

## **POPULATION SIZE AND FORAGING AREA OF THE INVASIVE TERMITE *RETICULITERMES FLAVIPES* (BLATTODEA, RHINOTERMITIDAE) IN THE CANARY ISLANDS**

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**Abstract** *Reticulitermes flavipes*, one of the most harmful subterranean termite pests, was recently reported for the first time from Tenerife (Canary Islands, Spain). It is estimated that it was introduced between 2002 and 2005 in the northeast of the island. It affects buildings, crops and both native and ornamental plant species there, with consequent economic, social and biodiversity impacts. Studies to assess the numbers of individuals in foraging populations and their foraging territory sizes have been conducted at several sites within its global distribution. Given that its foraging behaviour varies depending on whether it is a native or introduced species locally, the colonies detected in the Canary Islands have now been characterised. Mark-release-recapture experiments were conducted in three selected areas where this termite is present, each adequately distant from areas already treated with the chitin synthesis inhibitor baits used. Foraging population numbers and foraging area extent were determined. Preliminary results of studies carried out on these *R. flavipes* colonies on Tenerife are provided herein. Among the main results, the second largest colony found to-date of this species is characterised.

**Key words** Eastern subterranean termite, invasive species, foraging territory