

Happy Anniversary, botanist dr. Ion SÂRBU!



On September, 17th, 1933, was born the Romanian botanist Ion Sârbu, in Tudor Vladimirescu commune (Galați county). He followed the primary school classes in the same village (Suceveni today). The secondary and high school courses were attended at the Normal School “Costache Negri” in Galați (Pedagogic High School for now), which he graduated in 1952. Further on, he goes on the Faculty of Natural Science in Iași, at the speciality of Biology-Geography, and graduate it in 1963, with the final exam in 1964.

Between 1963 and 1967 he worked as a teacher of biology and geography and as a School Inspector, in District of Bujor, Galați Region. In 1967 he held through competition a biologist position in the Department of Botany, at the University “Alexandru Ioan Cuza” in Iași, where besides researches in flora and phytocenology, he took hours of practical work laboratory and field in Systematic Botany, Nature Protection, Biodiversity and aquatic environments and taught a graduate course on forest resources. In 1975 Mr. Ion Sârbu was accepted as a researcher at the Botanical Garden of the University, where he realized, on an area of 25 hectares, the “Romanian Flora and Vegetation” section. For many years he served as the Scientific Secretary of the Botanic Garden, supporting with his skills and competency the various community events in which the institution was involved.

He get his PhD title in Biology at the same University, in 1978, with a thesis called *Flora și vegetația din Bazinul Chinejii și al Prutului între Rogojeni-Mastacani / Flora and vegetation of Chinejii and Prut Basin between Rogojeni-Mastacani* / under the guidance of the Professor Constantin Burduja.

In 2006 he was granted with the special prize “EMANOIL TEODORESCU” of the Romanian Academy of Science, for the 4 volumes book called *Flora lemnoasă spontană și cultivată din România / The spontaneous and cultivated lignaceous flora of Romania* (în collaboration).

The research carried out has resulted in the publication of a number of 121 papers, of which 5 in journals abroad (Germany, Italy, Sweden); he also published, in collaboration, a total of 10 books in Romania, and collaborated to other 4 books published abroad (Finland, Netherland, Germany, Sweden and Italy). The published papers relate to vascular plant taxonomy, chorology, phytocenology, and environmental protection, being referred in all specialty synthetic works in the country.

The whole research activity resulted in the publication of many reference works, such us:

- an illustrated flora of vascular plants in eastern Romania, volumes I and II / 2001 (781 pages), in collaboration;
- the spontaneous woody flora cultivated in Romania, volumes I, II, III, IV / 1996-2004 (1407 pages), in collaboration;
- explanation to the vegetation map of the Romanian Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve/ 1993, in collaboration;

- vegetation of the Biosphere Reserve “Danube Delta” with transboundary vegetation map/ 2002, in collaboration;
- vascular plant species threatened in Moldova / 2005;
- red lists of species and animals in the Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve;
- a guide to the identification and inventory of seminatural grasslands in Romania / 2001, in collaboration;
- guidelines for identification and protection of Important Plants Areas in Romania / 2003, in collaboration.

He has an international recognition, attested by a continued working and collaboration to several great works of synthesis on the European level, as:

- *Atlas Florae Europaeae*, volumes 12, 13, and 14 (in Helsinki)
- *Euro+Med PlantBase* (a database on www for “Flora Europaea” – romanian contributions).

He participated in the development and implementation of the “Natura 2000” protected area network in Romania, with the selection and preparing standard formulars for 273 sites of European interest, being also a member of a team for validation of all proposed “Natura 2000” sites in Romania. He was also involved in 18 national projects, most of them on the biodiversity of the Danube Delta flora and vegetation, development of management plans, the study of alternative solutions to reduce human impact on ecosystems in the Danube Delta. He initiated and led projects on capacity assessment of conservative protected areas in Moldova or assessment of the current status of protected areas in eastern Romania.

Though he is retired at his 70 years old, he continues to work on botany field, coming weekly at the Botanic Garden “Anastasiu Fătu” in Iași, where all his collaborators ask him to give many valuable advices on the romanian flora and vegetation, or on the garden history, checking-up a lot of sample seeds for the “Seeds Catalogue” every year, on the herbarium collection, and so on.

The whole experience of him on botany was materialized in a 6-year project, publishing thus a comprehensive field guide for the vascular flora of the whole Romania (Sârbu I., Ștefan N. & Oprea A. 2013. *Plante vasculare din România. Determinator ilustrat de teren / Vascular Plants of Romania. Illustrated Field Guide*), Publishing House “Victor B. Victor”, Bucharest, 1320 pp.), with the ink-drawings and color photos for almost all the species included in this most up-dated book.

Through its scientific work and research projects he is a recognized personality among the Romanian botanists, and not only! Thus, in 2007, the European Conference *Planta Europa*, held in Cluj-Napoca city, awarded him and his activity on the realm of botany with a special prize of this international organization on plant conservation, namely the “LINNAEUS AWARD” and the silver medal “FOR EXCELLENT WORK IN PLANT TAXONOMY”.

Botanist Ion Sârbu participated at several scientific meetings in Germany, Austria and Turkey. He also travelled, privately, to Germany, Canada and the United States of America, where he made botanical trips along different regions. At his returns he presented to us some excellent slideshows, delighting us with many aspects on flora and vegetation of those more or less remote countries.

The 80th anniversary represents a special moment both for Botanist PhD Ion Sârbu's life and the entire academic community. All of us want to wish him “Happy anniversary and that all his wonderful dreams become true!”

Adrian OPREA