

MAMMOTH INOCULATION TRIAL OF PINE SEEDLINGS

Fourteen FABlans banded together for the mammoth task of inoculating and disease assessment of 6,360 *Pinus patula* seedlings with 159 *Fusarium circinatum* isolates in December. The FABlans involved in this project sacrificed time away from their December holidays, with work continuing past Christmas. These consisted of 106 South African isolates and 53 isolates with a global cosmopolitan distribution.



The aim was to investigate the pathogenicity of these isolates that links into a Genome-Wide Association Study (GWAS) project for FABI PhD student, Benedicta Swalarsk-Parry. The pathogenicity of *F. circinatum* in the different individuals will be used to determine if any variant is associated with pathogenicity. Genomic regions will be located and genes associated with pathogenicity identified. These results will aid tremendously in our understanding of the pitch canker disease and its pathogenicity, biology and genomic comparison of the fungus.