

Your Crawl Space Can Attract Termites

By: Stephanie Larkin

No one wants a termite infestation to hit their home, but if you are not careful you might actually be attracting the pests. If you have a crawl space to allow for access to your home's foundation, you could have an environment that's ideal for termite colonies to live in and thrive. Luckily, this is a problem that can be easily taken care of once you realize the aspects of your crawl space that are likely to attract termites. If it's too late and you already have termites under your house, take comfort in the fact that you've found them while they are still in the crawl space and not after they have moved up into walls or other parts of the house.

The reason that termites are attracted to your crawl space is that in most cases a crawl space provides an ideal environment for them. Think about what your crawl space looks like. Does it have poor ventilation, lots of exposed wood, and plenty of scattered bits of wood on the dirt itself that has dried out over the years? The poor ventilation will result in the crawl space having higher humidity than the air outside, which is needed by termites to live. They will be initially attracted by this excess moisture, and then realize that there is a large amount of cellulose and wood material for them to eat. Even though you obviously did not want it to be, your crawl space could appear to them like an all-you-can-eat buffet in paradise.

Assessing Your Crawl Space

Chances are that you do not spend much time in your crawl space. It's dark, cramped, and the air is probably a bit musty. Unfortunately, if you are going to check for termites (and to check whether the conditions in your crawl space are likely to attract termites) then you are going to have to head under the house. Be sure to watch out for other insects and animals under there as well; while some of these, such as spiders, can be helpful and will actually kill and eat termites that might be in your crawl space, this doesn't mean that you want them in your hair or face. Take the necessary precautions to avoid bites before going under your house.

Once there, see if the air is musty or smells like mildew. This will indicate that there is excessive moisture in the air, which is one of the key elements that will attract termites. Much preferable is for the air to smell dry or dusty, though in this case you will need to check and make sure that any wood in the support of your house isn't becoming overly dry. While under the house, you should also take the time to look at the wood and house supports themselves for any indications of termite activity. See if there is any wood or plant material on the ground, especially next to the walls of the house where it might draw in termites from outside.

Preventing Termite Infestations

After you have evaluated how much moisture and loose plant material are under your house, it's time to do something about it. One of the first steps that you can take is to hire

waterproofing experts to come in and seal all of the walls of your crawl space and provide complete cover so that there isn't just open dirt under your house. This will close off most of the access points for termites, and will greatly reduce additional moisture from getting in. Many waterproofing experts will also clean up any loose debris in the process to further prevent termites from being attracted to your home.

You can choose to have the crawl space completely sealed so as to prevent airflow as well, though a more common solution is to make sure that your crawl space has enough ventilation so that excess moisture doesn't build up in the air. Just remember that any vents in your crawl space need to be sufficiently above the ground so that water won't enter them when it rains, and you should avoid having any plants or plant material blocking them or touching them because that is a good way for termites to find their way in.

Treating Termite Outbreaks

Should you find that you already have termites in your crawl space, you should call your preferred pest control expert or exterminator immediately. They can spray the outer perimeter of your house in order to prevent additional termites from coming in as well as using foggers or other sprays to kill all of the termites that have already made it into your crawl space. While at your home, they will also evaluate it to make sure that your termite problems have not spread elsewhere.

Source:

<http://www.articlesnatch.com/Article/Your-Crawl-Space-Can-Attract-Termites/291847>