



Long live wood!

Clifford Binedell of Timber Direct, Plaisir de Merle Farm Manager Freddie le Roux and Distell Group Farm Manager Hannes van Rensburg. Courtesy of Arch Wood Protection

TIMBER POLES IN WESTERN CAPE vineyards have been given an exceptionally long life thanks to Tanalised Weatherwood preservative, according to Timber Direct, the Stellenbosch-based supplier of timber poles in the province. It says users have reported no problems with the SABS 457/H4-approved Weatherwood pressure-treated pine vineyard trellising and fencing in the 15 years since it was introduced. As a South African Wood Preservers' Association member, Timber Direct is a staunch advocate of the Weatherwood treatment.

The Weatherwood additive was developed by Hickson Timber Preservation, now known as Arch Wood Protection, in the early 1990s to deal with the problem of vineyard poles cracking. After various trials, the product was introduced at Du Toit Hout in Ceres.

"Our experience completely vindicates the 25-year guarantee Arch Wood Protection extends to Weatherwood-treated poles," says Clifford Binedell, who heads up Timber Direct. "The product has won many customers." Currently about 60% of vineyard trellis poles in the Western Cape are

Weatherwood-treated, and Clifford predicts the treatment will eventually be applied to virtually all timber poles in the region.

Tanalised Weatherwood combines the well-known timber preservative Tanalith (CCA) and the Weatherwood additive, a water-based wax emulsion. Arch Wood Protection marketing manager Gerard Busse explains the treatment is applied in a vacuum-pressure, timber-impregnation treatment plant, and has a dramatic effect on the wood. "Weatherwood derives its name from its water-repellent properties," he says. "By stabilising the moisture content, thereby reducing the stresses of expansion and contraction, it reduces weathering and splitting in timber poles and other products."

Weathering and splitting can expose the sapwood to insect attack and wood decay. Wood products treated according to SANS 10005 and the relevant hazard class "H" are identified by the "TAN" symbol – Weatherwood is widely effective from H2 (interior above ground) use through H3 (exterior above ground) and H4 (in ground) to H5 (fresh water contact) use. The 25-year guarantee covers damage

by wood borer, termites, brown rot, soft rot, white rot and any other wood decay that renders the timber structurally unserviceable. It's valid from date of purchase and is transferable from one owner to the next within the guarantee period. Customers can purchase Weatherwood-treated poles from timber agents, building supply agents and co-ops in the province.

"Western Cape Weatherwood users include the Distell Group, which is JSE-listed and includes famous estate names such as Nederburg, Papkuilsfontein (Tukulu), JC le Roux and Plaisir de Merle," says Clifford. "We have over 1 000 clients and the number is growing as the benefits of Weatherwood become increasingly known." – Dave Gray
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