

# Reduce the Risk of a Conehead Termite Infestation

## ► **Be alert for conehead termites.**

Watch for the 'Big 4' indicators:

- Tunnel networks.
- Dark-colored, cone-shaped heads on small beige bugs (1/8") within those tunnels.
- Bumpy, brown nests that are generally spherical or ellipsoidal.
- Termites with charcoal colored wings flying in April - June.

If you find or think you have found conehead termites, call the Division of Plant Inspection Helpline at 1-888-397-1517.

## ► **Maintain your yard.**

- Keep the lawn mowed.
- Cut back shrubs, branches, and fronds so vegetation is not too thick or overgrown.
- Remove dead plant debris to reduce termite food and hiding places.
- Dispose of yard waste through curbside bulk trash pickups or call your city for the nearest Residential Yard and Bulk Waste Drop-Off Location.

## ► **Prune back all vegetation surrounding your house, garage, shed, or other structure.**

- Leaves, branches, visible roots, or trunks should not be closer than 18" (3' preferred) from any part of the building, including tree branches and palm fronds near the eaves or roof.
- Plants touching a structure can serve as bridges to introduce wandering termites to the structure.

## ► **Avoid mulch or thick leaf litter accumulation adjacent to the house.**

- Rake and weed around the entire perimeter to expose the soil surface out 18" away from the structure. This helps to discourage termites by drying out the soil immediately adjacent to the structure.
- Coneheads like to travel within thick litter and mulch layers, so removing that condition – particularly near a building – makes it less hospitable. If they build a tunnel across the exposed soil to travel to the house, it will be far easier to see them than if they are hidden in debris.



**Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services**

► **Reduce moisture around your house.**

- Termites are more likely to infest a building if they find water conveniently located near a structure.
- Keep gutters clean, maintain downspouts and attach outlet extenders to direct rain water well away from the structure.
- Slope the soil surrounding your house to eliminate water puddling near or against the structure.
- Condensation from window or central home air conditioning units should be directed away (several feet if possible) from the house.
- Direct lawn water sprinklers away from the walls of your house.

► **Move stored wood and cellulose products away from buildings**

- Move all stacked fire wood or loose boards, wooden products with substantial ground contact such as pallets or crates, as well as paper and cardboard materials located outdoors (or stored under a porch or crawl space) to a distance of at least 20 feet away, or as far as possible, from any structure.
- Also, it is not recommended to store these materials in a garage or nearby shed.

For additional information on protecting your home from termite infestations, visit [FDACS.gov](http://FDACS.gov) and search “Conehead” and/or “Florida Termite Help” or call the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services’ Bureau of Scientific Evaluation and Technical Assistance at (850) 617-7917.