

# Frequently Asked Questions Florida

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## **1. How are Formosan termites affecting Florida – specifically the Central Florida region?**

Formosan termites have already infested 90 counties and parishes in the southeast, including counties in Central Florida. Formosan termites are particularly destructive because they consume massive amounts of wood. The average domestic termite colony eats seven pounds of wood per year while a typical Formosan colony eats 1,000 pounds. Formosan termites can also build nests above ground, allowing them to avoid traditional soil barriers. Their colonies have up to ten million members, making them ten times larger than native termite colonies.

## **2. In dollar amounts, what kind of damage have termites caused in Florida? And in the entire United States?**

Termites are a massive problem in Florida. Just look at the number of pest control operators (PCOs) doing business in the state. For most PCOs, termite control is their most important source of income.

In Florida, termites and wood decay cause up to \$1 billion in property damage each year. Across the United States, termites and decay fungi cause an estimated \$3 billion a year in damages. More than a third of that is caused by Formosan termites alone, accounting for damages, repairs and control.

## **3. Why are SmartGUARD/Advance Guard products more effective than termite treatments currently being used in Florida?**

SmartGUARD/Advance Guard products are highly effective because they incorporate borates directly into the manufacturing process. Borates are deadly to termites because they interfere with metabolic pathways when they are ingested through feeding or grooming. Surviving termites then learn to avoid the protected wood products.

Borates have been used to protect homes in New Zealand against decay fungi and other wood destroying organisms for more than 50 years. The borate solution has also been in place for a decade in Hawaii, to protect homes against Formosan termites, and even longer in Europe to protect various building components.

Conventional solutions such as baits, soil treatments and fumigation provide some protection for new and existing structures, but those systems are short-term solutions that fail to build protection into the actual building components. SmartGUARD/Advance Guard products are guaranteed to last 20 years, four times longer than traditional barriers.

**4. Which builders are using borate-treated products in Florida? What is their incentive?**

At least two builders in Central Florida are now using borate-treated products in new home construction. Builders at Keller Construction and Park Square Homes see a clear value in building termite and decay protection directly into their homes.

The incentive is that the borate solution provides long-term protection to homeowners against Formosan termites and other wood destroying organisms that live in Florida – protection that is guaranteed to last 20 years, or four times longer than traditional treatments. This gives their homes a unique competitive advantage over other new homes, as well as existing ones.

Homeowners recognize that homes built with borate-treated products hold their resale value, and that they can expect little or no damage to treated wood products over the short- and long-term.

**5. Could borate-treated products pose a threat to the environment? Do they affect humans or pets?**

No. Borates – the active ingredient in SmartGUARD/Advance Guard products – pose no risk to people, pets or the environment. Borates are a natural mineral that can be found in everyday household items such as cups and plates, laundry detergents, cosmetics and personal care products.

**6. How much more money could a Florida homebuyer expect to spend for a house made from borate-treated building products?**

On average, a home built with borate-treated products is \$1.50 more per square foot. For a 2,000 square foot home, that translates to about \$3,000. This one-time expense is far lower than the amount homeowners can spend repairing damage caused by termites.

**7. What is the history behind the SmartGUARD/Advance Guard products?**

SmartGUARD/Advance Guard products were developed through a strategic alliance of three companies: U.S. Borax Inc., the world's leading borate supplier, Osmose, the leader in wood preservation technology, and LP, the world's largest producer of oriented strand board. The products are highly effective because they incorporate borates into the manufacturing process.

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