

Saving the Alamo

Advance® Termite Bait System (ATBS) Installed to End Battle with Termites at the Historic Alamo

The Alamo, originally built as a religious mission, has withstood many troubles since it was built in the 1740s. Later that century it was abandoned as a mission and left in decline. And in 1836, it was the site of the Battle of the Alamo, where Mexican armed forces eventually overtook a small but determined group of Texas military men during the Texas War for Independence, spawning the phrase “Remember the Alamo.”

Now owned by the State of Texas and managed by the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, the Alamo faced another formidable foe recently with the discovery of subterranean termites. While doing damage slower than the battles of war, the potential

threat was just as great – decay and destruction of an important national historic landmark.

Public awareness of termites was heightened with the discovery of Formosan termites in San Antonio, by Sal Caballero, owner of Advanced Pest Control. It was at this time that the Daughters of the Republic of Texas contacted Advanced Pest Control for help with their ongoing termite problem. Since the Alamo had been having trouble with termites for some time, and with concerns about using liquids, it was decided that baits would be used to treat the problem. After using another bait system for several years, Caballero decided to change to the Advance Termite Bait System to do battle with the termites.

“We heard about ATBS when it first came out, but we didn’t start using it until 2007 when we were looking to convert from another system,” Caballero says. “ATBS is better because the bait cartridges are less intrusive, the interior of the stations are low disturbance, and the stations are designed for easy installation and service.”

All of these factors were important at the site since the Alamo is a tourist attraction that draws more than 2.5 million visitors each year.

“With that many visitors, it is important that we not only preserve this historical structure, but that we have zero visibility to visitors when it comes to treating termites,” says Alamo Director David Stewart.

ATBS stations sit inconspicuously at ground level so they are not seen by tourists visiting the property. Additionally, drilling into the stone was not required, which kept the architectural and historical integrity of the structure intact. The majority of the building is stone, but termites had damaged the wood beams and window frames.



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Pest Management In Action



Alamo Ranger, Sgt. James H. Hood (right) with Advanced Pest Control owner Sal Caballero (left). It's Your Day Photography, Kelly Ponce, photographer

In addition, the San Antonio River runs near the site, so Stewart requested that Caballero minimize the use of pesticides, especially liquids, when treating the property. "With the river running nearby, it was important to us to minimize the use of pesticides - especially liquids - when treating the grounds," Stewart says.

The Advance Termite Bait System is different than earlier bait systems. The dual-stage monitoring and baiting process features an ultra low disturbance design that patterns termites' natural feeding behavior. ATBS features one of the largest containerized bait loads available, allowing for maximum bait to be fed to the colony in a shorter time. Termites take to the bait quicker, stay in the station longer and feed more aggressively thanks to the patented station design which is only available with ATBS.

Caballero says that in addition to ATBS being effective and undetectable by tourists, he likes the fact that ATBS is easy to use. "I like the freedom and the fact that it is our choice to establish the time of

monitoring. I also like the dual food source – the wood and the bait are present at the same time."

Now, nearly 200 ATBS stations protect the famous landmark from the damage of one of their most aggressive attackers.

"We have just begun to use ATBS, but we already have the termites under control," Caballero says. "No swarming has occurred, and we continue to get some hits on the stations, so we just keep fighting, and we are now winning the battle."

Advanced Pest Control, which Caballero says takes pride in solving termite problems that have been challenging for other companies, has now converted all their competitive bait systems to ATBS – nearly 5000 stations in all.



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