

## REAL SCIENTISTS IN FABI START YOUNG

Two Grade 7 students from Irene Primary School have been working in the FABI laboratories again. Sandra Barnes and Kayla Josef have been conducting their annual school science projects at FABI. This year their aim is to test the hypothesis that the important tree-killing fungus, *Ceratocystis manginecans*, can be found in soil samples. They are using a carrot baiting technique to screen soil samples collected from plantations where a *Ceratocystis* canker and wilt disease is severely affecting *Acacia mangium* trees.



Last year these smart and aspiring young scientists received a gold medal at the Eskom Northern Gauteng Expo for Young Scientists for their project titled "Testing the susceptibility of different sweet potato varieties to the black rot fungus, *Ceratocystis fimbriata*". They also won the Merck Junior

Microbiology prize. Their work involved testing four sweet potato varieties grown in South Africa and they found that "Blesbok" was the most susceptible.



These results could then be used in the studies conducted by PhD student Arista Fourie, who is now using the Blesbok variety in her studies to evaluate the host specialisation of two *Ceratocystis* species.