



Inconvenient Truth

Nothing is ever simple, even if you hire it done. Fumigators will descend upon my 39-year-old home while Yoshi and I are kicking back at a local lodge for a couple of days. They will drape a tent over the entire house and pump in poison gas that will kill all the termites. I'll pay them \$1,855 and that will be that. Simple, right? Wrong. The gas kills not only termites but all plants inside the huge tent. Well, the orchids and other houseplants can survive in shady backyard spots. The potted plants lining the 20-foot-long, roof-covered walkway that leads to our front door will get by well enough in the adjacent courtyard. But the decades-old vine that enwraps the center walkway post, shown at left in the photo above, presented a problem. The vine spreads out along a thick overhead beam in both directions from the post, and produces fragrant flower clusters that amaze everyone who sees them. A couple of clusters are displayed in a bud vase at right. Just



by looking at the flowers, you would think there is no way they could be real and not plastic imitations, cheap imitations at that. Conviction comes at the entryway when you see that the cluster stems are attached to the vine, actually growing out of it. Anyway, the vine was a problem for us because the fumigation tent could not possibly exclude it. The only thing to do was to try to save a small portion of it. This portion was separated from the post and stretched out on the ground outside the prospective tent area. The rest was trashed, filling up a sizeable bin. When we get back to our termite-free home, we will reattach the vine to the post and hope that it rejuvenates in the wake of its ordeal. All food-stuffs and medicines – anything that will be ingested – must be protected. We have two refrigerators, one in the kitchen and another in the attached garage, and both suck up house air to do their cooling chores. Everything in them must be sealed in special doubled plastic bags, as shown in the photo at right. Foods and consumable liquids in factory-sealed containers – cans, jars and bottles never opened – are safe from toxic contamination, but that leaves a bunch of pantry and shelf items – cereal, sugar, flour, rice, a half jar of peanut butter, etc., etc. They must be protected, too. Well, it was time to seek help from our good neighbors. They will take and hold our bags and boxes. Peko the cockatiel will go to a neighbor's house as well. We wouldn't want to lose him, our feathered pet for 26 years. Early on, when he was young, Peko wooed and won a homeless female, who eventually died and left him a widower. But that's another story, a love story, for another time.



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Die, termites, die. Our home is completely enclosed within a tent filled with poison gas. Die, termites, die.