



# Residential, Structural & Community Pests

Department of Entomology

Insect Notes

## Termite Swarms - What do they mean for you?

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At certain times of the year termite colonies produce “swarmers” - the winged adults (picture at right) that fly away to form their own colonies. Swarming usually occurs during the daytime and is simply nature’s way of reminding you that termites are nearby. Here are some commonly asked questions about termite swarmers.



### Where did the swarmers come from?

The swarmers likely came from a nearby underground nest. If most of the insects are found outdoors, then the nest is likely somewhere in your yard, possibly near an old tree stump or landscape timbers. If you find most of the swarmers indoors, then you quite likely have an infestation under/in your home or business.

### What happens to these swarmers?

In most cases, the termite swarmers simply die if they cannot escape from your house. They may be attracted to light and die on window sills or open areas. Quite often you will only find dead insects or just the wings as seen in the picture to the right. Collect some of the insects (or wings) so you can get them identified by a pest control service. You can also bring specimens to your county Cooperative Extension Service Center where they will assist you in identifying the insects.



### Will killing the swarmers fix the problem?

No. Termite swarmers are a nuisance particularly when swarms occur inside. However, they do not cause structural damage. Although killing swarmers eliminates the nuisance problem at hand, it does not provide any protection from further termite activity that may already be causing serious damage. Protecting your home or business from termites requires a proper soil treatment with a liquid insecticide or the installation of a baiting system, or with another method approved by the NC Department of Agricultural & Consumer Services (NCDA&CS).

### What should I do if I find termites swarming?

The first thing you need to do is confirm that you indeed have termites. Many species of ants also produce winged adults and to the untrained eye they look very similar to winged termites. If you have a termite contract, contact the pest control company as soon as possible so they can take corrective action. If you do not have a termite contract, contact 2-3 local pest control companies and arrange for them to inspect the property. If your home or business is infested with termites, then consider getting it treated.

Additional information about termite treatments is available online at the following websites:  
[insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/wood.htm](http://insects.ncsu.edu/Urban/wood.htm) and [www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP/structural/pubs/index.htm](http://www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP/structural/pubs/index.htm)

If you have any questions about approved termite treatments or about what you are told about the extent of any termite problem, contact the NCDA&CS - Structural Pest Control & Pesticides Division: 919-733-6100 or [www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP](http://www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP).