

Dr. Josef Poelt, professor emeritus (1924 - 1995): in memoriam

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Prof. Dr. Josef Poelt, the member of the Editorial Board of *Oecologia Montana* (born in Pöcking, Bavaria, Germany on October 17th, 1924) passed away unexpectedly on June 3rd, 1995, in Graz, Austria, at the age of 70.

Prof. Poelt was one of the greatest men in the history of lichenology, even earning the nickname of Pope of Lichenologists. 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 300 scientific papers, predominantly devoted to floristics, morphology, taxonomy, evolution and biology of lichens. During his numerous research trips he collected many plants 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 current history

of lichenology.

From his appointment in 1959 until his sudden death, Prof. Poelt had been a university teacher, and introduced many generations of students to botany and filled them with enthusiasm for this subject. He supported and encouraged especially lichenologists from the former Eastern block. He was famous for his hospitality - many of us will never forget the enjoyable nights in the homely atmosphere of his house. Usually he willingly discussed every problem we had.

In his spare time, Prof. Poelt was also interested in many other fields such as architecture, history and music of various nations. One of his favourite hobbies was his garden.

For his excellent work, Prof. Poelt received many honours of a number of various botanical societies (among others also Honorary Member of the Czech Botanical Society). In 1992 he was awarded the IAL Acharius Medal.

The death of Prof. Josef Poelt has meant that the World of Lichenology has lost its celebrity and some of us a good friend. His broadmindedness, helpfulness and cordiality to others remain a legend for those who had the good fortune to know him.

Received 6 April 1996