

TRI-PARISH AG NEWS

POINTE COUPEE, WBR, & IBERVILLE

May 2020



Pointe Coupee Parish Extension Office
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New Roads, LA 70760
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www.LSUAgCenter.com

May 2020 Events

12: Online Training for Private and Commercial Pesticide Applicators
12: Beef Brunch Online Educational Series – What’s Bugging You, Part 1
19: Beef Brunch Online Educational Series – What’s Bugging You, Part 2

June 2020 Events

9: Beef Brunch Online Educational Series – Weed Management in Summer Forage Systems

Remind Text Groups

Stay informed through text by joining one of our text groups:

Pointe Coupee: text @pcfarmers to 81010

WBR: text @wbrfarmers to 81010

Iberville: text @ibefarmers to 81010

Private and Commercial Pesticide Applicator Exam Training

This training event has been developed to assist you in better understanding general pesticide safety and to help prepare you for the exam which you must pass to become a certified applicator.

This training covers materials from the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual. Exams can be scheduled and taken through LDAF. You may contact LDAF to set up a time for testing, once you are ready.

Please contact Bryan Gueltig at bgueltig@agcenter.lsu.edu or Kim Brown at kbrown@agcenter.lsu.edu for more information or questions.

The training will be held on **May 12, 2020 at 1:00 pm**. People who wish to participate must pre-register online at the LSU AgCenter’s online store by 4:00 pm, May 11, 2020, to attend. Once you have registered, you will be provided a link that you must use to connect with the training event on May 12, 2020, at 1:00 pm.

The training will take approximately 3 ½ hours to complete, and the cost for the training is \$45.00.

Please go to <https://store.lsuagcenter.com/c-3-eventsservices.aspx> to register for this event.

Beef Brunch Educational Webinar Series

This online educational webinar series was developed specifically for beef cattle producers. The goal of this series is to bring timely educational information to our beef cattle producers across the state.

The first webinar was titled, “Sustainability During Turbulent Markets.” If you missed this first webinar, please feel free to catch up by visiting the LSU AgCenter Livestock Channel on YouTube. This can be found by visiting <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCD67S84m-f1sptMCC4H-ioQ>.

What's Bugging You – Beef Brunch Educational Webinar Series

This next Beef Brunch Webinar Series, What's Bugging You, will be divided into two parts.

Part 1 is scheduled for **May 12, 2020 at 10:30 am**, and it will feature Dr. Sebe Brown, Field Crops Extension Entomologist. He will be discussing management of armyworms and bermudagrass stem maggot in pastures and fields. Part 2 is scheduled for **May 19, 2020 at 10:30 am**, and it will feature Mr. Jason Holmes, Regional Livestock Specialist. He will be reviewing methods of external parasite control for cattle.

This webinar will be hosted through Microsoft TEAMS. An internet connection is required but a microphone and webcam are not necessary. The TEAMS application may be downloaded by smartphone or tablet and is a free software application.

Participants may join by accessing the webinar online at <http://lsuagcenter.com/beefbrunch>.

You may also join by telephone for audio only.

For Part 1 on May 12th by calling 225-614-2374 and using conference identification code 578 134 854#.

For Part 2 on May 19th by calling 225-614-2374 and using conference identification code 454 138 091#.

For more information on the Beef Brunch Webinar Series, please contact Ashley Edwards at 512-818-5476 or akedwards@agcenter.lsu.edu.

Agronomic Crop Updates

Seedling Cotton Injury

Dr. Sebe Brown, Field Crops Extension Entomologist, LSU AgCenter

In the past week, I have looked at a few central Louisiana cotton fields that appeared to have severe thrips injury, yet no adult or immature thrips were present. Thrips are often one of the first factors people attribute to seedling cotton injury. However, several factors can contribute to early-season cotton injury. These include cold temperatures, insect feeding, preemergence herbicides, sand blasting, seedling disease and water stress. Fields planted in April often will experience some form of environmental stress that delays seedling growth and vigor. Severe issues often arise when these factors become additive, such as chilling injury coupled with use of preemergence herbicides. Much of this injury will look very similar to thrips and is easily mistaken as such. This type of injury can lead automatic thrips sprays when they are not warranted.

