



## PROGRAMME

# 37<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE TREE PROTECTION CO-OPERATIVE PROGRAMME (TPCP)

Venue: Future Africa Auditorium, University of Pretoria

## Partnerships for sustainable and productive plantation forestry

TUESDAY, 10 MARCH 2026

07:30-08:00 Registration, coffee and tea

**Session 1: Forestry sustainability in a changing world**

08:00-08:15 A joint TPCP/FMG-EPPI symposium

**Prof. Sanushka Naidoo**, Director of FMG-EPPI, FABI, University of Pretoria

08:15-08:30 Welcome from the University of Pretoria

**Prof. Francis Petersen**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Pretoria

08:30-08:50 Sustainability in the Forestry Sector and the role of industry-university partnerships

**Mr Giovanni Sale**, Head of Sustainability, Sappi, South Africa

08:50-09:10 Future forests: global impacts of hotter drought and the search for climate-resilient growth and survival

**Prof. Bill Hammond**, University of Florida, USA

09:10-09:30 The TPCP in 2025 and the road ahead

**Prof. Bernard Slippers**, Director of the TPCP and FABI

09:30-09:40 Annual TPCP photo

09:40-10:00 Comfort break

**Session 2: Advancing Integrated Pest Management options**

10:00-10:20 International forest health programs and their importance to the TPCP

**Prof. Brett Hurley**, FABI, University of Pretoria

10:20-10:40 **Guest speaker: Key drivers of Sirex woodwasp populations - an intercontinental comparison of a globally important pine pest**

**Dr Aaron Weed**, National Park Service, Woodstock, Vermont, USA

10:40-10:50 Exploring options for conservation and augmentative biological control of forest pests

**Dr Privilege Makunde and Ms Samantha Bush**, FABI, University of Pretoria

10:50-11:00 *Gonipterus* sp. n. 2 oviposition drives larval development by modulating *Eucalyptus* defense

