

AMBROSIA BEETLE EXPERT PRESENTS A SPECIAL SEMINAR AT FABI

A leading expert on ambrosia and bark beetles, Professor Jiri Hulcr, presented a special seminar at FABI on 1 November. His talk entitled “Which of the 1000 bark beetles indigenous to Asia is the greatest threat to American forests?” took a look at the work that his research group, based at the University of Florida, conducts in the USA and Asia.



Their research entails pre-invasion assessments of pests and pathogens of concern to North American trees. Work with collaborators in China seeks to identify “bad” Asian bark beetles that are potential threats. These trials are done in China using North American tree species and provide a valuable early warning of possible future invasive species on the Continent. Studies are also done to identify their natural enemies that could be used as biological control agents as well as determining if these beetles carry a fungus that may be pathogenic. Beetles also open up trees to pathogens through tunnelling and some secondary beetle species can therefore become tree killers.

Climate change also has an effect on beetle outbreaks. It is getting hotter and dryer allowing bark beetle species to spread and this has resulted in unprecedented outbreaks such as the Mountain pine beetle and Southern pine beetle in the USA. Prof. Hulcr was one of several researchers that participated in the recent Bark Beetle Mycobiome Research Network Meeting and Bark Beetle Blitz hosted by FABI from 27 October to 2 November.