

# Silent destruction

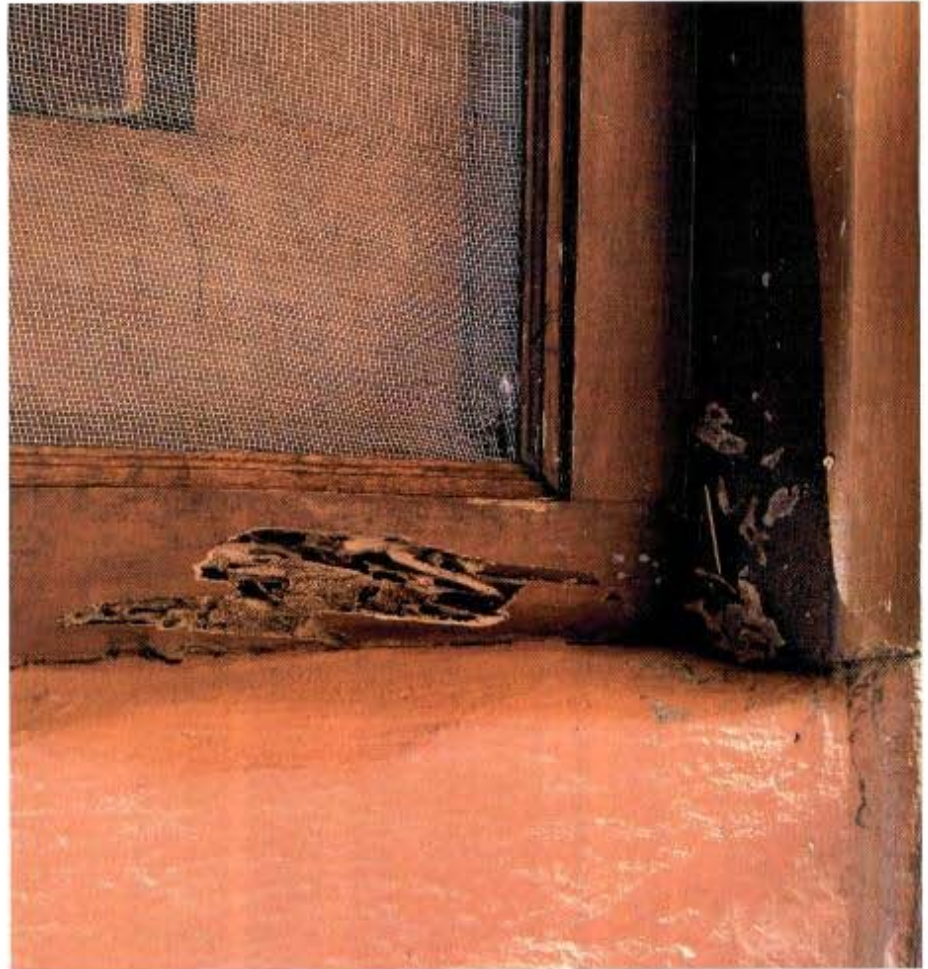
Text **SVENJA GERNOETH**

**THERE ARE FEW** things worse than having your beautiful home gnawed away by termites, yet so many South African homes fall victim to these silent destroyers. Although, according to [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org), termites mostly feed on dead plant material, generally in the form of wood, leaf litter, soil or animal dung, an estimated 10% of the around 4 000 species are economically significant as pests that can cause serious structural damage to buildings, crops and plantation forests.

Mark Enslin, president of the South African Pest Control Association (SAPCA) explains that termites often go unnoticed for years without any immediate signs only to be discovered when the damage done is too severe.

"These termites, however, are not the only ones causing the damage as various unregistered pest control officers and building contractors are causing major havoc with inadequate and incorrectly applied pre-treatment against these pests too," adds Mark.

According to SAPCA, many home owners move into their residence only to find that neither the grounds on which it is built nor the actual structure have been treated properly. "Often this is the result of building contractors appointing unregistered pest control officers who act illegally in either using banned chemicals or applying chemicals incorrectly," explains Mark.



Termiticides are registered through the Registrar Act 36 of 1947 only after thorough testing by the South African Bureau of Standards (SABS). Modern termiticides, which are more environmentally friendly, only offer a protection and efficiency guarantee to a maximum of five years compared to older compounds like Chlordane, which have been banned due to the hazardous effect on humans and the environment.

However, SAPCA has found that there are pest control officers that offer to termite-proof buildings at a rate per square meter, which is well below the wholesale cost of the chemicals alone and in addition, still offer a ten-year guarantee. "Since Chlordane has been banned, pest control companies are no longer able to offer a ten-year guarantee on termite proofing as there is currently no chemical on the

market that can offer that kind of protection," states Mark.

The best way to deal with termites is to always get in touch with a credible pest controller or exterminator, as getting rid of these pests can be extremely difficult on your own – but make sure that the professional is employed with a licensed pest control company and has knowledge of the various treatment methods and resources to create a treatment plan suitable for your development. Lastly, always be suspicious of cheap pricing and extended guarantees that exceed five years. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. 📌

**[www.killthetermites.com](http://www.killthetermites.com) advises looking out for the following telltale signs:**

- Mud-looking material on wooden surfaces
- Wings
- Actual termites
- Termite tubes
- Sawdust
- Small holes in the surface of the wood
- Paint bubbles
- Check moist, dark areas
- Tap at wood with a hammer or blunt object
- Pick at wood with a penknife in various places

**With thanks to the South African Pest Control Association (SAPCA), Strategic Communication, [www.wikipedia.org](http://www.wikipedia.org) and [www.killthetermites.com](http://www.killthetermites.com)**