The key to making thrips rescue sprays is the presence of immatures. When immatures begin to appear, this means the seed treatment has broken and reproduction is occurring. Luckily, thrips numbers appear to be low thus far in 2020 and are primarily composed of tobacco thrips; however, this can quickly change and may differ across the state. If a rescue spray is deemed necessary, the decision should be made based on the presence of immature thrips and not old thrips damage or other non-insect related damage.

Below are some considerations when deciding what foliar insecticide to use.

Dimethoate:

Positives: Relatively inexpensive, decent efficacy at high rates, less likely to flare spider mites and aphids than acephate.

Negatives: Less effective on western flower thrips, less effective than acephate or bidrin when applied at lower rates.

Acephate

Positives: Relatively inexpensive, effective towards western flower and tobacco thrips.

Negatives: May flare spider mites and aphids if present.

Bidrin

Positives: Effective, less likely to flare spider mites and aphids than acephate.

Negatives: More expensive, less flexibility with applications early season.

Intrepid Edge

Positives: Effective, unlikely to flare spider mites and aphids. Intrepid Edge is a mix of Radiant and Intrepid. Activity is similar to Radiant.

Negatives: Requires the application of two modes of action but only gets the benefit of one.

Italian Ryegrass is Everywhere! Do not forget about it this Fall.

Dr. Daniel Stephenson, Extension Weed Scientist, LSU AgCenter

How many of you had an issue with glyphosate-resistant Italian ryegrass this spring? Did you expect clethodim to solve the problem and then found it did not? Did you apply paraquat and were not satisfied? Many farmers, consultants, and dealers commented to me since late January that the Italian ryegrass problem has exploded in Louisiana. Honestly, this is not surprising because we have not been addressing this pest properly. Mississippi has had this issue for longer than Louisiana has. Mississippi State University weed scientists determined a good strategy to manage glyphosate-resistant Italian ryegrass five or six years ago. LSU AgCenter weed scientists adopted their strategies and began disseminating that plan. It starts with tillage or a residual herbicide application in the fall, which has not been adopted by many producers in Louisiana. This article will not go into detail about Mississippi State University's glyphosate-resistant Italian ryegrass management plan in this article, BUT it will be covered at length later this year.

I am writing this article because I would like for Louisiana farmers, consultants, dealers, and ag lenders to notice that glyphosate-resistant Italian ryegrass is still present in corn, cotton, and soybean fields on May 1st. It may be brown following herbicide applications, but it is still competing with crops as you can see in the photo (Figure 1).

Do not take glyphosate-resistant Italian ryegrass lightly. Remember what crop fields look like in the spring so that you will be motivated to implement good management strategies in the future. More to come later. If you have questions, please contact your LSU AgCenter parish agent. Feel free to contact me at 318-308-7225. Have a great day.



Figure 1. Italian ryegrass competing with seedling soybeans.

Cotton Nitrogen Rates

Dr. Dan Fromme, Cotton Specialist, LSU AgCenter

Once the cotton stand has been established, nitrogen applications will be made for the upcoming season. Recommended nitrogen rates are 60 to 90 pounds per acre for coarse-textured soils and 90 to 120 pounds per acre for high-clay soils. The lower recommended rates should be used on fields that are following soybeans, corn or legume cover crops and fields with a history of excessive stalk growth.

Caution should be used to not apply more nitrogen than what will be required by the cotton plant because excessively high nitrogen rates can produce very tall and rank cotton. This increased vegetative growth will hinder reproductive growth and ultimately yield. Furthermore, to limit this excessive growth, producers will have to rely heavily on mepiquat chloride applications to control plant height and creating the potential for making the cotton plant harder to defoliate at the end of season. Excessive nitrogen, especially

in combination with high amounts of late-season rainfall, can delay maturity, reduce harvesting and ginning percentages, and promote boll shedding and boll rot.

Also, best management practices suggest making split applications of nitrogen, especially on sandy soils with a high leaching potential and soils with a high saturation potential due to denitrification losses. For split nitrogen applications, a third to half should be applied at planting, with the remainder being applied by early bloom at the latest.

