

No matter where you are located, subterranean termites are present in your area – and they are responsible for more economic loss each year than all natural disasters combined. There are more than 350 species of termites which have been recorded in Australia, about 25 of which achieve economic importance as pests of timber in service. With the exception of drywood termites, all species of economic importance are soil dwelling (subterranean) and have similar habits. Several of these species have a wide geographic distribution.

Subterranean termites live in colonies, numbering from a few hundred to millions. In each colony there is a division of labour, with several distinct castes, each specialising in a particular duty. The worker termites are responsible for the damage to timber caused in their search for food, which consists mainly of cellulose, sugars and starch present in the timber.

Subterranean termites generally nest underground in the soil, build earthen mounds, or nest in the root crowns or trunks of living and dead trees. Having to maintain contact with soil or a reliable water source to obtain sufficient moisture to survive, subterranean termites construct protective mud shelter tubes from their nests to their food source - living trees, seasoned timber, books, furniture etc.

Consuming the wood from inside out, usually by the time the termites' work is visible, the timber is virtually eaten away.

Signs of subterranean termite presence:

- mud trails leading up the sides of piers, over the edge of concrete slabs, and even over the ant capping of wooden or concrete piers
- accumulation of dried mud in the joins of door or window architraves, or the joins around stairs, and other similar areas around the home
- blistering paint on door and window architraves and skirting boards
- damp areas or moisture stains on walls
- faint tapping or chewing noises behind plaster walls (particularly at night time)
- power failures and a build up of earthen material around power points – termite damage to electrical wiring has been attributed to many household fires
- mud structures in ceiling cavities may contain termite activity



Mud trails shelter subterranean termites on the move



Subterranean termites consume the wood from the inside out



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Enemy Profile

Subterranean Termites

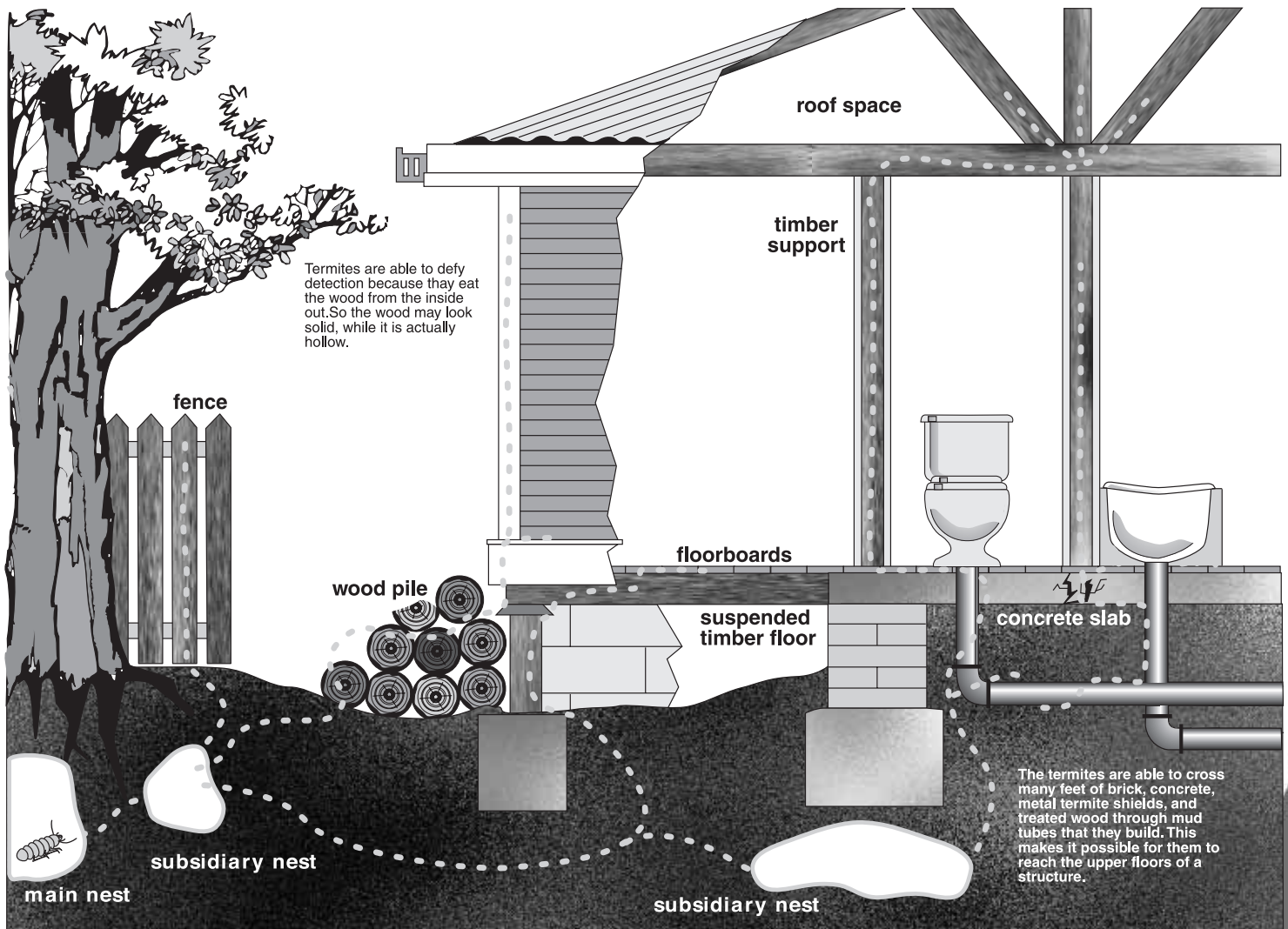
How subterranean termites can enter your home:

- by constructing mud tubes over concrete piers
- by constructing tunnels up the centre pipe of wooden stumps
- constructing mud tubes from the soil to the flooring, often within cavity walls
- through hairline cracks which appear in concrete slabs around plumbing and electrical conduits
- through colonising flights, reproductive termites may form nests within or in close proximity to the building
- through service pipes such as telephone, plumbing or electrical utilities
- bridging by way of vegetation in contact with the building

- through the soil abutting the base of the building, working their way through the mortar or timber in soil contact

What to do if you find termites in your home:

- contact your nearest TermAForce technician
- do not disturb the termites in any way and try to put things back the way you found them
- household pesticides should never be used



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