

Dr. Josef Poelt, professor emeritus passed away...

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Prof. Dr. Josef Poelt (born in Pöcking, Bavaria, Germany on 17 October 1924) passed away unexpectedly on 3 June 1995, in Graz, Austria at the age of 70.

Prof. Poelt was one of the greatest men in the history of lichenology who substantially shaped the European lichenology during the last 40 years.

Working as a scientist at the Universities of Munich, Berlin and Graz (since 1972) Prof. Poelt built up a scientific work which made him internationally appreciated especially as a lichenologist, but as a mycologist and bryologist as well. Over the years he published more than 200 scientific papers, focused on floristics, morphology, taxonomy, evolution and biology of lichens. He travelled worldwide and built up a large herbarium of cryptogams. In his career he described many new genera and dozens of new species. Many of his publications have become landmarks and lichenological standard works in the recent history of lichenology.

Besides his lichenological publications there are about 100 papers on nonlichenized fungi (e. g. *Loculoascomycetes*, *Hyphomycetes*, *Uredinales*, fungi on ferns, etc.), mosses and phanerogams.

From his habilitation in 1959 till his sudden death Prof. Poelt has been a university teacher, and introduced many generations of students to the fascinating field of botany. He favoured and encouraged especially the lichenologists from the former Eastern bloc – many of us will never forget the enjoyable evenings in the homely atmosphere of his house with a glass of Styrian wine, folk music of various peoples and a relaxed discussion on every problem we had.

Apart from botany Prof. Poelt had many other interests as well – e. g. architecture and history. In his rare spare time he used to work in his garden where even some still unnamed lichens have grown on a garden wall!



For his outstanding work Prof. Poelt received many honours and has been elected as a Honorary, Foreign or Corresponding Member of a number of distinguished botanical societies (among others also Honorary Member of the Czech Botanical Society). In 1992 he was awarded the IAL Acharius Medal.

With the death of Prof. Josef Poelt the world lichenology has lost its Pope and some of us a good friend. His broadmindedness, helpfulness and cordiality to others remains a legend among those who had the good fortune to know him.