Table 1. Nitrogen rates for cotton in Louisiana

Soil type	Dryland	Irrigated
Clay	90-120	100-120
Clay loam	90-120	100-120
Fine sandy loam	60-90	60-90
Loamy sand	60-90	60-90
Silt clay	90-120	100-120
Silt clay loam	90-120	100-120
Silt loam	60-90	60-90
Very fine sandy loam	60-90	60-90

Considerations for improving on-farm water management

Stacia L. Davis Conger, LSU AgCenter Engineer

If planting happens to be delayed due to wet conditions, here are a few reminders and a few new considerations to help with navigating this upcoming irrigation season.

1. Review readily available irrigation water management technologies

This is a good time to review which technologies work best with your current management strategies.

Computerized hole selection (CHS)

The purpose of CHS is to determine the correct hole sizes along the lay-flat irrigation pipe so that all rows water out at the same time while maintaining an acceptable pressure within the pipe. The software is a free alternative to an engineer designing the distribution across the field. Once the hole sizes are determined, a printout can be given to the hole puncher to take into the field during setup. There are two CHS options: [PHAUCET](#) and [PipePlanner](#). Delta Plastics' PipePlanner has become the most popular software due to the easy point-and-click website design combined with the complexity of Louisiana's farming operations and field shapes. However, PipePlanner requires a good internet connection and may require a few training sessions with me, an extension agent, or a Delta Plastics representative to get the process down. PHAUCET is a downloadable program and does not require the internet to run. Its lack of modern design (looks like a Windows 95 program) makes it less user-friendly and can get complicated with oddly shaped fields. However, both programs have the same hydraulics calculations behind the interface, will give the same results and are free to use.

Surge irrigation

Surging furrow irrigation events involves moving the water across the field in multiple segments in effort to improve infiltration uniformity (less overwatering at the head, less underwatering at the tail, less runoff). This process can be completed manually by switching between two or more irrigation sets every few hours or with a surge valve that automates the process. Implementing this method can consistently provide water savings (reported as 10% - 50%) while

helping to even out yield response to water stress across the field. Information about net profits associated with surge irrigation can be found [here](#). Surge valves are available from [P&R Surge Systems, Inc.](#) and [DamSurge](#), but locally made valves may be available.

Soil moisture sensors (SMS)

With regular access to soil moisture data, trends in water loss can help to predict when irrigation will be needed, determine root growth, find compaction layers and estimate how much of that last rainfall (or irrigation) actually entered the soil. There are many different types, styles and data collection methods that need to be considered before investing in a product or product line. Most universities have extension information available to help inform your decisions, but make sure to check the recommendations based on soil type, as that is the most important factor in getting good data.

Please check out our videos on scheduling irrigation and furrow irrigation technologies on [YouTube](#).

Automated pump/valve control

This recommendation is a new one from us, but only because it is a fairly new product line for the mid-South market. Automating pumps remotely and switching between irrigation sets without touching the alfalfa valve can be extremely helpful in managing irrigation more efficiently. Typically, these products require an app or website to control the irrigation infrastructure and provide irrigation and maintenance records at the end of the season. They can be used to manually control all devices (remote operation) or can be fully automated. How many times has irrigation continued to run for an additional few hours (or more) until someone could make it back to shut off the pump? Though complete automation is ideal, it does not mean that irrigation should be ignored. Issues common to furrow irrigation such as busted pipes, animal damage and large changes in flow rates can still negatively impact efficiency. Loss in wireless connection can also be an issue in rural areas.

2. Appoint an irrigation manager

Many times, farmers describe getting behind with irrigation while focusing on other issues such as insect pests, diseases, and weeds. It is understandable given the fact that irrigation is not always required, whereas other issues occur every crop season. To help avoid this occurrence, consider the appointment of an irrigation manager. This person would be responsible for irrigating on time and as efficiently as possible. There are many creative options for incorporating this position within most operational styles. Examples include hiring a crop consultant with soil and water responsibilities, providing an end-of-season bonus to a trusted farmhand during a big irrigation year or hiring a full-time irrigation manager that can work on improvements when not in the field.

3. Fine-tune drainage and water quality

With such wet conditions currently, this is a good time to revisit on-farm drainage. There are two main considerations: moving water off the field in a timely manner and ensuring that good-quality drainage water enters the natural environment. In the short term, newly cut ditches can help drain low spots more quickly, but they may not be the best long-term solution and can increase erosion potential. Water routing plans should be completed using accurate elevation maps, current drainage patterns and soil type considerations that affect infiltration. In some soil types, such as those with a hard pan and sealing surfaces, considering tile drains with the benefit of sub-irrigation strategies may be a good investment. Even if maintaining the current ditch structure, establishing a buffer between farm discharge outlet(s) and local water bodies can greatly improve downstream water quality. You can find more information on buffers from [NRCS](#).

