convert sugar to energy. In other words, the pests starve to death. Fortunately, this isn’t a problem for people, pets and other non-target organisms. So far, insects have shown no ability to develop resistance to borates.

Borate products are being used more and more in the conservation of wooden structures and artifacts. The chemical diffuses into wood fibers to stop wood decay fungi. They are used in restoration projects from old homes to old ships.

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Anaheim Arsenal

SLAM DUNK
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community,” says Grumet, 2008 HB Chamber Board Chairman.

In Orange County, there is no shortage of competition vying for the attention of sports enthusiasts, but what the Anaheim Arsenal offers in addition to “great quality basketball is an emphasis on fun family entertainment,” according to Jim Petersen, VP of Marketing for the Arsenal.

“Our half time shows include fun youth games on the court and special groups are even going to ‘camp out’ the night before in our arena,” he says. “Ultimately, any family can afford to see a game and every family will enjoy the action.”

For more info. or tickets, call the Anaheim Arsenal at (714) 635-2255. **HB**

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Eliminate the food source

By treating the wood with a borate-based product, you kill existing termite colonies and help prevent future colonies from establishing. Our company sprays the product onto all exposed wood in attics, garages, soffits and crawl spaces. Wall voids are injected using high pressure misting or foaming. The manufacturer has developed methods and technologies to treat all wood in a structure.


The State of California has also enacted laws requiring all pesticides lower their levels of Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Bora-Care has no VOCs, so it is a great green solution for our area. **HB**

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