



Insect free home

For homes built twenty years ago, insect treatment and prevention largely occurred after the home was built. Exterminators sprayed gallons of pesticide onto the ground and into wall cavities. Homeowners planned to be at the grocery store or ran errands for several hours afterward to let the chemicals dissipate.

But times have changed and so have the ways builders construct homes to address pest control within the living environment. Proactive builders now routinely incorporate insect deterrents into the construction of new homes, helping homeowners minimize the amount of insecticide needed during the life of the home.

One of the easiest ways of controlling insects -- especially termites -- is to avoid burying debris on the construction site. Scrap lumber, cardboard, and paper trash should be hauled away since burying these items can attract tunneling insects.

Your pad was pre-treated prior to pouring your slab. This is the first measure in insuring you home will stay pest free. And as obvious as it sounds, ensuring that grading runs away from the home and that pipes are insulated to avoid moisture problems also helps eliminate pest infestations.

In spite of the best building standards, however, termites are common to Arizona homes. Knowing how to detect and treat these insects can minimize the damage these pests can cause.

The most effective and least expensive way to treat an infestation is to catch it early. This means regular inspection of your home. Trained inspectors look for mud-like tunnels on the outside of your home, usually beginning at the base of the home's foundation. Interior inspections focus on small pin size holes through structural surfaces accompanied by tiny amounts of dirt. These holes are often connected to hidden mud tubes that are usually connected to the ground.

If termites are found, quick treatment is key to controlling the infestation. Controlling is the key term, as complete elimination of the colony is almost impossible. Though some liquid termiticides and baits used have the potential to impact colonies, treatments are almost never guaranteed to eliminate a colony. Traditional treatment usually means establishing a chemical barrier in the soil along the exterior and interior of foundations, around plumbing protrusions, changes of slab levels, and other critical areas. These barriers primarily keep termites from penetrating the foundation and have little if any effect on the colony. Since all chemical treatments are designed to break down over time in order to protect the environment, on-going treatment should be expected.

Ask your builder about construction methods that minimize future insect damage and also ask for a referral for a qualified exterminator. Being proactive can help ensure an insect-free living environment for years to come.