

Slow and steady

How the historic Thomas Center became termite-free

When the Thomas Center, a historic building that holds a museum and hosts civic functions in Gainesville, Florida, decided to do something about their 25-year drywood termite infestation, Southern Fumigation stepped up to the plate. Owner James Yeomans says the most difficult part of the fumigation was ensuring nothing was damaged while fumigating the 4-million-cubic-foot building.

“The building has an almost new slate tile roof,” he explains. “I was responsible for any damage done to the building. We had to remove plants from inside the building, and we had to guarantee that we wouldn’t harm the landscaping outside.”

To ensure the job was done safely, without damaging anything, Yeomans’ crew members took their time, moved a little more slowly and were very careful about each step they made.

“I walked around and took pictures of the whole roof, prior to us going on it,” he explains. “There were three or four broken tiles on the entire building, so I took pictures of those and showed them to the city’s liaison. After the fumigation was done, we went around and checked again. We had only cracked a tile that

was already cracked. The liaison was able to repair it with silicone.”

It was evident that the termites had been taking up residence in the Thomas Center for a long time, says Yeomans.

“I would say the infestation has been there for 20 to 25 years,” Yeomans says. “It’s an old building, but it’s had good maintenance. The drywoods were everywhere.”

In fact, the Thomas Center experienced swarming termites every year.

Although the employees at the Thomas Center were aware of fumigation, their knowledge was based on outdated methods.

“They had never heard of the things we were talking about, so I had to educate them prior so they understood what we were going to do,” Yeomans says. “I would assume they talked to someone about fumigation years ago and had a basic list of questions to ask about fumigation.”

Yeomans worked with Eric Hobelmann, his sales representative from Dow AgroSciences, to share literature about Vikane® gas fumigant with the city



The Thomas Center is carefully tented during its fumigation by Southern Fumigation.

manager. Next, Southern Fumigation held a mini town hall meeting to talk about concerns and expectations.

One thing was certain, this building had many failed spot treatments over the years.

“There’s no telling how many times it was spot-treated before,” Yeomans says. “I’m almost positive it had been liquid-treated for years, and there’s no way to liquid-treat a building of that size.”

The results spoke for themselves.

“The city was pretty happy,” Yeomans says. “We took extra care. It took us a little longer, but we did it.”

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