4. Available weather data

In February, the LSU AgCenter released [a new page on the website](#) to provide weather variables from an updated weather network called Louisiana Agrilimatic Information System (LAIS). This updated LAIS network includes a minimum of one station within each region around the state. As they continue to develop the product, future

capabilities include providing daily reference evapotranspiration values that can be used to schedule irrigation using estimated methods such as the [checkbook method](#). Please reach out to me or your local extension agent to gain access to our checkbook method spreadsheet that will be publicly released later this year.

Horticulture

Our Regional Horticulture Agents and specialists put together the Horticulture Hints for the Central Region in Louisiana. This information can be found by going to <https://bit.ly/2WdwqeJ>. These are done quarterly and have great information on timely issues happening across our region.

Watch Out for that Sting

Every year we look forward to Spring. Everything is in bloom; the weather begins to change, and it is a great time to get out of the house and enjoy the outdoors. Unfortunately, this also means that the insects are ready to come out as well. Some of these are not too friendly on our plants, but some are also not too friendly for us.

Each year many people and their pets are stung by a large caterpillar with black spines that emerges in the spring. So, what is that stinging caterpillar?



Photo 1. Buck Moth Caterpillar. Photo by Robbie Hutchins, LSU AgCenter.

This stinging caterpillar is the larval stage of a colorful moth known as the buck moth. Buck moths are fairly large moths with black and white wings and a rust colored abdomen. These moths emerge from the ground in late fall and early winter in Louisiana usually in November through mid-December. Mature buck moths can often be seen in daylight hours a trait that differentiates them from other moths. Females lay eggs in circular clusters on smaller limbs in the canopies of oak trees. Live oaks appear to be the buck moth's most preferred oak species, but other oaks can also be attacked.

The eggs begin to hatch between mid-February and April in Louisiana. Young larvae, caterpillars, feed on oak leaves and grow rapidly. When the caterpillars are fully developed, they crawl down the tree as a group and look for a place to bury in the ground and pupate. The mature caterpillars are usually 2"-3" in length and are covered by many hollow spines. Each one of their hollow spines contains venom and multiple spines are often injected by a single touch. It is this venom that produces a painful sting when touched.

Buck moth caterpillars are prone to crawl along sidewalks, patios, driveways, and lawns. Contact between buck moth larvae and people, young children, or pets generally happens during this time.

Some people are highly allergic to insect stings. A caterpillar sting can result in a serious medical emergency for people allergic to insect venom. If stung, those who are allergic to insect venom should seek medical attention immediately.

Fortunately, for most people a sting from a buck moth caterpillar can be easily treated. Avoid rubbing the contacted area since this results in more venom entering the skin. Instead, gently wash the area with soap and water and let it air dry. Then take a piece of scotch tape or duct tape and place it over the affected area. Remove the tape and the multiple spines should be attached to the adhesive portion of the tape. Rubbing alcohol or an ice pack can also be used to treat any swelling.

Buck moth caterpillars can cause defoliation of some or the entire canopy of the infested tree. This seems to be especially true for live oaks. Even though defoliation can appear to be drastic and severe, this defoliation rarely causes death of the tree. Trees generally grow back their leaves within a few weeks after defoliation. However, trees already weakened by some other type of stress can have a hard time recovering. If a tree is defoliated by buck moth larvae or other insects, it is prudent to lessen other environmental stresses on the tree until it has time to recover. Supplemental watering is recommended to help trees recover from insect defoliation. To conduct a beneficial supplemental watering, water the tree slowly and deeply starting under the canopy and moving the area around the drip line. Water slowly and deeply to the point where the ground is saturated. The ground should be soft and spongy like it normally is after a long duration winter rain. Repeat the process every 7-10 days until the tree grows its foliage back.



Photo 2. Defoliation caused by Buck Moth infestation. Photo by Justin Dufour, LSU AgCenter.

