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Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences

Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute



Bernard Slippers is an Professor in Genetics at the University of Pretoria. He is a research leader of the Tree Protection Co-operative Programme and Centre of Excellence in Tree Health Biotechnology at the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI).

Bernard's research focus is on the molecular ecology and evolution of insects and micro-organisms that affect tree health, with a particular focus on anthropogenic influences on these dynamics. He has received wide recognition for his research, including a President's Award from the National Research Foundation, the Southern African Association for the Advancement of Science, British Association Medal (Silver) and the JE Vanderplank award from the Southern African Society for Plant Pathology. He has published more than 120 papers, one edited book and number of chapters in books. He regularly contributes popular scientific articles to journals, newspapers and radio.

Bernard is predominantly involved in science education at the postgraduate level and has been, or is currently, involved as supervisor of a number of postdoctoral researchers, more than 30 PhD and MSc students, as well as numerous BSc honours students. He also regularly contributes to national and international congresses, as participant and organizer. Bernard broadly reviews papers for key journals in his field and served on advisory teams on forestry pests and diseases in South Africa and abroad.

Bernard is passionate about science development and the role of science in broader society. In this regard he has been deeply involved in the global Young Academy movement, being a founding member of the Global Young Academy (GYA) in 2010 and the South African Young Academy of Science (SAYAS) in 2011. He has served in the leadership of both these organizations and is the immediate past co-chair of the GYA. Bernard is also a Young Affiliate of Academy of Science of the Developing World (TWAS), from whom he received the AU-TWAS Young Scientist national prize in 2011.

Bernard is also the head of the Boekenhout mens' residence at the University of Pretoria, where he lives with his two daughters and wife, Dr. Jana Slippers.

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