**Dr Christoff Joubert**, FABI, University of Pretoria

11:00-11:10 Biological control of wilding pine

**Prof. Martin Hill**, Rhodes University

11:10-11:25 **5 minute speed talks**

**Mr Khulekani Mbatha**: Chemodiversity in *Pinus* to inform biological control of wilding pines

**Mr Innocent Rakubu**: Entomopathogenic nematodes to control white grubs: an update on research at the TPCP

**Mr Ngoye Zondo**: Exploring causal agents of mortality of young pine in the Southern Cape

11:25-11:45 Tea

**Session 3: Know your enemy: Characterising threats globally and locally**

11:45-12:05 Pine needle diseases: A global perspective

**Prof. Irene Barnes**, FABI, University of Pretoria



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- 12:05-12:25 **Guest Speaker:** Emerging forest diseases in a changing climate: Challenges and innovations in Western Canada  
**Dr Joey Tanney**, Natural Resources Canada
- 12:25-12:35 The Diagnostic Clinic as a key service for monitoring and discovery of pests and diseases  
**Dr Wilma Nel**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 12:35-12:45 Insights from field extension services in 2025  
**Ms. Sandisiwe Jali**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 12:45-13:05 **5 minute speed talks**  
**Mr Christiaan Grobler:** *Pinus* blue stain and dieback: More than just *Diplodia sapinea*  
**Dr Nam Pham:** Cryphonectriaceae pathogens on *Eucalyptus*  
**Dr Felipe Balocchi:** Surveillance through sentinel sites
- 13:05-14:00 **LUNCH** (Future Africa Hub)
- Session 4: Phenotyping and genotyping for tree resilience**
- 14:00-14:20 A holistic approach to tree health: Considering complexity in forest systems  
**Prof. Almuth Hammerbacher**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 14:20-14:40 ICFR/FABI joint tree health research  
**Prof. Ilaria Germizhuizen**, ICFR
- 14:40-15:00 Remote sensing of *Gonipterus* sp. n. 2  
**Dr Phumlani Nzuza**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 15:00-15:15 Using the Information Hub for Biosecurity-related data management and decision making  
**Prof. Martin Coetzee and Prof. Cobus Visagie**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 15:15-15:40 **5 minute speed talks**  
**Dr. Danvir Ramesar:** NIRS as a rapid diagnostic for *Acacia mearnsii* and *A. decurrens*  
**Mr Lihan Esterhuizen:** Hyperspectral sensing for pathogen screening and monitoring  
**Dr Lieschen de Vos:** Can companies implement real-time PCR diagnostic protocols?  
**Ms. Tshiamo Lesedi:** Physiological and molecular changes under artificial and insect defoliation in *Eucalyptus*  
**Ms. Alida van Dijk:** *Fusarium circinatum* pathogenicity assays using seedlings and detached branches of *Pinus patula*  
**Ms. Pilar Hemmelmann:** Developing *Diplodia sapinea* screening of *Pinus radiata* in Chile
- 15:45-16:05 Comfort break
- Session 5: Future directions for the management of pests and diseases**
- 16:05-16:25 Precision plant health in forestry: AI, genomics, and climate-ready disease management  
**Prof. Emma Steenkamp**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 16:25-16:40 Tree pathogen genomics and molecular biology: the future!  
**Prof. Tuan Duong**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 16:40-16:50 Pathogen interactions in the *Eucalyptus* microbiome  
**Dr Tanay Bose**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 16:50-17:00 Progress with developing gene editing tools for pest management  
**Dr Gudrun Dittrich-Schröder**, FABI, University of Pretoria
- 17:00-17:20 **5 minute speed talks**  
**Mr Kyle Craninx:** Reproductive systems in pathogenic fungi: The *Diplodia sapinea* example  
**Ms. Lente van Zyl:** Chemical responses of *Pinus* to *F. circinatum*  
**Mr Siphephelo Phungula:** In field screening for *Elsinoe masingae* tolerance  
**Ms. Michané Reutener:** *Teratosphaeria* stem canker on *Eucalyptus*: A re-emerging problem  
**Ms. Anika Keuck:** Pests, pathogens and the foliar microbiomes in the IMPACT *Eucalyptus* OAL
- 17:20-17:40 **Open discussion:** Key insights for the way ahead in 2026
- 17:40-17:45 Closing of the day
- 17:45-18:15 **Cocktails** (Future Africa gardens)
- 18:00-late **Quiz and Dinner** (Future Africa Hub)

**WEDNESDAY 11 MARCH 2026**

**07:30-08:00**    **Registration, coffee and tea**

**07:30-08:00**    **Screening Facility Steering Committee meeting**

**Session 6:    National infrastructure for forestry research: Open Air Labs**

08:00-08:15    IMPACT Open Air Lab, Lourensford: Lessons and opportunities

**Prof. David Drew**, Stellenbosch University

08:15-08:30    A *Eucalyptus* Open Air Lab plantation on IA@UP: Opportunities for pathology and entomology

**Prof. Bernard Slippers**, FABI

08:30-08:40    Establishing a *Eucalyptus* Open Air Lab plantation on IA@UP

**Dr Ofentse Methibela**, FABI

08:40-08:50    A *Eucalyptus* Open Air Lab plantation on IA@UP: Opportunities for genetics

**Prof. Sanushka Naidoo**, FABI

08:50-09:00    A *Eucalyptus* Open Air Lab plantation on IA@UP: Opportunities for physiology

**Dr Yolandi Ernst/Prof. Rob Skelton**: University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa

09:00-09:10    Macadamia Open Air Lab at IA@UP: Opportunities for synergy

**Dr Nicky Taylor**, University of Pretoria

09:10-09:20    An industry led *Pinus* OAL

**Dr Jaco-Pierre van der Merwe**, York Timbers

09:20-09:545    Move to OAL site on IA@UP

09:45-10:45    **Opening of the Innovation Africa @UP Open Air Lab**

**Speakers: Prof. Sunil Maharaj, Prof. Khotso Mokhele, Prof. David Drew and Prof. Bernard Slippers**

11:00-12:00    **TEA**

11:00-14:30    **TPCP Board meeting** (Future Africa Conference Room 2)

11:00-13:00    **FABI facilities tours**