

A FOCUS ON INSECT INVASIONS



Group photo of the workshop participants

Insect invasions are growing rapidly in number and distribution. They increasingly threaten agriculture and forestry globally and are therefore a major focus of research in most programmes at FABI. Key questions regarding these invasions concern drivers, mechanisms and impacts. Research teams in many parts of the world work actively to better understand these processes. In November, Drs Jeff Garnas and Brett Hurley and Prof Mike Wingfield joined colleagues from around the world to debate these issues at a focused workshop organised by members of the Department of Science Technology / National Research Foundation Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology (CIB) based at Stellenbosch University. Dr Matt Hill, a postdoctoral fellow with a passion for the subject of insect invasions organised the workshop and coordinated the production of numerous research papers that emerged from the event. Participants included various collaborators of the Tree Protection Co-operative Programme (TPCP) and the Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB), both based at FABI. Notably, Dr Andrew (Sandy) Liebhold of the USDA Forest Service based at Morgantown West Virginia, USA, who has worked with FABI researchers including those dealing with the Sirex wood wasp invasion, presented the

plenary address that kicked off the workshop. The meeting was also attended by Dartmouth student Flora Krivak-Tetley who is working with the TPCP team on a global Sirex project funded by the USDA Forest Service. In all, this workshop provided many new ideas and directions for future research and community engagement that are sure to lead to solutions to slow a growing global crisis.

