Is Your Termite Protection Adequate?

If You’re Not Using Deans You May be Missing Out

Mind-Reading Rodents
Cheesy Minds Think Alike
Page 2

Customer Questions
“How Do You Treat for Mole Crickets?”
Page 3

And The Winner Is...
The Results of Our Recent Newsletter Drawing
Page 4

Sickly Shrubs
How Researchers Are Working To Stem the Spread
Page 4

In a national survey, homeowners were asked what they perceived as the top threat to the value of their home. 43% responded with the reasonable (though incorrect) response of fire. Only 14% of homeowners named termites as the number one threat, although they strike more than five times as many homes each year as do fires and cause about $1.7 billion in damages.

If this is surprising to you, you’re not alone. In fact, despite the fact that Florida is one of the highest risk states for termite infestation*, we’ve noticed that some of our ‘General Household Pest’ customers do not have our industry-leading termite protection.

Some may be under the impression that their homeowner’s insurance covers termite damage. Unfortunately, this is usually not the case and is not realized until the damage has been done.

But even if you have coverage with another company, it’s always a good idea to check and ensure that your protection is adequate. For example, did you know that some companies do not cover Formosan termites (Coptotermes formosanus)—a particularly destructive species of termite found throughout Florida? Or that some companies require that a deductible be paid if termite damage is discovered? Some may even require that you pay the cost of a full termite treatment every several years.

(Continued on page 2)

*Source: Mallis H.P.C.
Is Your Termite Protection Adequate?

(Continued from page 1)

We know it's important to receive the best service for your money, and we know there are many options from which to choose. We'd like to make the comparison easy for you by providing a brief checklist displaying a few of the provisions Deans Services offers. So take a look, and if it seems your termite protection may not be adequate, or you'd just like to reduce the cost of your annual termite renewal, call Deans today at (352)787-5300 and ask about our Convert-to-Save program! 😊

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Implant Makes Mind Reading Possible in Rats

By Jason Koebler, USNews.com

Neuroscientists at Duke University have proven that telepathic communication—between rats—is not only possible, but can be done across continents. Similar experiments are already being tested on monkeys. The discovery, published Thursday in the journal *Scientific Reports*, is the first confirmed brain-to-brain communication between animals.

In the experiment, two rats that could not see each other were trained to press certain levers in exchange for a food pellet. The first rat was given a visual cue that told it which of two levers to push, which corresponded to a lever in the other rat’s chamber. The other rat did not receive a visual cue but instead received brain waves (transmitted through arrays of electrodes between the rats' brains) that informed it which lever to push.

If the second rat pressed the correct lever, the first "encoder" rat would receive an additional reward, giving the rats incentive to work together. The second rat pressed the correct lever 70 percent of the time.

"Nobody had ever done this, so the challenge was significant. We didn't know if it would work," says study lead researcher Miguel Nicolelis. "It took us years to get this to work." To prove the same experiment could be done with what Nicolelis calls "interference," he placed one rat in his lab in Durham, N.C., and one in a lab in Brazil. Using an Internet connection, he found the rats were still able to work together.
"We wanted to show that even when the line was noisy, we were able to get this to work," he says. "We used to do this with wires but now we're doing everything wirelessly and experimenting with swarms of rats." Since his first successful experiment, Nicolelis has been able to create wireless connections between rats' brains and has begun experimenting with monkeys. Though that research is yet to be published, Nicolelis says early results are promising.

"Once we got it to work in rats, we were able to unlock the secret to this technology. We're already doing very much more sophisticated experiments with monkeys," he says. "They're learning to play games, controlling avatars of themselves on a screen." As for the swarms of rats, the researcher says that getting dozens of rats to communicate with each other is more difficult, but possible. Someday, he imagines neural computing networks that could be more powerful than current technology.

"We may have a way to come up with new architectures of computing," he says. "How will it work? We don't know, but that's why we're going to test." Nicolelis says it's far too early to think about experimenting with the technology on humans, but that his breakthrough "opens a completely new line of research." "I'm not implying we should test now in humans, but when people made the first telephone transmission 100 years ago, people said it was too simplistic, it'd never work," he says. "I think this is an important first step."
or many homeowners, landscaping means more than just plants. For those who consider themselves gardening enthusiasts, it can be a relaxing and—as studies have shown—even healthy pastime. Indeed, many invest plenty of precious time and money on getting just the right look for their home’s exterior décor. That’s why when plants in a garden are found to be diseased, it can be more than a minor irritation.

Sometimes the fix can be as simple as a little extra attention—an extra feeding, pruning, or a little more time soaking in some sun. But what happens when a plant begins to show symptoms that you’ve never seen, and it doesn’t seem to respond to any type of treatment? We encountered this recently when one of our customers contacted us regarding a strange growth he found on one of his mature ligustrum shrubs.

The brown, irregularly-shaped growth appeared almost mold-like, but upon closer inspection it was found to be a cluster of stunted plant growth, and its spread began to result in several bare spots. Though similar symptoms have been observed as a result of bacterial infections, our field expert recognized that this was no ordinary disease and took a sample to the Florida Agricultural Center for more information, and it turns out we’re not alone in our concern.

According to UF Extension Director Dr. Juanita Popenoe, similar reports have been received from as far south as Miami, and now the problem seems to be hitting closer to home. We also spoke with Dr. Phil Harmon, Associate Professor of Plant Pathology at the University of Florida, who has been assisting in the research on this new pathogen.

According to Harmon, although no conclusive evidence has been reached, there is some indication that the culprit may be a disease-causing pathogen known as a phytoplasma. These microorganisms are similar to bacteria and infect plants via insect hosts. “Once it’s infected, symptoms may come and go”, says Harmon. “Some plants will show very mild symptoms for many years, so we certainly wouldn’t say we need to pull out all these plants and start over. But at the same time, there’s nothing we could recommend to cure a plant that is already affected.”

But while that synopsis doesn’t sound overly optimistic, Dr. Harmon added that “the severity of the symptoms is dependent upon environmental factors such as where they’re planted, how much stress they’re under, and how they’re managed,” which gives us some hope that a healthier shrub may be better suited to handle any such infection. “Because it’s something new,” he says, “we just don’t have all the answers right now. We’re working on it, but we’re a long way away.”

As for Deans, we’ll continue to seek new ways to combat this disease through continued communication with university extensions and will relay any details to our readers as they become known. In the meantime, it never hurts to ensure your prized landscaping is kept healthy with a regular routine of feedings and pest prevention. If you’re interested in learning more about our lawn or shrub program, feel free to call (352) 787-5300, or visit us online at www.DeansServices.com.