

## SIREX RESEARCH IN SOUTH AFRICA AND JAPAN IN THE SPOTLIGHT AT A FABI MINI-SYMPOSIUM

A mini-symposium on 15 November showcased the diversity of research on the woodwasp *Sirex noctilio* conducted at FABI by postgraduate students and staff, as well as collaborators from Japan. Drawing on the resources and capacity available at FABI, the symposium highlighted the need for a holistic approach in the control and management of the invasive woodwasp. The research focused on, but was not limited to, the complex interaction between the woodwasp, its fungal symbiont *Amylostereum areolatum* and the nematode *Deladenus siricidicola* as a biological control agent.



Professor Bernard Slippers opened the meeting by giving an overview on the introduction of the *Sirex* woodwasp in South Africa and the research that emanated from it. Prof Masanobu Tabata and Prof Natsumi Kanzaki from the Forestry and Forest Products Research Institute presented on *Sirex* research in Japan. Staff at the FABI Biocontrol Centre, who play an integral role in the research, also attended.

Alisa Postma: *Amylostereum-Deladenus-Sirex* genomics: Opportunities arising from the genomes of a tripartite symbiotic system

MSc student Bianca Jardim: Characterising sex determination genes of *Sirex noctilio* (Hymenoptera: Siridicae)

PhD student Josephine Queffelec: *Sirex noctilio*: Influence of reproductive biology on invasive species

PhD student Katrin Fitzta: The diversity and specificity in the *Deladenus-Sirex-Amylostereum* complex

PhD student Osmond Mlonyeni: Genotypic and phenotypic diversity in non-native populations of *Sirex-Amylostereum-Deladenus*

Dr Marc Bouwer: Potential semiochemicals for *Sirex noctilio* and *Ibalia leucospoides*

PhD student Quentin Guignard: Chemical and visual influences on insect behaviour: Opportunities to study applied biology of *Sirex noctilio*

Dr Brett Hurley: *Sirex-Deladenus-Environment* interactions: Lessons from tens of thousands of dissection

Prof. Masanobu Tabata: Siricidae and Xiphydriidae woodwasps and their fungal symbionts in Japan

Prof. Natsumi Kanzaki: Introduction to entomophillic nematodes with some remarks on *Deladenus nitobei* n.sp., a potential biocontrol agent

