

## PhD position: Disentangling the drivers of invasive alien trees in East Africa

An exciting PhD position is available at Stellenbosch University's Centre of Excellence for Invasion Biology (C•I•B, <http://academic.sun.ac.za/cib/>). The C•I•B is a world-leading research centre in the field of biological invasions. The proposed project forms part of a multi-national research initiative between European and African partners. The overarching goal of the research project is to help to mitigate the effects of invasive alien trees on biodiversity, ecosystem services and human well-being in East Africa. We are seeking a creative and motivated student who wishes to carry out original research in the field of invasion biology, with a strong evolutionary focus.

The PhD project is specifically aimed at understanding the drivers of alien tree invaders (*Prosopis* species) in East Africa and to relate species traits and habitat characteristics to invasions in East African biodiversity hotspots. The PhD candidate will determine the incidence and extent of hybridization between *Prosopis* species in various East African countries, assess genotype X environment interactions in these areas, assess how genotypic identity and/or incidence of hybridization links with habitat suitability, map *Prosopis* invasions in East African forest reserves to determine the effects of reserve isolation, proximity to propagule sources, and edge effects on invasion extent. The student will be based at Stellenbosch University (<http://www.sun.ac.za/Home.aspx>) but will spend substantial periods of time in East Africa (Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania) to conduct field research and interact with other consortium members at various host institutions.

The project is suitable for students interested in environmental management, GIS, and population ecology, population genetics and/or evolutionary biology. Applicants should hold an MSc degree in one or more of the following fields: Ecology, Botany, Evolutionary biology or Population genetics. Preference will be given to individuals with demonstrated skills in one or more of these fields and an excellent academic track record (grades, publications in international journals, etc.). Successful candidates will be fully funded for 3.5 years, for full time research, with no teaching requirements. An attractive annual stipend will be offered, along with additional expenses for research, international travel and subsistence and conference attendance. Individuals of all nationalities are eligible.

To apply, please send a CV, academic transcript, contact details for at least two academic references, and a brief outline of research interests to Dr. Jaco Le Roux ([jlroux@sun.ac.za](mailto:jlroux@sun.ac.za)) and Prof. Brian van Wilgen ([bvanwilgen@sun.ac.za](mailto:bvanwilgen@sun.ac.za)) by 30 November 2014. Informal inquiries are welcome. Review of applications will begin immediately, and short-listed candidates will be contacted to set up phone/Skype interviews. The envisaged start date for the project would be March/April 2015.