Although treatment options for buck moth caterpillars do exist for the homeowner, most are expensive and are not very effective. Treatment for buck moth caterpillars is most effective when the larvae are young and concentrated in small areas in the canopy. Two nontoxic pesticides recommend treating larvae in this stage are Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) and Spinosad. For treatment for caterpillars that are in the mature stage homeowners can use common pyrethroids with active ingredients such as permethrin or bifenthrin that are sold under several different brand names. Unfortunately, most infested trees are too large for homeowners to spray themselves with their equipment. Therefore, a commercial applicator must be used. This can be very costly. In addition, unless all infected trees on a homeowner's property or in a neighborhood are treated then no significant effect on buck moth populations will be achieved.

Perhaps the most satisfying control method is mechanical control. Caterpillars can be killed by squashing them with something or stomping them with a shoe. Some claim that buck moth caterpillars make a sound like popping bubble wrap when stomped. Remember to be careful not to touch the caterpillars with bare skin even the dead ones.

Continue to enjoy the great weather and wonderful sights of spring in Louisiana. And the next time you see one of those stinging caterpillars you will know what they are, and where they came from.

Mower Maintenance Tips

With lawn mowing season in full-swing, I have one quick question for you, did you tune up your lawn mower this past fall or winter? Mower maintenance is crucial to making sure you have little to no issues with your mower during mowing season.

Just like your vehicle, your small engines need the proper care and maintenance to run efficiently throughout their lifetime. There are a few simple things you can do to make sure your mower will run smoothly throughout this mowing season. For starters, each time you go to mow your lawn, make sure to check your oil. If you have not changed your oil in a while, you may want to consider changing both your oil and oil filter. Consult your owner's manual to see the interval (typically the done by hours) between oil changes.

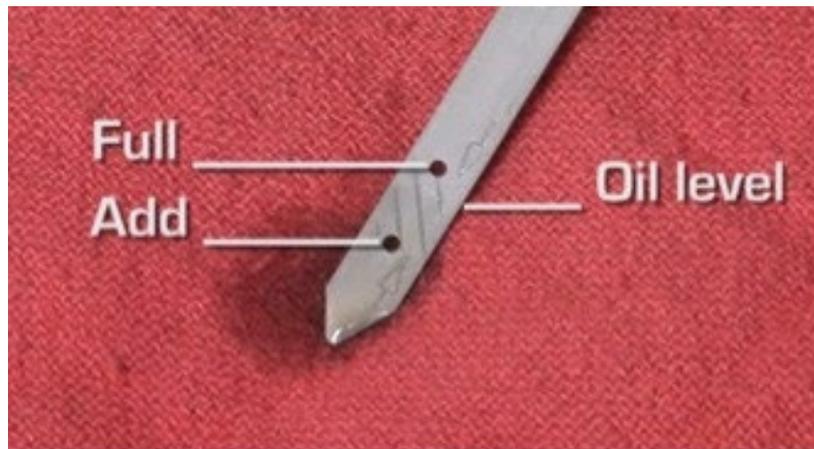


Photo 1. Engine oil dipsticks are used to make sure your oil level is at the correct level for your engine.

Next you will want to check your air and fuel filters. If you have had your mower for several years, this is something you should consider changing. If these filters are clogged it will reduce the amount of fuel and air flow to the engine causing it to run poorly. Again, you should always check your owner's manual for your mower's maintenance schedule.



Photo 2. Visually check your fuel filter to make sure it does not need to be changed.

Besides for the engine, the blade is the most important component to your lawn mower. The blade is something that should be inspected regularly to make sure it is both sharp and balanced. The blade will eventually wear down due to normal wear and tear. When you blade is dull, it makes an unclean cut on your lawn. If you notice your blade is dull your blade should either be changed or sharpened but remember to follow your owner's manual for all safety requirements when working to remove your blade, and do not do more than you feel comfortable doing. Safety is always our number one goal.

When checking your blade, you need to make sure that it is not only sharp but at the proper height. Most mowers have different settings for deck height. Some mowers even have the measurements labeled for the height of the mower blades directly on the mower. It is important to check this height several times throughout the mowing season. To check the mowing height, first make sure all tires are filled to the same air pressure and that your mower is on level ground. You can purchase a deck leveling gauge or use a tape measure to make sure all sides of the mowing deck are level.

