

Getting to know...

Termites Must Have WATER

Water is said to be the source of Life.

This explains why one of the objectives of space exploration is to find water. Once its presence is detected the next step is to find out if it is capable of sustaining a life form that is similar to Earth's. If the answer is "Yes", then a new and exciting world in outer space awaits Man.

This is simplifying the situation. Of course consideration must be given to the other things like oxygen, temperature, disease, physical terrain and radiation. But the presence of water is the cornerstone in the search.

In pest management the single most damaging pest is the Subterranean Termite, which as the name suggests, lives in the soil and is able to find and survive on underground water.

Dr Jerry Hu, a leading entomologist on termites, believes that the other group of termites, the

Drywood Termites, does not depend on an external water source. They extract water from the timber on which they feed. Hence they prefer timber with moisture of more than 10%. This explains why a dry piece of timber with less than 2% moisture will not support a Drywood Termite infestation. Perhaps the name "Drywood Termite" is a misnomer.

What happens if the Subterranean Termites do not find a ready water source? They will go out of their way via their mud shelter tube to look for one, or they will perish.

And what happens if there is too much water? They move to higher grounds.

For prevention, immediately repair any leak in your air-conditioning drainage piping, evident by damp or mouldy walls. Otherwise this attracts Subterranean Termites and the horrors of their infestation.



Subterranean Termite bivouac (commonly called a sub-nest) built on top of a telegraph post found in the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia, to escape the annual flooding caused by the North-East Monsoon.

Subterranean Termite mud shelter tube heading out of a jar of palm trees, in search of water.



Subterranean Termite mud shelter tubes linked to an indoor fishpond to draw water.

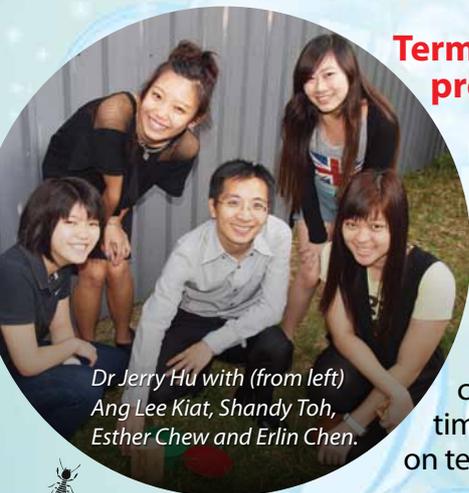
WHAT ABOUT TERMITES?

Termites cause hundreds of thousands of dollars of damage to properties every year in Singapore.

Four students pursuing a course in facilities management at the Singapore Polytechnic decided to find out more about this tiny insect and how they can be controlled. They contacted several pest management companies but did not get a response. Just when they were about to give up and switch projects, Aardwolf Pestkare's Technical Manager Dr Jerry Hu called.

Having personally experienced difficulty in getting collaboration with companies during his student days, Dr Hu felt that he should give some of his time to help them. After all he is today regarded as one of the top entomologists on termites in Asia.

The four ladies were delighted. They now hope to receive top marks for their project.



Dr Jerry Hu with (from left) Ang Lee Kiat, Shandy Toh, Esther Chew and Erlin Chen.