

FOREST STEWARDSHIP BRIEFINGS

Timber ◇ Wildlife ◇ Water Quality ◇ Soil Conservation ◇ Best Management Practices ◇ Recreation ◇ Aesthetics

MULCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

by Dr. Michael Merchant,
Urban Entomologist, Texas
Cooperative Extension, Dal-
las, TX

For more information:

- http://citybugs.tamu.edu/IntheNews_Details.asp?ID_Key=425
- <http://termites.tamu.edu/formosan.html>
- <http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/termites/>
- <http://www.agctr.lsu.edu/NR/rdonlyres/B49C9FA5-24A9-4631-9210-68ECDE9FF1B6/2712/pub2908termites.pdf>

A recent email circulating on the Internet suggests that bark mulch being sold through certain large retailers is likely to be infested with an alarming new termite species. The message warns consumers to be on the lookout for termite-infested mulch which the state of Louisiana is attempting to ship to whoever will take it. The termite being shipped, according to the message, is the Formosan termite.

According to Dr. Dennis Ring, extension entomologist from Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, the university published an article in October, notifying people about a quarantine on shipping wood from Formosan termite-infested areas and warning people in hurricane areas to be careful how to dispose of their yard debris.

There is currently a quarantine on all wood waste from hurricane-devastated areas of southern Louisiana [see top article, page 2]. The quarantine specifically addresses the concern about Formosan termite-infested wood products being shipped to new areas. According to Dr. Gregg Henderson, research entomologist and termite expert from LSU, all yard debris and dead trees are being burned or shipped to a large local landfill near New Orleans. The state is currently considering how or whether large quantities of wood material can be treated prior to shipping to overflow landfills in Mississippi that do not currently have Formosans.

Louisiana neither encourages nor condones the sale of wood waste in mulch from the hurricane damaged areas. If any-

one is chipping, bagging and selling mulch from southern Louisiana it is being done illegally. The same would be true for Texas where there are also large quantities of wood from Hurricane Rita-affected areas that also have Formosan termites.

Formosan termites are commonly found in damaged trees in the New Orleans area. It is possible for Formosan termites to be transported in wood mulch. This has occurred in at least one instance, prior to last year's hurricane season, and was observed by researchers at Texas A&M University. However, the chance for Formosan termites to be shipped in this way is relatively low for several reasons. For one, the chipping and mulching process used to make landscape mulch is highly destructive to termites and the likelihood of transporting a viable mini-colony of Formosans in this manner is relatively low.

A far more common route that Formosan termites are distributed is via the sale and distribution of recycled railroad ties. Railroad ties are pulled from railway beds and commonly sold throughout the country for use in landscaping. Unfortunately, Formosan termites can easily inhabit the untreated center areas of railroad ties. When railroad ties are collected from Formosan termite-infested areas they can easily transport these termites to many parts of the country.

Twenty-five counties in Texas have been found with Formosan termite infestations, although the principal infested areas are along the upper Gulf coast between Houston and Louisiana.

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MUCH TO DO ABOUT TERMITES

by Dr. Dennis Ring, Entomologist, Professor, Extension Specialist, Department of Entomology, Louisiana State University AgCenter, Baton Rouge, LA

For more information:

- <http://www.lsuagcenter.com/>

Efforts are under way to prevent the spread of Formosan subterranean termites in mulch from New Orleans and Louisiana following hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

It is true that there is a lot of cellulose debris (wood, paper and their products) in Louisiana following these two hurricanes. Yes, Formosan subterranean termites are found in the parishes affected by the hurricanes and will get in mulch. However, the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry (LDAF) in Louisiana imposed a quarantine for the Formosan subterranean termite on October 3, 2005, in Calcasieu, Cameron, Jefferson, Jefferson Davis, Orleans, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. John the Baptist, St. Tammany, Tangipahoa and Washington parishes (the parishes affected by the hurricanes).

Provisions of the quarantine imposed by the LDAF include:

- Movement of wood or cellulose material is prohibited unless either (1) it is fumigated or treated for Formosan subterranean termites and is approved for movement by the commissioner or his designee(s) or (2) written authorization is given by the commis-

sioner or his designee(s) for the movement of untreated wood or cellulose material from the quarantined parishes.

- Temporary housing cannot be moved from the named parishes until written authorization is given by the commissioner or his designee(s).
- All architectural components (beams, doors and salvaged wood) cannot be sold or placed in any structure in any parish until the architectural components are fumigated or treated for Formosan subterranean termites
- Additionally, it is strongly recommended that all new construction and reconstruction of structures in the quarantined parishes use pressure-treated wood or non-cellulose materials. [The Texas Department of Agriculture has placed entry restrictions on wood materials from southeast Louisiana that could contain Formosan subterranean termites.]

The quarantine is in effect until it is rescinded by the commissioner of agriculture. If a waiver of a requirement or an authorization to carry out one of the prohibited acts is granted, it does not rescind or modify the quarantine.

TEXAS BRIGADES WILDLIFE LEADERSHIP CAMPS

by Dale F. Prochaska, Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept., Kerr Wildlife Management Area, Hunt, TX

For more information:

- <http://www.texasbrigades.org>

The Texas Brigades is a wildlife-focused leadership development program for high school youth ages 13-17. There are four different camps: **Bobwhite Brigade**, **Buckskin Brigade**, **Feathered Forces**, and **Bass Brigade**. Students will be introduced to habitat management, honing communication skills and developing a land ethic. Top wildlife professionals and resource managers serve as instructors and mentors. Each camp is 4 ½ days long.

