

2025

FDACS Formosan Termite Alate Trapping Report for Peninsular Florida



Photo courtesy: Dr. Nan-Yao Su

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Purpose

The Formosan termite (*Coptotermes formosanus*) came into Florida about 60 years ago on infested wood packing materials in ships coming from Asia after WWII. Ever since, they have spread rapidly throughout the Southeastern US and thrive in the region's high temperatures and humidity. Formosan termites cause billions of dollars of damage each year in the US alone. This project is designed to trap Formosan termite alates throughout the Peninsula of Florida during their major swarm season from April to July. Trapped alates are counted on a weekly basis to determine peak swarming weeks. The presence or absence of alates is also documented in key areas within Peninsular Florida. This data can aid citizens on Formosan termite presence and activity level in their municipalities.

Materials and Methods

The simple trap consists of a sticky card in proximity to a bright, reliable light source. The white, gridded 7" by 4" sticky card is zip tied to a six-foot, plastic coated metal stake and placed under strong, predetermined streetlights. These streetlights are chosen for brightness, location out of the way of human activity, and lack of competing light sources. Traps are checked weekly during the months of April to July. Alates are identified using a microscope when needed, counted and recorded in an Excel worksheet. For this year of trapping in the Peninsula, six trap locations were selected within Clay, Nassau, and St. Johns counties. Melissa Vizza and Derek Yan of FDACS setup, checked, and maintained the traps.



Figure 1: Formosan termite alate trap

Results

Out of the total six traps, none were positive for Formosan termite alates throughout Clay, Nassau, and St. Johns counties (see Figure 2).

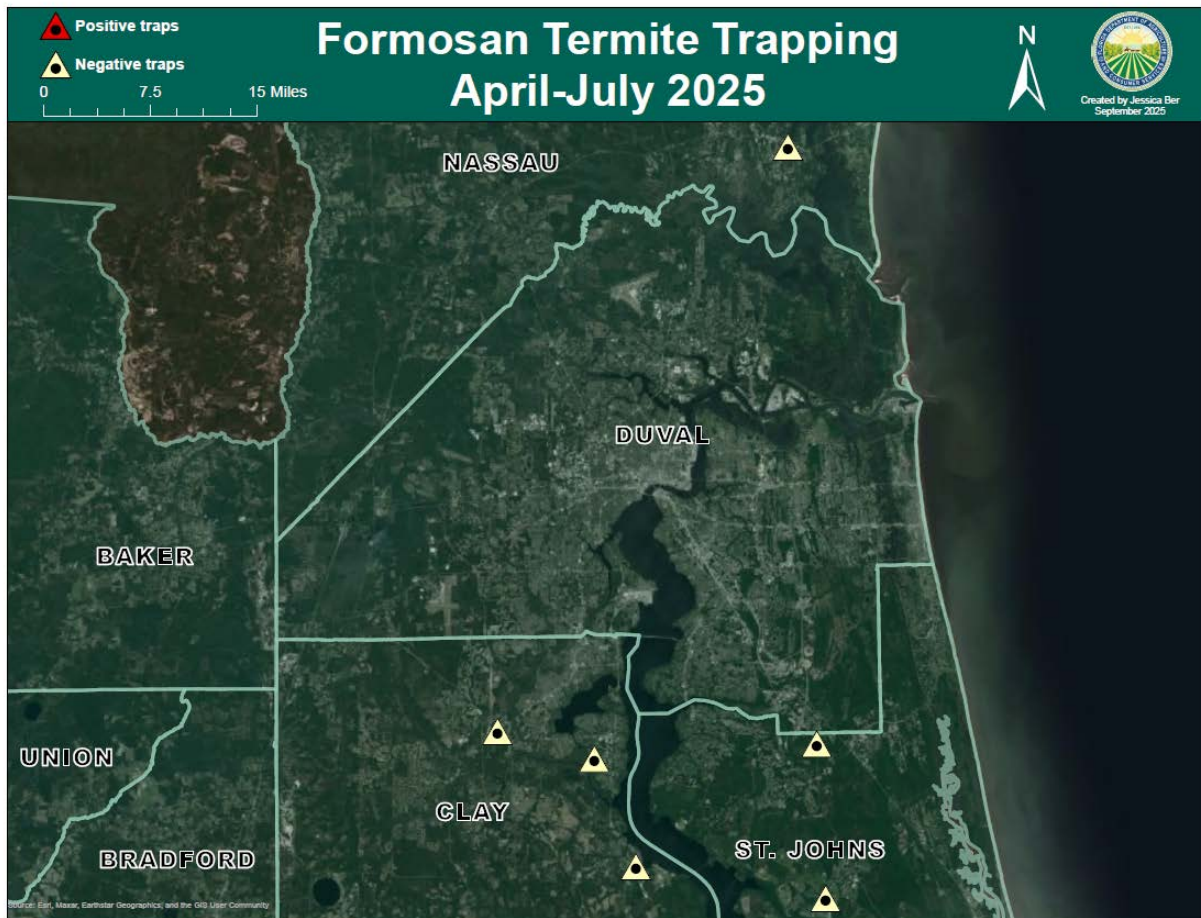


Figure 2. Map of negative traps.

Discussion/Conclusion

From this year of trapping in the Florida Peninsula, there were no positive traps recorded. All three counties this year were chosen because they have not been officiality confirmed as positive for Formosan termites on the State or National maps. Although negative data, this is still valuable to share statewide and is important in monitoring Formosan termite activity throughout the expansive and highly populated Florida Peninsula in the future. Annual continuation of this project and extension into other Peninsular counties will contribute to increased and more widespread education, a better understanding of the range of Formosan territories, and possibly even a swarm forecasting system for citizen and pest control groups throughout Florida.

Special Thanks

This year's trapping and report could not have been achieved without the dedication of Melissa Vizza, Derek Yan, Jessica Ber, and Marah Clark (FDACS).