

DIY & BUILDING

## Beware the beetles

**Deon Bergh writes:** I'm in the process of buying my first home and have been told that I need to obtain a beetle certificate from the previous owner of the house. I've heard a horror story from a colleague who, three months after having been presented with a certificate to say that his house was beetle free, discovered a huge beetle infestation in the wooden floors under the carpets – which cost him thousands to rectify. How could this happen and how can I ensure that it doesn't happen to me?



**Mark Enslin, President of the South African Pest Control Association (SAPCA)**

**replies:** All too often SAPCA receives complaints from consumers who find their wooden floors under seige by *Anobium Punctatum* (Common Furniture Beetle), and when they seek recourse on the basis of the so called 'beetle free' certificate they find themselves confounded by terms like 'notifiable beetle'.

In the old days, to plot the spread of wood destroying insects, The Department of Plant and Seed Control categorised beetles according to the perceived risk. The list

was quite extensive and when any of these beetle were found in construction timber the Department of Plant and Seed Control were 'notified' by the inspector and the infestation dealt with in a prescribed manner.

In 1978 SAPCA was given the stewardship over the property inspection industry by the Department and has continued ever since to be the ONLY authority that sets guidelines and standards and qualifies the prospective inspector.

The term 'notifiable' as it appears on many a deed of sale is therefore actually a misnomer since the government no longer gets notified about the incidence of beetle infestations. The original definition, as stated above, had a broader meaning than the loosely adopted definition that only the two beetles and one termite species listed originally are covered under the term 'notifiable'.

The SAPCA definition includes all wood-destroying beetles and insects. The only way you can ensure you're protected from a beetle infestation is to insist on the comprehensive beetle clause from SAPCA to be added into the deed of sale as an addendum. This is your legal right. The clause covers 'all wood destroying beetles' and will also ensure that the inspection is carried out by a suitably competent and qualified inspector registered with the association. The inspector will use an official SAPCA certificate available only to qualified members, and which provides a guarantee to the client, giving them further peace of mind. A list of qualified, SAPCA-registered inspectors can be found at [www.sapca.org.za](http://www.sapca.org.za) or call our offices on 086 111 4556.