



No. 190, December 2008 ISSN 1175-9755

TASMANIA TRIP FOR *URABA LUGENS* BIOLOGICAL CONTROL RESEARCHER

Dr Lisa Berndt was awarded Scion sabbatical funds for a trip to Tasmania to develop collaborations with Dr Geoff Allen at the University of Tasmania. For a number of years Dr Allen has been supplying Scion with shipments of the parasitoid *Cotesia urabae* (Braconidae), which Lisa is studying as a possible biological control agent for *Uraba lugens* (Nolidae) (gum leaf skeletoniser) in New Zealand. *Uraba lugens*, which has the potential to be a serious defoliator of eucalypts in New Zealand, is an Australian species that was first found in here in 1992 at Mt Maunganui in the Bay of Plenty. It is now widespread in Auckland and has been found in Waikato and Coromandel. Given time it will spread to all parts of New Zealand where eucalypts are grown.

The trip to Tasmania enabled Lisa to see the pest and parasitoid in their natural environment, and to work with Dr Allen and an Honours student to design experiments to explore host selection by the parasitoid. The experiments will be an extension of host range tests done under quarantine conditions in New Zealand that aim to test the risk that the parasitoid might pose to New Zealand moth species. Although the parasitoid has never been found attacking anything other than the target pest *U. lugens*, related species in New Zealand are tested to assess possible risks. The New Zealand research has to be done under strict quarantine conditions making it difficult to properly assess natural behaviour of the parasitoid in

the field. By running similar laboratory experiments in Tasmania, and then conducting field experiments there to compare laboratory and field behaviour, a more accurate estimation of risk can be made. The work in Tasmania will be done using the Australian magpie moth, *Nyctemera amica*. This species is very closely related to the New Zealand magpie moth, *N. annulata*, which is one of the species being tested in host range experiments. During her time in Tasmania, Lisa helped set up

laboratory colonies of the parasitoid and moth species needed for experiments. She was also able to bring back a shipment of the parasitoid to boost the laboratory colony in quarantine in Rotorua.

Lisa Berndt



IUFRO INTERNATIONAL FOREST BIOSECURITY CONFERENCE

March 16-20, 2009, Rotorua, New Zealand



Exploring the latest thinking on forest biosecurity: from protecting our borders to managing insect pests, weeds and diseases.

For more information or to register see
www.forestbiosecurity.com

OECD BRINGS LEADING RESEARCHERS TO NZ

Scion is hosting the IUFRO International Forest Biosecurity Conference, which is to be held in Rotorua, New Zealand from March 16-20, 2009.

A highlight of the conference will be an all-day workshop on Tuesday 17 March that explores the connections between science, policy and management. Sponsorship from the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) has made it possible to invite a range of international speakers who represent the world's leading researchers in the field of invasive pest and disease management.

Day rates for registration are available for anyone wanting to attend the workshop only.

NATIONAL FORESTRY HERBARIUM

As a result of a restructuring at Scion earlier this year the staff of the National Forestry Herbarium are now part of the Forest Protection group. There have always been strong links between entomologists, pathologists and the herbarium staff, particularly when dealing with samples from high risk site surveillance. The high risk surveillance programme involves using transects in the designated risk sites and all woody vegetation in these transects is thoroughly examined. When new transects are established a high number of plants have to be sent to the herbarium for specific identification.

The National Forestry Herbarium provides a long-term reference collection focussed on plantation and native forests, trees and shrubs cultivated in New Zealand, and vegetation of the central North Island and Bay of Plenty. It includes extensive collections of conifers, eucalypts and other plantation tree species from New Zealand, as well as smaller collections from Australia, some Pacific Islands and Mexico.

The Curator, Chris Ecroyd, and Assistant Curator, Elizabeth Miller use the collections and their experience to:

- Support forestry, New Zealand biosecurity and research;
- Identify tree species especially eucalypts and conifers so that best use can be made of timber;
- Identify host tree and shrub species of pests and diseases from biosecurity (high risk site) surveillance;
- Provide taxonomic information on New Zealand plantation and native forest species.

Phone: (07) 343 5609

Email: chris.ecroyd@scionresearch.com;
elizabeth.miller@scionresearch.com

Website database: www.scionresearch.com/herbarium



Pinus Pinea bud - National Forestry Herbarium



A LOOK AT SOME NEW RECORDS

The November 2008 issue of *FH News* mentioned that it contained the most new records since January 2006. Lack of space precluded any discussion on this so it is done so here.

There were 26 new records listed, 6 each from Hawke's Bay and Wellington, 4 from Auckland, 3 from Nelson, 2 each from Wanganui and Marlborough, and 1 each from Waikato, Bay of Plenty and Kaikoura. Twenty four records were of insects and 2 were fungi.

Twenty one of the insects were sapsuckers and there were 2 defoliators and 1 wood borer. All but one (*Oemona hirta* – the wood borer) of these insects were exotic, as were 20 of the hosts.

Both the new records of fungi were exotic on exotic hosts. *Diplodia mori* was a new to New Zealand record but it is not known to be pathogenic.

John Bain

NEW RECORDS

New distribution record for New Zealand – Insect:

Creiiis liturata (Psyllidae); **Region:** Gisborne; **Host:** *Eucalyptus botryoides*; **Coll:** B Rogan, 11/12/2008; **Ident:** J Bain, 15/12/2008; **Comments:** This Australian psyllid was first found in New Zealand in 2002. It has previously been recorded from Auckland, Waikato, Coromandel, Bay of Plenty, and Wanganui. It is a serious pest of *Eucalyptus dunnii* in New South Wales.

New host record for New Zealand – Insect: *Aenetus*

virescens (Hepialidae); **Region:** Bay of Plenty; **Host:** *Ligustrum sinense*; **Coll:** B Rogan, 16/12/2008; **Ident:** J Bain, 2/12/2008; **Comments:** This native caterpillar bores in the living trunks and branches of a wide range of native and exotic hardwoods.

New distribution record for New Zealand – Fungus:

Phomopsis abdita; **Region:** Waikato; **Host:** *Melia azedarach*; **Coll:** J Bartram, 07/11/2008; **Ident:** R Ganley, 23/12/2008; **Comments:** This fungus which causes branch dieback of *Melia* has previously been recorded from Auckland, Bay of Plenty and Wellington. It was first recorded in New Zealand in 2005 and has been reported from Cuba, India and France.

John Bain