



termite

representative specimen

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Arthropoda
Class: Insecta
Order: Isoptera
Family: Rhinotermitidae

FEATURES

Termite adults are soft-bodied, light-colored and about one-fourth inch in length. If wings are present, they are clear and similar in size. The antennae are short. The nymph resembles a wingless adult. Eyes may or may not be present.

BEHAVIORS

Termites may be found statewide in Illinois. The king and queen are the most well-developed sexually and also have wings and eyes. The queen may live for several years, laying thousands of eggs. Kings and queens are produced only in certain seasons, leaving the colony in a swarm to mate and begin new colonies. Other reproductive individuals may be present within a colony to assist the queen. Worker termites are nymphs and sterile adults. They are pale and lack wings and eyes. Workers perform most of the work of the colony. Soldiers are sterile adults. They have a large head and jaws. Their job is to protect the colony. Termites eat shed skins and feces of other termites, dead termites and plant materials. They have protozoans or bacteria within their intestine to digest the cellulose in their food. They often groom each other with their mouthparts.

HABITATS

- bottomland forests
- coniferous forest
- southern Illinois lowlands
- upland deciduous forest

ILLINOIS STATUS

- common
- endangered
- threatened
- native
- exotic

ILLINOIS RANGE

Permanent resident: statewide

Summer resident:

Migrant:

Winter resident:

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Illinois Department of Natural Resources. 1999.
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