FABI LAUNCHES APPLIED CHEMICAL ECOLOGY SATELLITE LABORATORY

FABI launched an Applied Chemical Ecology satellite laboratory and research programme in co-operation with Natural Resources Canada in March. This is the culmination of a longstanding partnership that started in 2013 between the Institute and Prof. Jeremy Allison. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the Institute and Natural Resources Canada in May 2018. This programme was officially launched at a signing ceremony during the FABI Monday morning meeting on 9 March attended by Prof. Allison, FABI Director Prof. Bernard Slippers, the Dean of the Faculty of Natural and Agricultural Sciences at the University of Pretoria, Prof Barend Erasmus, Prof. Robin Crewe and Prof. Christian Pirk.

The group's research interests lie at the interface of behavioural chemical ecology and pest management. The primary focus of their work is the development of an understanding of the chemical ecology of insect pests of plantation forests and agricultural tree crops in the southern hemisphere. By using pest species as model systems they are able to simultaneously make discoveries that advance the understanding of the natural world and provide pest management tools to stakeholders.

Specific ongoing projects include the development and optimization of survey and detection tools, characterization of the active space of semiochemical-baited traps and the biotic and abiotic factors that influence it, the impact of chemical ecology on the efficacy of biological control, the chemical ecology of insect pests of plantation and fruit and nut trees and the causes and consequences of variation in insect sex pheromones.