

BUILDING CAPACITY IN AFRICA: FABI HOSTS A WORKSHOP ON THE BIOLOGICAL CONTROL OF EUCALYPTUS INSECT PESTS

FABI hosted a workshop on the Biological Control of Eucalyptus Insect Pests from 29 March to 1 April. The workshop was organised by Drs Brett Hurley, Dr Michelle Schröder and Ms Samantha Bush, brought together 15 participants from Malawi, Mozambique, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe to share knowledge and build capacity and collaborative networks within the region.



One of the greatest threats to the sustainability of plantation forestry on the African continent is that of alien invasive insects and diseases. The introduction of these pests, generally from the native range of the host trees, has increased rapidly over time (Garnas et al. 2016). For insect pests of eucalypts, the rate of new introductions around the globe has increased fivefold since the 1980s (Hurley et al. 2016). Biological control is considered one of the most effective and feasible responses to these insect invasions and consequently the Tree Protection Co-operative Programme (TPCP) has developed much capacity in this area over the years,

including the establishment of the FABI Biocontrol Centre, consisting of advanced facilities and equipment and highly skilled staff.

FABI has been increasingly approached by forest research organisations and forestry companies in other African countries, and abroad, for advice and support on the biological control of insect pests of plantation trees. It has become clear that there is a need for a long-term strategy for the management of insect pests in the region (Wingfield et al. 2015).

The workshop was an initial step towards this objective, with a specific aim of developing capacity in biological control. Information was shared on the facilities and protocols for biocontrol development as well as the general background on the major insect pests and their biocontrol agents. Importantly, the participants also obtained hands-on training in the identification and rearing of the insect pests and their biocontrol agents.



The organisation of the workshop involved a huge amount of effort and was only made possible by the involvement of a passionate group of TPCP students and staff. The workshop would also not have been possible without the sponsorship and support of the participants by

the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), the Tobacco Research Board of Zimbabwe, the Tobacco Industry in Malawi, and relevant government departments.

RELEVANT RECENT PUBLICATIONS FROM FABI:

Garnas J, Auger-Rozenberg M, Roques A, Bertelsmeier C, Wingfield MJ, Saccaggi DL, Roy HE, Slippers B. (2016) Complex patterns of global spread in invasive insects: Eco-evolutionary and management consequences. *Biological Invasions* 10.1007/s10530-016-1082-9

Hurley BP, Garnas J, Wingfield MJ, Branco M, Richardson DM, Slippers B. (2016) Increasing numbers and intercontinental spread of invasive insects on eucalypts. *Biological Invasions* 10.1007/s10530-016-1081-x

Wingfield MJ, Brockerhoff EG, Wingfield BD, Slippers B. (2015) Planted forest health: The need for a global strategy. *Science* 349(6250):832-836. 10.1126/science.aac6674