

PROF. MARY BARBERCHECK PRESENTS A SPECIAL SEMINAR AT FABI



Prof. Mary Barbercheck from the College of Agricultural Sciences at Penn State University presented a special seminar at FABI on 27 January. The occasion marked Prof. Barbercheck's return visit to South Africa after more than 30 years as one of Birhan Abate's PhD external examiners. She presented her seminar titled "Effects of soil characteristics and management of *Metarhizium*, a bifunctional fungus, in organic cropping systems". The talk focused on studies on the effect of *Metarhizium anisopliae* on soils on organic systems where the use of synthetic chemicals, whether as fertilisers or pest management is prohibited. The fungus has an endophytic relationship with some plants and Prof. Barbercheck spoke about the possible roles that the fungus plays in disease and insect pest control, nutrient transfer and the decomposition of organic matter.