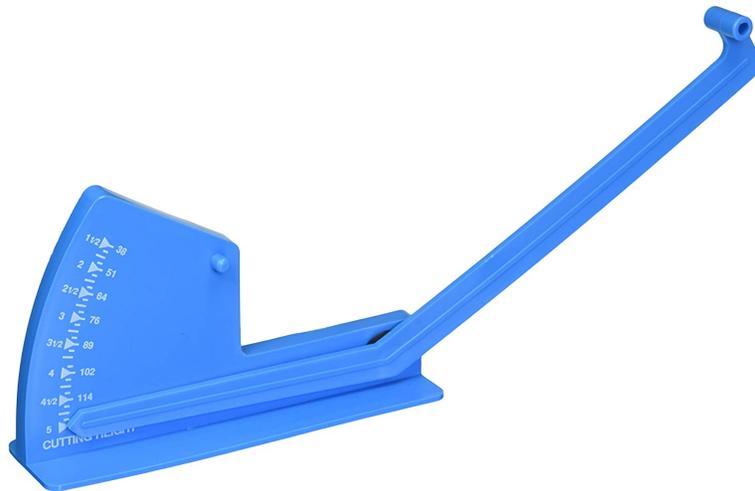


Photo 3. Mower deck leveling tools can aid in making sure your mower blades are level and at the correct height.

Most of our southern lawns consist of Bermuda, Centipede, or St. Augustine grasses. Each of these types of grasses should be mowed at different heights to improve their overall quality. St. Augustine grass should be mowed between 2-3 inches in height, where Bermuda and Centipede grass should be mowed between 1-2 inches. If you mow your lawn shorter than what is recommended for your type of lawn it is considered scalping. Scalping your lawn causes added stress to your lawn, and will invite unwanted pests such as diseases, insects, and weeds. Maintaining a healthy lawn is the best way to keep these things out of your lawn, and the easiest step is to make sure you are mowing your lawn at the proper, recommended height.

If you are like me, mowing the lawn is relaxing and instant gratification. However, if you wait too long between your mower maintenance, mowing the lawn could be just another unwanted chore. So, protect your mower by keeping up the maintenance based on your mower's owner's manual.

Termite Swarms are Back

As our evening temperatures begin to warm, you may begin to see swarms of Formosan subterranean termites begin to swarm. These termites come out of their colonies at dusk, often near lights, searching for wood and moisture to form new colonies. Each year these termites swarm from May to June, with their most activity being around Mother's Day.

These termites are not new to Louisiana as they are an invasive species that came to the continental United States from Asia shortly after World War II via wood on cargo ships. Louisiana was one of the first places in the U.S. where these termites established colonies. This is due the heat and humidity that we have here in Louisiana.



Photo 1. Formosan subterranean termite workers and soldiers are rarely seen. Swarmers will be flying from late April to June.

Formosan subterranean termite colonies grow slowly at first but will eventually become huge and can survive for decades. This is due to the queen becoming very large and laying thousands or tens of thousands of eggs per day. Formosan termites are the most destructive termites in the world due to their large colonies and very aggressive soldiers that are tolerant to high temperature and feed on a diverse range of wood types. It is estimated that these pests cause \$1 billion in damage in the United States annually, with half of that - \$500 million – in Louisiana, especially in the south eastern portion of the state towards the New Orleans area.

If you see these termites swarming around your home, it indicates that there may be a nearby colony. We recommend being proactive and search your property for any sources of food or water where a colony may exist such as wood stored on the ground or mulch contacting the foundation of your home, decaying portions of a tree, or any outdoor faucets that may be leaking. In some cases, the infestation may be on your neighbor's property. So, work with your neighbor and try to locate the source of your infestation. If you cannot locate the source or have a concern, we recommend contacting a local pest control professional.



Photo 2. Termite swarms around light posts and out lightning typically peak around Mother's Day.

To reduce the swarms from being attracted to your home, remove all food and water sources. In the evenings, termites are attracted to a light source. We recommend during peak swarming months to turn off all outdoor lighting, and close blinds or curtains to reduce them swarming around your home. If you do see a few termites in your home during this time, but do not see mud tunnels, there is not much to worry about. Just because you see these swarmers in your home, it does not mean that you immediately have a termite problem.

If you do see tunnels or a large amount of swarmers in the evenings, we recommend contacting a pest control professional to treat your home. As the summer progresses you will begin to see less of these termites swarming around your home.

May – June 2020

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