

Asian subterranean termite (384)

Summary

- Worldwide distribution. In Oceania, recorded from Fiji (Lautoka only), and French Polynesia (Marquesas Islands).
- Damage: destructive, feeding on paper, clothes, living trees (preference) - mango, citrus, coconut, cassava. Mostly, lives underground.
- Colonies are started by king and queen - queen laying 1000 eggs/day; eggs produce blind workers (dig tunnels, collect food, care for brood), and soldiers (large, defend colony, emit toxic substances); colonies up to 1 million.
- Spread: (i) each year swarms of 'reproductive' occur and pairs of kings and queens seek new places to start colonies; (ii) colonies move long distances in e.g., wooden shipping pallets.
- Cultural control: Fiji has eradication plan: surveys, containment, community surveillance (<http://baf.com.fj/news/asian-subterranean-termites>). Where established, measures needed concerning drainage, ventilation, treatment of timber, treatment of swarms.
- Chemical control: Chemicals for preservation of timber; soil barriers to prevent termite invasions beneath houses; and monitoring baits, need be applied by professional pest control operators.

Common Name

Asian subterranean termite

Scientific Name

Coptotermes gestroi. It was previously known as *Coptotermes havilandi*.

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Information from Rudolf H Scheffrahn, Nan-Yao Su (2017) *Coptotermes gestroi* (= *havilandi*) (Wasmann). Asian subterranean termite. Featured Creatures, Entomology & Nematology, UF/IFAS, University of Florida. (<http://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/urban/termites/havilandi.htm>); and Biosecurity Authority Fiji. Asian subterranean termites. (<http://baf.com.fj/news/asian-subterranean-termites>); and *Coptotermes gestroi*. Wikipedia. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coptotermes_gestroi); and from Nan-Yao Su, Rudolf H Scheffrahn (2019) *Coptotermes formosanus* Shiraki. Featured Creatures, Entomology & Nematology, UF/IFAS, University of Florida. (<https://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/pdffiles/IN/IN27800.pdf>). Photos 1-3 Walker K (2011) Asian subterranean termite (*Coptotermes gestroi*). PaDIL - <http://www.padil.gov.au>.

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Photo 1. Side view of soldier, Asian subterranean termite, *Coptotermes gestroi*.



Photo 2. Top view of soldier, Asian subterranean termite, *Coptotermes gestroi*.

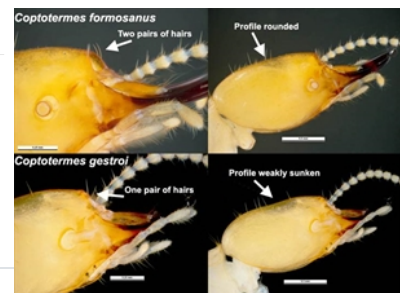


Photo 3. Comparison of features of the Asian subterranean termite, *Coptotermes gestroi*, and the Formosan subterranean termite, *Coptotermes formosanus*.

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