

# Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds - Mini Fact Sheet Edition

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# **Coconut termite (116)**



Photo 1. Winged adult and worker termites, Neotermes rainbowii.

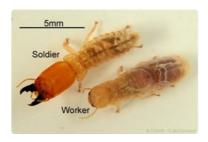


Photo 2. Coconut termite, *Neotermes rainbowi*, soldier and worker.



Photo 3. Characteristic groves in the trunk of a coconut palm made by the coconut termite, *Neotermes ranbowi*.



Photo 4. Attack by the coconut termite, *Neotermes rainbowi*, has produced the characteristic grooves in the trunk, destruction of internal tissues and death of the palm.

## **Summary**

- Narrow distribution. Known only from the central Pacific. On coconuts, but also stilt roots of Pandanus. An important pest.
- After the nuptial flight, the queen lays eggs, producing workers and a few solders. Once the colony is established, it begins
  hollowing out the centre of the palm; this makes it likely to snap off in the wind.
- Characteristic grooves covered with frass and wood are made in the "bark" for reasons unknown.
- Cultural control: dig out and burn palms as soon as net-like grooves are seen.
- Chemical control: not appropriate for this pest; the chemicals might contaminate the fresh water lens.

### **Common Name**

Coconut termite

#### Scientific Name

Neotermes rainbowi. A related termine, Neotermes samoanus, is present in Samoa.

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Information from Waterhouse DF (1993) Biological Control Pacific Prospects - Supplement 2. ACIAR Monograph No. 20. Brown Prior Anderson, Burwood, Victoria. Photos 1-4 Gerald McCormak, Cook Island Biodiversity & Natural Heritage. (http://cookislands.bishopmuseum.org/).

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This mini fact sheet is a part of the app Pacific Pests, Pathogens & Weeds

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