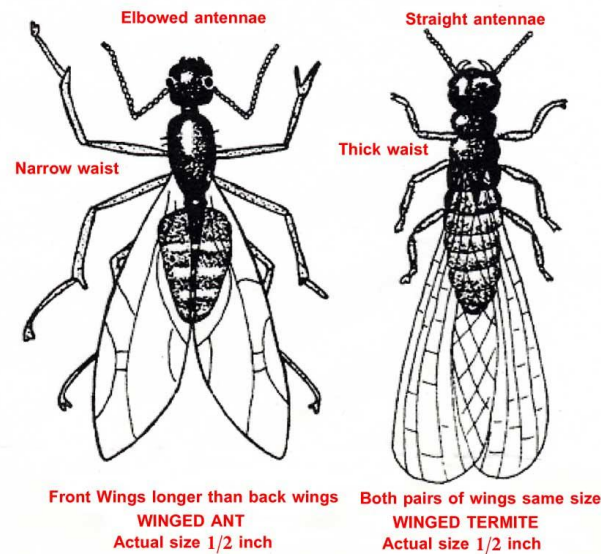


## Ants or Termites?

For most people, it's difficult to know the difference between a swarm of ants and a swarm of termites. Due to the threat they pose to your property, it is important for you to know the difference between the two.



## Ants

Ants do not eat wood. Most species of ants can chew on and remove wood, sheetrock, etc. but they only do it for the purpose of expanding their nests. When there is an ant infestation in your home, often times you will see wood shavings or dust like particles coming out around a window or wall. This is due to the ants expanding their nests. Carpenter ants can do a large amount of damage in the eaves of a home that already has water damage taking place.

There are many different species of ants that can swarm any time of year if temperature and conditions are right. Unlike termites, they do not have a particular swarm season. Many ant swarmers look similar to termite swarmers.

Ant swarmers have antennae with a 90 degree bend in them. They also have a very tiny waist. Ant wings have a few veins in them, and the hind wings are smaller than they front pair. (See the diagram.)

## Native Subterranean Termites

According to the LSU Agriculture Center, there is an average of 10 colonies of Native subterranean termites per acre in Louisiana. There are 300,000 termites per colony. A colony of Native subterranean termites can eat less than 100 pounds per year.

Chances are you have seen a swarming termite; you just didn't know what you were looking at. Swarming termites (alates) are the reproductive members of the colony, and in the spring time they make a colonizing flight to establish new nests. (see video).

Native subterranean termite swarmers can swarm anytime during the night or day. Swarms are from late January through late April. The amount of termites seen swarming can be hundreds to a few thousand. They are dark brown to black in color. Their antennae have a smooth angle, as opposed to the ant's 90 degree angled antennae. A termite swarmer has a broad waist, unlike the ant's pinched waist. The pairs of wings on a termite swarmer are equal in length.

### **Formosan Subterranean Termites**

There is not a known number of colonies of Formosan termites per acre in Louisiana, however there have been documented cases of colonies the size of a city block in New Orleans! There are up to 10,000,000 Formosan termites per colony. A colony of Formosan termites can eat 1,000 pounds of wood per year.

Formosan subterranean termite swarmers are structurally similar to Native subterranean termite swarmers, except their bodies are amber to orange in color, and they are slightly larger in size compared to the Native species. They only swarm at dusk from early May through June. Formosan termites swarm by the thousands or tens of thousands and are often seen in the evening around street lights, ball parks, etc. Ball parks have sometimes been closed due to massive Formosan termite swarms.

### **Free Inspections and Estimates**

If your house is not under contract with a professional company for ant or termite control, call us for a free, no obligation inspection and estimate.

Joe E. Arceneaux  
Arceneaux Pest Management Service, Inc.