



The University of Georgia

College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences
GEORGIA AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATIONS

Department of
Entomology

Georgia Station
Griffin, Georgia 30223-1797

28 August, 2008

To: The Georgia Pest Control Association
From: University of Georgia Entomology Faculty
Re: Real Estate Inspections for Subterranean Termites

Subterranean termites cost the American public over one billion dollars annually. As a natural component of the soil ecosystem, subterranean termites occur in nearly every region of the U.S., but are most abundant, and responsible for more structural damage, in the Southeastern U.S. compared to any other region of the country. In the Southeast, every yard in a suburban neighborhood will have a resident population (or more likely, populations) of subterranean termites that can be found feeding on wood fence posts, garden stakes, tree stumps, or other sources of cellulose in the landscape. Intuitively, in Georgia the threat to structures by termites is constant.

In 2007, a University of Georgia Survey Research Center survey of Georgians revealed that nearly 47% had "moved to Georgia from another state", up from 2003 when the percentage was 44%. During the 1990s Georgia was the fastest growing state east of Colorado and the sixth fastest growing state in the U.S. with an influx of 1.7 million people (a 26.4% increase). More recent statistics suggest that Georgia's growth rate has not stopped. According to the U.S. Census, in April 2005, 60 of the 100 fastest-growing counties in the U.S. were in the South—including 12 in Georgia which as a state was tied with Texas for second. *U.S.A. Today* reported in a recent article that Georgia was the fourth-fastest growing state in the U.S. and that in one year (2005-2006) 231,388 new residents moved into the state, bringing Georgia's population to 9.4 million. New residents from out of state are less likely to be aware of the intense termite pressure confronting houses in Georgia and least likely to understand the importance of a termite inspection at the time they purchase a home.

For the reasons outlined above, we unanimously agree that for the best interest of consumer protection all homes and other structures in Georgia be inspected for subterranean termites (and other wood infesting organisms) during the transfer of real estate. Inspection for wood infesting organisms performed by a professional is the cornerstone of protecting the average consumer's single largest lifetime investment from structural damage by subterranean termites and we recommend that all houses be inspected not only on an annual basis but also at the time of purchase.

Sincerely,

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