DEANS SERVICES Buzz
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TERMITE BAITS OR TERMITE BARRIERS?

A Special Consumer Informational

In nature, termites are beneficial to our ecosystem. Foraging underground, they target and consume wood which then turns to fertile soil. But when their appetite leads them to our homes, the damage can cost thousands. In fact, termites cause up to $7 billion in damage each year!

Recognizing the particularly high risk of termites in Flor-ida, the state enacted a series of laws requiring builders to have a termite treatment performed during the construction process.

The most popular treatment method has traditionally been a liquid soil barrier. But in recent years, plastic bait stations have been solicited to new homeowners as a method of continued coverage once the home is sold. This has led to much discussion about which method is best – protective barriers or bait.

You Have Options

It's important to know that as the homeowner, you have the right to adopt any type of termite protection you prefer. Never feel pressured by a company to use the method used at construction. After all, such default treatments may have been selected due to construction budgets or convenience rather than their long-term effectiveness.

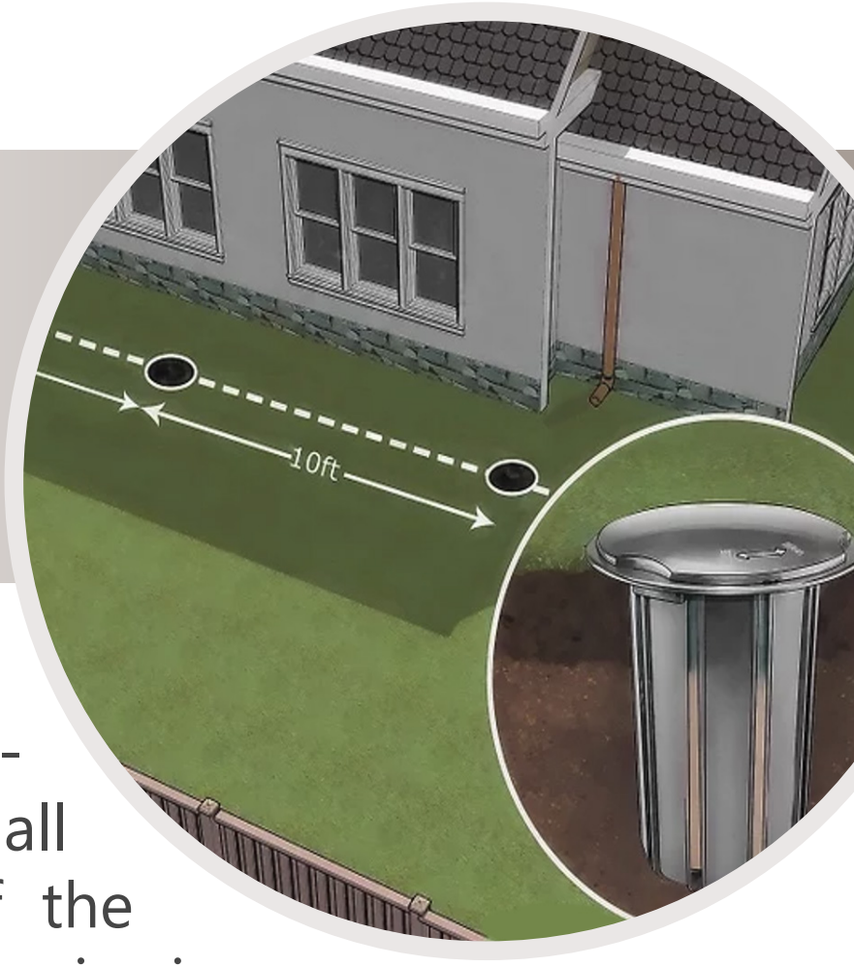
Soil Barrier

The application of a termite soil barrier usually occurs during construction but can also be performed after the home is built. The soil at the foundation is treated with a specially-formulated termiticide (most often Termidor or Premise) which, due to its soil-binding properties, stays in place for years. This reduces environmental impact while providing a excellent protection against termites.

A note regarding the term ‘barrier’: While a complete border is formed, the product is not meant to repel termites like older methods. Modern protective zones remain undetected, thus allowing foraging termites to encounter the product and pass along the lethal ingredient to the colony. Once this occurs, the elimination of the colony begins within only seven days.

Because soil treatments remain in place, there’s little need for maintenance and nearly zero room for failure.

Bait Stations



Bait stations are plastic devices that are installed all around the perimeter of the home, the tops of these remain visible while the cartridge below ground contains wood , often laced with a lethal ingredient, meant to attract termites. Unlike barrier treatments, stations do not provide a complete protective zone around the home. Instead, an inspector will visit each year to determine if termites have begun to infest. Once they do, any wood not containing the termiticide will be replaced with toxic material which will then spread to the colony. Colony elimination usually takes slightly longer than it does using the traditional soil method.

While not proactive like a complete soil treatment, bait systems will work to control infestations when employed properly year after year. The benefit here is that the stations are easily installed, and minimal product is required to be applied.

However, because the bait stations are essentially rented from the company, they can be repossessed by a company agent, leaving your home unprotected.

Soil Barriers are widely considered the gold standard. The longevity of the treatment is a great value; and because the treatment stays in place, your home will continue to be protected for years after application.

Bait stations are sometimes cheaper up front, but without diligent monitoring, there is risk of failure and associated costs. Some

companies prefer baits due to ease of installation, but protection is subject to repossession upon warranty lapse.

So Which Treatment Method is Better?

The answer here depends on what you value as a homeowner. If you don't like the look of the stations around your home and prefer the discreet and reliable method...the barrier simply can't be beat. If you have any special concerns about digging or have areas that are inaccessible, stations are an easy alternative.

Here at Deans, we've used both barrier and bait stations depending on the circumstance, but while we recognize the benefits of bait, we recommend barrier treatments due to their value and reliable performance. Here are a few other insights from experts in the field.

"I recommend bait stations if there are special con-struction concerns, but I've never been comfortable relying solely on bait. In my 25 years of experience, the soil treatment has simply been the benchmark."

James Shead

State-Certified Termite Inspector

"With the baits, if they're not maintained, there's no protection."

Steven Dwinell

Asst. Director State Agricultural and Environmental Services

"Once [termites] find [the bait], it may take six months or a year to kill them. In the meantime, you're unprotected."

Dr. Phil Koehler

Entomologist; University of Florida

"[Baiting] is not a good pretreatment. It depends on the person knowing that the baits have to be checked. I feel much safer knowing that chemical went into the ground."

Roland Holt

Palm Beach County Building Chief

"Bait stations and barriers both have their place.

But when I protected my home...I chose a liquid soil barrier treatment."

Joe Tomasiello, ACE

Associate Certified Entomologist

Termite protection is a necessity here in Florida but choosing the right method doesn't need to be stressful. We invite you to research – especially from University-backed sources – so you can make the best decision for your home.

As always, our experts are here to keep you well informed...and well-protected!

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