

# The Economic Importance and Control of Termite Infestations in Relation to Plantation Forestry and Wood Preservation in Peninsular Malaysia – An Overview

by

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## ABSTRACT

Both the plantation forestry and wood preservation industries in the tropical and sub-tropical belts of the world, exemplified by the humid equatorial Peninsular Malaysia, regard termites as major destructive pests of standing trees, various timber products and building timber structures. This paper is a compilation of information on these economically important pests encountered in both plantation forestry and the wood preservation industry in Malaysia, particularly the peninsula, and describes on-going termite research activities to establish practical control strategies for tree and wood protection.

Key Words: Termite control, plantation forestry, wood preservation, wood protection, Malaysia

## I. INTRODUCTION

Termites are social insects with a caste-structure, belonging to the order Isoptera. Based on their varied nesting strategies, they can be broadly classified as drywood, dampwood, mound building or subterranean termites. Drywood termites nest and feed in dry wood, obtaining the water they need for survival through physiological processes in their bodies. Colonies of drywood termites develop very slowly. Dampwood termites nest in damp wood but do not leave the wood in which they nest and feed in. There are few termite species in Malaysia that can be said to strictly adopt this strategy. Most termites search for food away from the nesting site, which may be a nest that protrudes from the ground, made from soil and partially digested wood material (mound building termites) or an underground nest (subterranean termites). The term "subterranean termites" is sometimes used more loosely to refer to the way in which the termites search for food, concealing their movements underground, as opposed to drywood or dampwood termites, which do not leave the nest, and free ranging termites which search for food openly on the ground. Used this way, the term can be applied to termites

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