

## STRENGTHENING COLLABORATIONS WITH UNIVEN

*Prepared for FABI News*

Six faculty and student members of the Centre of Excellence for Tree Health Biotechnology travelled to the University of Venda the week of 22 June, and then north to the Tshikundamalema region of the Limpopo province. The purpose of the visit was to build and strengthen collaborations between the CTHB/FABI and the University of Venda, and to establish field sampling protocols and design for five student projects linked to insect and fungal biodiversity on native trees. These include Marula (*Sclerocarya birrea*), brown ivory (*Berchemia discolor*) and Buffalo thorn (*Ziziphus mucronata*). Collections of the Mopane lerp psyllid were also made in support of host specificity testing efforts for a potential biocontrol agent against the red gum lerp psyllid, *Glycaspis brimblecombei* that is an increasingly important problem on *Eucalyptus* in South Africa.

A big thank you to the community leaders who have demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting this work, and to the Venda faculty, staff and students for facilitating a fun and fruitful meeting and trip.



**FABI participants included Drs Jeff Garnas, Martin Coetzee and Brett Hurley, Prof Jolanda Roux, Ms. Saraí Olivier and Mr. Darryl Herron. Venda participants included Dr. Ednah Kunjeku, Mr. Rollet Ramavhale, Mr. Rofhiwa Mbengeniri, Ms. Lovejoy Tembo, Ms. Dinah Maeko Mokgadi and Ms. Elewani Ramabulana.**