

# Don't scrimp when treating the soil

## *Essential to deal with pests properly*

THE South African Pest Control Association (SAPCA) has voiced its concern over the potential decrease of South African property values due to inadequate pre-construction soil treatment before buildings are erected. Soil treatment refers to the application of pesticide to the soil during the pre-construction of a building. When this is neglected, infestation by subterranean termites often requires expensive drill-and-inject treatment after the building has been finished. By this time, damage may have been caused to the building.

Although municipalities in high-risk areas, especially along the coast, have bylaws requiring pre-construction soil treatment, incorrect application is not always noticed by building inspectors. Not all building inspectors are aware of the bylaws and even if they are, they don't always take soil samples to verify that the correct treatment has been carried out.

SAPCA says application should adhere to the manufacturer's label specifications, in terms of concentration and what insect the pesticide is intended for.

"The owner, architect and builder are co-responsible for seeing that this kind of treatment is carried out and properly scrutinised by a building inspector before the foundations are laid. This responsibility is determined by the National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act 103 of 1977)," said Carol McDonald, the vice-chairperson of SAPCA's Gauteng region.

The National Building Regulations and Building Standards Act, 1977 (Act 103 of 1977), clearly states that buildings shall be, where so required by the local authority or in areas of high termite infestations, protected from subterranean termite, therefore the owner, architect and builder are co-responsible for seeing that the correct treatment is applied.

SAPCA CEO Lynette Cokayne also had a warning. "Some builders view treatment as non-essential, while unscrupulous pest-control companies may take shortcuts or use over-diluted pesticides. This will have disas-



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trous results once the building has been completed and termites have moved into the timber," said Cokayne.

She continued: "They can't always be detected straight away, but as structural damage becomes severe, the owner will have to cope with sagging floors, cracks in the walls and other damage. This will obviously have a negative effect on the valuation when the owner wants to sell."

SAPCA encourages buyers of buildings and homes, as well as developers, to ensure that they are aware of the proper requirements for pre-construction soil treatment and that they demand the correct process is carried out by fully qualified people.

"Also be careful of pest-control companies that charge too little for this treatment," said Cokayne. "We've found cases where fly-by-night companies dilute the termiticides in order to undercut and quote less, to win the tender and get the job."

Neglecting proper soil treatment means the builder may tend to be negligent

about other safety features as well. Visit [www.sapca.org.za](http://www.sapca.org.za) for a list of SAPCA members who adhere to a code of conduct and best-industry practices. — Supplied.

## *About SAPCA*

SAPCA is the pest-control industry representative body, which aims to advance and uphold a positive image of the industry. The association assists its members to be successful and responsible pest-control operators, who are committed to the principles of integrated pest management practices, achieving effective pest management without harming consumers, operators or the environment.

SAPCA believes that every pest-control operator and technician who applies pest-management products, should be trained and registered with the Department of Agriculture, to ensure appropriate, effective and safe application of the products, in addition to having the appropriate knowledge of the pests to be controlled. SAPCA believes in the independent registration of pesticides by gov-

ernment and the control of the use of new and existing compounds, based upon assessments using scientific standards. SAPCA is committed to operating within the legislative framework of governments, while encouraging governments to take account of the industry's views and expertise.

SAPCA believes that the industry must act beyond the arena of pest management. The industry seeks to observe and promote the wellbeing of the people employed in it, while promoting social responsibility. The aim is to ensure that the results of their labour contribute to the development of a better and healthier society, while offering those who work in the industry pride in their achievements and the knowledge that their endeavours serve to create a better world.