The camps are held on private ranches and at environmental camps in different areas of the state. In addition to learning animal anatomy and behavior, botany, nu-

trition, habitat management, population dynamics, etc., students will also learn valuable leadership skills. They will write news releases, practice public speaking and find out how to handle radio and television interviews. Through these activities, students develop valuable life skills that will help no matter their career goals.

The Texas Brigades is a cooperative effort of Texas Cooperative Extension, Texas Wildlife Association, TPWD, USDA-NRCS, the Lower Colorado River Authority, the Texas Deer Association, the Mellon Foundation, Quail Unlimited, and the National Wild Turkey Federation.

ATTRACTING BIRDS TO YOUR PROPERTY

Birds need shelter from hard rains and cold winds and protection from predators. Young birds especially need cover while they are learning to fly. The most dangerous backyard predator may be the local house cat. You can add shelter and food sources to your yard by including wildlife needs in your landscaping plan.

Fortunately, most of the qualities you look for in plants are also a high priority for birds. We like to have lots of flowers and fruits, dense growth and long-lasting foliage. Birds do too! Even if you have only a deck or window planter, you can attract birds and offer shelter by careful plant selection. A hanging basket of fern or ivy could shelter a wren. A small evergreen tree in a tub could break a cold wind or keep the rain off.

If your landscape is mostly lawn, plant an island of shrubs and flowers. Perhaps five or seven (odd numbers look best when

grouping) boxwoods or hollies surrounded by zinnias or marigolds would work well and add attractive color. Add a small flowering fruit tree such as pear, plum, crab apple, or dogwood.

If your landscape is mostly shrubs and lawn, a fast-growing tree such as honey locust, green ash or red maple will add height to your yard. A small grove of the trees would be even more attractive.

If your landscape is mostly trees, you have an advantage. Many people wait a lifetime for their trees to reach full height. Planting a few shade-tolerant smaller trees and shrubs will give a layered effect and will attract different kinds of birds. Consider dogwood, holly, aromatic sumac, and viburnum, among others. You may want to add a few evergreens. They are excellent protection from cold winds and will protect your house as well as the wildlife when planted on the north and west sides.

from Arkansas State Parks publication, "Cover."

For more information:

- <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildscapes/>
- http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/huntwild/wild/wildscapes/guidance/planning/home_lot_dev/design_tips/index.phtml

COPMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN

Texans have watched communities and over a million acres go up in flames during this recent wildfire season, and as such, prevention and protection have become increasingly important to the state's communities.

In 2005, the Urban Wildland Interface (UWI) program took notice of this problem and brought the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to Texas. CWPP is a nationwide program that offers the best solution for identifying strategies for increasing a community's resilience to wildfires. It is being spearheaded in Texas by Justice Jones, UWI Specialist. Jones put together a template that makes the process easier for communities. You can find the template on the TFS Web site.

To have a working CWPP in a community, structural ignitability and hazardous fuels reduction need to be addressed and

involve three entities: the local fire department, a local government official, and the area UWI specialist. The federal government recognizes the CWPP and will use its presence as a determining factor in appropriating funds after a disaster or for fuel reduction. Federal partners will also participate in the process when plans are developed in proximity to federal lands and focus fuels reduction efforts in areas identified as at-risk in a CWPP.

The ultimate goal for a community with a CWPP is to become one of the Firewise Communities/USA, which is a nationally recognized program whose goal is to encourage and acknowledge action that minimizes home loss to wildfire.

For more information contact your local UWI specialist or Justice Jones, jjjones@tfs.tamu.edu.

by Elysa Nelson & the Communications Office, Texas Forest Service, College Station, TX

For more information:

- http://www.tamu.edu/ticc/UWI_contacts.pdf
- <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/shared/article.asp?DocumentID=1209>
- <http://texasforests.tamu.edu/fire/interface/default.asp>
- <http://www.firewise.org/usa/>

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Editorial Board

- Dick Pike, TPWD, Lufkin, Texas
- Joe Pase, TFS, Lufkin, Texas

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS AVAILABLE

From 1979 through March 2002, the Texas Forest Service (TFS) has been taking black and white aerial photographs of the forested region of East Texas. The photographs are taken during the winter months when hardwood trees have dropped their leaves. This makes ground features more visible and allows for easy separation of pine and hardwood timber.

TFS no longer takes the black and white photos. Instead, color infrared photographs have been taken and digitized. Most TFS District offices should have digital copies of these photos taken from 2003 through 2005.

Black and white photos from 1979 through 2002 are available for purchase at a nominal charge. For a map and list of quadrangles and the years they were photographed, go to the TFS website at <http://texasforests.tamu.edu>. Click on *Forest Management*, then *Aerial Photographs of East Texas Areas*. To receive help in locating or ordering a photo for your particular property, contact your local TFS office or Donna Work at dwork@tfs.tamu.edu.

To obtain a free print-out of your property from the color infrared photography, contact the TFS office located in or near the county where your property is located.



P. O. Box 310
Lufkin, TX 75902-0310

Phone: 936-639-8180

Email: dwork@tfs.tamu.edu

TDD Line: 1-866-419-4872