

Strong presence of TPCP / CTHB students and staff at National Entomology Congress

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FABlans attending the National Entomology Congress. Left to right: Caryn Oates, Marc Bouwer, Gudrun Dittrich-Schröder, Tanya Joffe, Chongxing Zhang, Zander Human, Dawit Degefu, Bernard Slippers, Amy Wooding, Jeff Garnas, Osmond Mlonyeni, Brett Hurley and Eston Mutitu.

The Seventeenth Congress of the Entomological Society of Southern Africa was held at the University of the Free State (3 – 6 July 2011). This congress saw a substantial increase in student participation from various South African Universities. Two hundred and sixty-one delegates attended this congress with forty talks and nineteen posters presented by students.

The growing focus on Forest Entomology in FABI was reflected by the attendance of thirteen FABlans, including Amy Wooding, Bernard Slippers, Brett Hurley, Caryn Oates, Chongxing Zhang, Dawit Degefu, Eston Mutitu, Gudrun Dittrich-Schröder, Jeff Garnas, Marc Bouwer, Osmond Mlonyeni, Tanya Joffe, and Zander Human. The group comprised masters and PhD, postdoctoral students as well as staff. The group presented eight presentations and three posters from FABI.

The congress commenced with a 'Meet and Greet' function on Sunday evening. The daily presentations were organized into three parallel sessions covering nine subject areas. Talks presented by delegates dealt with Agriculture and Forest Entomology, Biocontrol, Biodiversity, Conservation, Climate, Ecology, Evolution, Insect Pathology, Insect Physiology, Medical, Veterinary and Forensic Entomology, Taxonomy, Systematics and Zoogeography. Each day the congress commenced with a plenary address during which researchers recognized for the contribution to entomology presented their work.

Plenary lectures were presented by Prof. Steven Chown, Prof. Martin Hill and Dr. Jeffrey Harvey. Prof. Chown (Centre for Invasion Biology, University

of Stellenbosch) presented a lecture entitled '*Arthropod assemblages and environmental change: lessons for the long term*'; Prof Martin Hill (Rhodes University) presented a lecture entitled '*Towards 100 years of weed biological control in South Africa: successes, challenges and the way forward*'. Dr. Jeffrey Harvey (Netherlands Institute of Ecology in Wageningen) presented some work from his research group, entitled '*Linking heaven and earth: where we are and future directions*'.

Apart from the scientific input, there were many opportunities for networking during tea and lunch breaks as well as at the Potjiekos evening function and the Congress dinner. The congress was an important opportunity for members of the CTHB / TPCP to present progress and results from their entomology projects. It also provided an excellent opportunity to receive input from the broader community and strengthen the ties that are so vital for scientific work.

Presentations and posters from the FABI group at the ESSA congress are listed below:

Presentations

- Understanding the persistence of highly male-biased sex ratios in South African populations of *Sirex noctilio* Fabricius (Hymenoptera: Symphyta) (Wooding, A. L., Greef, J. M., Garnas, J., Hurley, B. P., Dittrich-Schröder, G., Wingfield, M. J. & Slippers, B.)
- Influence of genotype and environment on biological control: a *Sirex-Deladenus* case study (Hurley, B. P., Hatting, H. J., Wingfield, M. J., Klepzig, K. D., & Slippers, B.)
- Mitochondrial DNA barcodes confirm the shift of *Coryphodema tristis* from a native or non-native host to Eucalyptus (Degefu, D. T., Hurley, B. P., Garnas, J., Wingfield, M. J., & Slippers, B.)
- Invasion and subsequent decline of the *Thaumastocoris peregrinus* (Heteroptera: Thaumastocoridae) population in Kenya (Mutitu, K. E., Garnas, J., Hurley, B. P., Wingfield, M. J., & Slippers, B.)
- Are males absent from Eucalyptus gall wasp populations in South Africa? (Dittrich-Schröder, G., Wingfield, M. J., Hurley, B. P. & Slippers, B.)
- Assessing the consequences of cryptic diversity in a tree pest-biocontrol system: the Eucalyptus snout beetle and its Mymarid parasitoid in South Africa (Garnas, J., Chungu, D., Hurley, B. P., & Slippers, B.)
- Analysis of female gland extracts of the cossid moth *Coryphodema tristis* (Bouwer, M. C., Slippers, B., & Rohwer, E.)
- The *Sirex-Amylostereum-Deladenus* complex: understanding diversity in pest biological control programs (Mlonyeni, X. O., Hurley, B. P., Wingfield, B. D., Wingfield, M. J., Ahumada, R., Klasmer, P. & Slippers, B.)

Posters

- RNA sequencing as a tool to investigate host response of *Eucalyptus grandis* to the gall-inducing wasp *Leptocybe invasa* (Oates, C., Myburg, Z., Slippers, B. & Naidoo, S.)
- Opportunities arising from sequencing the genome of the *Sirex* parasitic nematode, *Deladenus siricidicola* (Zhang, C. X., Mlonyeni, X. O., Postma, A., Wingfield, B. D., Wingfield, M. J., & Slippers, B.)
- Discovery of symbiotic actinobacteria associated with the bark beetle *Orthomictus erosus* (Coleoptera: Scolytinae) in South Africa (Human, Z. R., Slippers, B., de Beer, Z. W., Wingfield, M. J. & Venter, S. N.)