

## MACADAMIA PROTECTION PROGRAMME LAUNCHED AT FABI

The Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI) and Southern African Macadamia Growers' Association (SAMAC) have established a collaborative research partnership, the Macadamia Protection Programme (MaPP). This programme will address the threats posed by pests and diseases to Macadamia farming in South Africa. The new partnership was officially launched on 22 February with a ceremonial signing of a certificate by SAMAC Chairman, Walter Giuricich, Dean of the University of Pretoria's Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences, Prof. Jean Lubuma and FABI Director Prof. Mike Wingfield.



South Africa is the second biggest macadamia nut producer in the world and the industry is regarded as the fastest growing tree-crop industry in the country. This industry is, however, threatened by a number of pests and diseases that can cause significant economic losses. In addition, the continuous build-up of resistance towards commercially available pesticides and chemicals is

of concern to growers. In order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the macadamia industry, growers need to move towards alternative control and management strategies.



The overall focus of the MaPP, under the leadership of Dr Gerda Fourie, will be to assist in the development of commercially viable biological control options as well as alternative management strategies. More specifically, this research programme will focus on the development of biologically relevant information on important pests and pathogens of macadamias in order to improve

integrated pest management systems. The programme will also aim to contribute to the development of biological control agents and natural products, as well as to conduct research that assists in the selection of resistant or tolerant cultivars.

The newly established Macadamia Protection Programme will also collaborate with existing research Groups within FABI including the Tree Protection Co-Operative Programme (TPCP), DST-NRF Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology (CTHB) and the Fruit Tree Biotechnology Programme (FTBP). This will provide substantial synergy for all of these Programmes focused broadly on promoting TREE HEALTH.

