



British Ecological Society
Forest Ecology Group



Betula ermanii forest, Far East Russia

MARCH 2011

WELCOME!

This is the first e-bulletin of the Forest Ecology Group, a specialist forum for researchers and practitioners involved in forest ecology worldwide. We are a sub-group within the British Ecological Society, but aim to provide a means of spreading forest-related news, information and opportunities internationally. The scope of this is broad: any continent or biome, whether natural forests, restored forests, plantations or agro-forests, so long as they involve trees.

My intention is to send a regular monthly bulletin, though as with any newsletter, its usefulness will depend on contributions from our members. At time of writing there are already over 200 members, spread across all vegetated continents, and I hope this will grow further, making it an excellent way to reach an international audience of like-minded people. I'm very open to contributions or suggestions and hope you find this a useful and interesting resource. If you do then please recommend it to your colleagues!

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FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

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| 13 th April | Woodland Management in the UK
Manchester Metropolitan University
Organisers: Dr Francis Brearley (f.g.brearley@mmu.ac.uk)
Dr Liz Price (e.price@mmu.ac.uk)
See website for more information (link) |
| 14-16 th September | Animals, Man and Treescapes
Sheffield Hallam University
Organiser: Prof. Ian Rotherham (I.D.Rotherham@shu.ac.uk)
See website for more information (link). |

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Biodiversity in the New Forest. This book is based on the FEG meeting held in 2007. The New Forest is one of the most important areas for wildlife in the UK, associated with extensive areas of semi-natural habitats in a complex mosaic that is now rarely encountered in Western Europe. Its unique character is largely attributable to its long history of grazing by large herbivores. See [website](#) for details.

OPPORTUNITIES

MSc and PhD opportunities in Pretoria, South Africa

Two positions are available at the Forestry and Agricultural Biotechnology Institute (FABI), in association with the Department of Zoology and Entomology, at the University of Pretoria. FABI is a world-class, internationally recognised institute dedicated to understanding and promoting health in native and plantation forests, with a strong focus on insect and fungal ecology, genetics/genomics, systematics and biological control (<http://www.fabinet.up.ac.za/>). Specific projects can be tailored to student interests and background, but primary focal areas include: 1) understanding population feedbacks between the introduced pine woodwasp (*Sirex noctilio*) and various native and introduced organisms (including but not limited to: pine weevils, bark beetles, fungi, and baboons), and 2) assessing ecological and evolutionary processes driving insect community overlap between native and exotic trees (e.g. spillover of introduced insects from exotic hosts onto native trees, and host expansion/switching of native fauna onto exotic plantation species). More information is available upon request. Both projects are funded, and include a student bursary to cover University fees and living expenses.

Pretoria, the administrative capital of South Africa, is a modern city situated in the northern centre of the country in the highveld (high elevation savanna). The area has a moderate climate with wet summers and dry winters, and is culturally diverse with 11 official languages (English is the language of choice at FABI, where students come from over 40 countries). The University is located within driving distance of many amazing locations including the Drakensburg Mountains and Kruger National Park, with hiking and biking (together with giraffe, wildebeest and all manner of fascinating biodiversity) within the city limits.

PhD students will typically have completed an MSc degree (except under special circumstances). An interest in insect, plant and/or fungal ecology and evolution is essential, as is a working facility with English. Students with a drivers license and field/lab experience preferred. Please send a CV, statement of interest and a short writing sample to Dr. Jeff Garnas (jeff.garnas@fabi.up.ac.za).

AGROFORESTRY SURVEY

The Organic Research Centre is conducting a survey to find out the extent to which UK producers are currently using the woody components on their land. This will allow us to gain an understanding of current farmland wood usage and gauge whether there is potential for producers to gain more from the woody elements on their land, both financially and ecologically. Please forward this to producers who may be able to take part in the survey; we are aiming to reach as wide an audience as possible. The survey should take no longer than 10 minutes to complete. [Complete the survey](#). If you would like to receive a paper copy, or have any further questions, please contact Sophie Lewis, sophie.l@organicresearchcentre.com Tel. 01488 658298 ext 537. If you would like more information about agroforestry please follow this [link](#).

FOREST OF THE MONTH

The opening image on this bulletin is from one of my own forest plots, a montane *Betula ermanii* stand in Central Kamchatka, Far East Russia. If you have a study site or recent publication that you would like to promote, why not send a photo and a few short words about it? There aren't many of us working in Kamchatka, and it's one of the few remaining places in the northern hemisphere with truly primeval forests. If you're interested in setting up research in the Russian Far East, or perhaps would like to share data for a comparative study, please [get in touch](#).