

FUMIGATION UPDATE



Two Landmarks, Two Termite Species

JFK's historic bomb shelter and maritime museum treated for drywood and Asian termites.

“Southeast Florida is one of the few localities in the world where Asian and Formosan termites overlap, so it's very unique.”

– *Ellen Thoms*
Dow AgroSciences

During the Cold War, President John F. Kennedy needed protection, so he built an underground fallout shelter. Today, that shelter needs protection — from damaging termites — and it got it from Beach Environmental Exterminating.

The fumigation job of Kennedy Bunker and the Palm Beach Maritime Museum

on Peanut Island in Florida was a job with many layers. Not only did Beach Environmental Exterminating use Vikane® gas fumigant to eliminate the drywood termite infestation, but it also used the Sentricon® System with Always Active™ technology to eliminate subterranean termites from the underground fallout shelter. At first, Beach Environmental Exterminating thought it was dealing with Formosan subterranean termites, but expert help identified an infestation of Asian subterranean termites.

Dave Sprague, owner of Beach Environmental Exterminating, says he was not totally surprised to learn they were Asian termites.

“We suspected that it could be an Asian termite, so we sent a soldier termite off to

Dr. Rudolph Schefferan at the University of Florida and he identified it,” Sprague says. “It's very difficult to tell the difference between a Formosan and an Asian termite without a microscope. The Asian termites are very similar to Formosans, but the colonies are much larger and they can do a lot of damage quickly.”

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Asian termites are not common in this area of Florida, but Sprague says that a port is very close to this site and they think that's how the termites were introduced to the area. Sprague has encountered them on previous jobs in the area.

"I would say we've got Asian termites in about 10 of the buildings we've treated," Sprague says.

Having to eliminate both drywood and Asian subterranean termites is a challenge, and in this case, they were destroying the building.



"If you have both types of termites, this is the way you've got to do it," Sprague says. "We fumigated the building, we knew that would kill all the drywoods inside and then we knew that Sentricon would eliminate the subterranean termites that were underground. This building was being destroyed by termites. We knew we had to do something."

Kennedy Bunker, on Peanut Island, an intercoastal island off the eastern coast of Florida, has some significant historical value. President Kennedy built the bunker in 1961 as his family's fallout shelter, in case of a potential nuclear attack during the Cold War. The Kennedy family's vacation home in Palm Beach is minutes away. Today, the bunker and the former U.S. Coast Guard station are managed by the Palm Beach Maritime Museum, a nonprofit organization that focuses on maritime history.

The Palm Beach Maritime Museum contacted Beach Environmental Exterminating in crisis. Visible termite damage was evident in almost all of the rooms of the Coast Guard station, and the bunker had a severe infestation, as well. The museum used spot termite treatments over the years, but without success. Beach Environmental donated its services to the museum.

"The Coast Guard station had severe drywood termites," Sprague says. "It had to be fumigated. The termites had been active for a long time, and you could see severe damage throughout the 75,000-cubic-foot building."

Sentricon stations were installed around the Kennedy Bunker. Always Active technology with Recruit® HD termite bait was placed in the stations to begin termite colony elimination.

Dr. Ellen Thoms, Dow AgroSciences technical expert for Vikane, says Asian termites, or *Coptotermes gestroi*, are known to be in the area. Because Asian termites are more susceptible to cooler temperatures, they won't get established as far north as Formosan termites. However, Asian termites tend to be more active and even more aggressive than Formosans.

"Southeast Florida is one of the few localities in the world — including Hawaii and Taiwan — where Asian and Formosan termites overlap, so it's very unique," Thoms says.