

**IUFRO Division 7 Joint meeting of Forest Pathology and Entomology Research Groups
Colonia del Sacramento, Uruguay - 8th to the 11th November 2011**

Prepared by Jolanda Roux

Six members of the Tree Protection Cooperative Programme (TPCP) and DST/NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) visited South America for a week to attend the first joint meeting between the IUFRO (International Union of Forestry Research Organizations) Division 7 research groups on forest entomology and forest pathology. This historic meeting, the first ever IUFRO meeting to be held in Uruguay, was attended by more than 100 researchers from 25 countries.



A number of very important issues were discussed during the meeting in Colonia. These included tree health management, the movement of pests and pathogens around the globe, climate change, surveillance and monitoring, and the opportunities and challenges arising from the genomics era. The meeting also included a day in the field, looking at forestry pests and diseases in the south of Uruguay. The CTHB and TPCP research programmes were very visible in the contributions to the meeting, with five oral presentations and 10 posters. Professor Bernard Slippers presented a keynote lecture on genomics and tree health, while Professors Jolanda Roux and Mike Wingfield chaired two of the sessions.

Two of the points that stood out at the meeting were the importance of strong teams and collaboration, and the threat of the continued trade in plants. IUFRO research meetings are fantastic opportunities to strengthen existing collaborations and to establish new ones. Prof. Mike Wingfield (Director of the CTHB/TPCP and deputy director of IUFRO) summarised the importance of building and maintaining strong linkages worldwide in his closing remarks for the meeting in reminding all present that forest health scientists and foresters deeply depend on each other and should build each other up as much as possible. This can also be summarised in an explanation for the word "TEAM": T=together; E=everybody; A=achieves; M=more! Healthy competition is good, BUT, working as a team, we all achieve more!



Participants learning more about Eucalypt forestry and its pests and pathogens (left). Three of the FABI delegates who attended the meeting, Dr. Brett Hurley, Dr. Shuaifei Chen and Prof. Mike Wingfield (right)

The second issue discussed at the meeting in Uruguay which received significant attention was the trade in plants and plant products such as seed and timber. The increase in global trade has resulted in an exponential increase of pests and pathogens moving to new areas and subsequently threatening tree health. A number of these introductions of pests and pathogens have resulted in what is called “new encounter” diseases, often with devastating effect. The lack of understanding of the threats of the trade in plant material has led to the establishment and invasion of non-native organisms that threaten key ecosystems around the world and put additional pressure on managed resources. Concern regarding this issue has led to the drafting of a resolution now called the “Montesclaros Declaration” (www.iufro.org). This declaration by scientists from more than 17 countries aim to put pressure on forest policy makers around the globe to phase out international trade in live plants and plant products that put forest health at risk while offering limited economic benefit.



Two Eucalypt problems often encountered in Uruguay: *Mycosphaerella* leaf blotch disease caused by a species of *Teratosphaeria* (left) and an adult leaf beetle of the genus *Gonipterus* (right).

The meeting in Colonia was a great success, offering valuable opportunity for discussion and exchange of ideas. The group from FABI thus utilized the time available to hold informal meetings with forestry researchers working projects relevant to South African forestry and to gain valuable momentum in global efforts to solve tree health problems.