

# Close To Home

Quarterly Tips From *Fraysier Home Inspections*

Spring, 2003

## Termites Are On The Move!



### **ASK JOHN!**

**Q: For years we never heard of termites in Monroe County. Now we hear about them quite a bit. Are they a growing problem in western New York?**

**A:** Yes. Part of the reason for the increased news of termite activity is heightened awareness through required pest inspections and a growing pest management industry.

More important, however, is the documented expansion of termite colonies throughout western New York. What began in New York as primarily a southeastern problem has grown to include all of western New York.

Termites have followed waterways along the Hudson,

Mohawk, and St. Lawrence River systems, to spread into shoreline communities around lakes and drainage basins in western New York. Thirty years ago no reports of termites were known in the Finger Lakes region. Today, termites are a common occurrence around each of the lakes.

Termites populate neighborhoods in three ways:

**1) Spring Swarm:** In April, termite colonies swarm sending winged reproductives from their underground nests. Winds carry these new kings and queens to the neighbors.

**2) Budding:** Underground colonies sometimes become fragmented by construction and termite treatments. The split colonies form new queens and begin separate colonies.

**3) Displacement:** Transporting large quantities of soil can move termites to new neighborhoods. Remember that next time you purchase a load of topsoil!

Fraysier Home Inspections finds termite evidence in approximately **5%** of homes inspected in Monroe County. Reason enough to have a good pest inspection done today!

**Q: I recently was at an open house where I noticed long horizontal cracks in the**

**basement block walls. I liked the house but these cracks made me nervous. Are these a problem?**

**A:** Horizontal cracks in a block wall are the most dangerous. They usually form as a result of outside pressure, ie, saturated soil, tree roots, and soil movement. These pressures must first be remedied before any wall repairs can be done.

Foundation repairs can be very costly. They usually consist of installing pilasters (vertical support pieces) that prevent further wall movement and cracking. Sometimes steel rods and concrete are placed in the block to strengthen the wall.

Horizontal cracks in a foundation wall should be checked by a structural engineer. Basement walls can succumb to pressures and cave in. Smaller vertical step cracks are less of a concern but should not be glossed over. They are often a result of poor drainage and left unchecked can become bigger problems.

**Q: I found carpenter ants nesting in my front porch decking. What is the best “do it yourself” method for getting rid of these, and how do I know that aren’t in my house?**

**A:** Of all the wood destroying pests, carpenter ants are the toughest to detect on an inspection. Spring is the best season to find them. Live or dead ants in your home, sawdust piles, and scratchy noises in the wall are all

indications of possible nesting. Short of this, remodeling may be the only way to find them. And remember to keep a short list for plumbing and roof repairs!

If a nest is found, treat it with an aerosol insecticide with a crack and crevice tip. Make certain it is labeled for use for carpenter ants. Don’t expose the nest until you are ready to treat it. Ants run fast!

## Poet’s Corner

At the bottom of the page you will find some humorous insights on ant behavior by Robert Frost. To those that have stopped long enough to watch, it will ring true. It’s a light hearted approach to an otherwise stressful discovery!

## Fraysier Home Inspections

94 Jefferson Ave.

Fairport, NY 14450

[www.fraysierhome.com](http://www.fraysierhome.com)

585-216-1085

### Departmental

An ant on a tablecloth  
Ran into a dormant moth  
Of many times his size,  
He showed not the least surprise.  
His business wasn’t with such.  
He gave it scarcely a touch,  
And was off on his duty run.  
Yet if he encountered one  
Of the hives enquiry squad  
Whose work is to find out God  
And the nature of time and space,  
He would put him onto the case.  
Ants are a curious race;  
One crossing with hurried tread  
The body of one of their dead  
Isn’t given a moments arrest--  
Seems not even impressed.

But he no doubt reports to any,  
With whom he crosses antennae,  
And they no doubt report  
To the higher-up at court.  
Then word goes forth in Formic:  
“Death’s come to Jerry McCormic,  
Our selfless forager Jerry.  
Will the special Janizary,  
Whose office is to bury  
The dead of the commissary  
Go bring him home to his people.  
Lay him in state on a sepal.  
Wrap him for shroud in a petal.  
Embalm him in ichor of nettle.  
This the word of your Queen.”  
And presently on the scene  
Appears a solemn mortician;  
And taking formal position,  
With feelers calmly atwiddle,

Seizes the dead by the middle,  
And heaving him high in the air,  
Carries him out of there.  
No one stands round to stare.  
It is nobody else’s affair.

**Robert Frost**