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Insect Pollinators and Pollination Services in South Africa: Birth of the Bee Research Hub

Prof Ruan Veldtman (Stellenbosch University)

DATE: Monday, 9 February 2026 | 16h00–17h00 SAST

VENUES: • **Stellenbosch University:** NITheCS Seminar Room, Merensky Building
• **University of the Witwatersrand:** Room P215, 2nd Floor, Physics Building
• **North-West University:** Seminar Room K310, Physics Building G5
• **Online**

--- A recording of the talk will be published on the NITheCS YouTube channel afterwards ---

ABSTRACT

South Africa is unique with respect to crop pollination and pollination services. Research findings are regularly perceived as counter to accepted dogma in insect crop pollination. For example, managed honey bees are generally considered an agricultural input and an invasive species, however in South Africa, managed honey bees are simultaneously indigenous, dependent on wild forage resources, and a fundamental component of the agricultural industry. This uniquely South African context requires further study, awareness raising and environmental education. A practical solution would be to create an initiative that focusses on these aspects – behold the birth of the Bee Research Hub. The idea behind the Hub is to ensure novel multidisciplinary research on pervasive problems in the South African crop pollination and the bee industry and create a robust mechanism to secure funding for long term, public good research. Examples of such research topics are the forage service supporting managed bee industry and the pollination footprint of agriculture; potential impacts of managed honey bee introduction into natural vegetation in water stressed environments; and how to manage ecosystem disservices experienced by the bee industry. In summary, the overarching goal of the Bee Research Hub is to manage South Africa's pollination services and supporting natural resources sustainably, using the best possible scientific data.

BIOGRAPHY

Ruan Veldtman is a Senior Scientist at the South African National Biodiversity Institute and an Extraordinary Associate Professor at the department of Conservation Ecology and Entomology at Stellenbosch University. He works in the field of applied biodiversity research specialising in ecological entomology. His research deals with those entomological aspects linked to services provided by ecosystems and the impact of biological invasions. Other interests include wild silk moth ecology, plant–insect interactions, biological control of plant invasions, pollination ecosystem services and invasive wasp management. He is also avid supporter of interdisciplinary exchanges around entomology, such as agricultural economics and sustainable agricultural production.



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