

IN MEMORIAM

IN MEMORIAM PROFESSOR DR. VASILE CIOCÂRLAN



On December, 2nd, 2013, Professor Dr. Vasile Ciocârlan passed away, at his 87 years old. He was born on December, 21st, 1926, in Grumăzești village (Neamț county). He followed the primary school classes in the same village; later on, he attend the so-called "Școala Normală Gheorghe Asachi" in Piatra Neamț, and graduate it in 1946. Further on, he goes on the Faculty of Natural Science in Iași, at the speciality of Biology-Botany, and graduate it in 1951, with the final exam in 1952, with a diploma of merit. Being one of the best students of his generation, he worked temporary as a preparator within the Departament of Botany in the same faculty.

After graduation he made a two-year stage of probation in the Agricultural Secondary School in Calafat, Dolj county. After it, on 20th of November, 1953, he was called as an assistant professor in the Department of Botany, Faculty of Horticulture, Agronomic Institute "Nicolae Bălcescu" in Bucharest. Over the times, he promoted all levels of university hierarchy: Lecturer in 1968, Associate Professor in 1978 and Professor in 1990, honoring with a special competence the agricultural botany field.

In 1968 he get his PhD in biology from the University of Bucharest, with a thesis entitled: *Flora and vegetation of the Subcarpathic Basin of Slănicul de Buzău*, under the guidance of Professor Dr. Traian Ștefureac, a work widely appreciated for remarkable contributions at flora and vegetation in eastern Romania.

In 1974 he get the Romanian Academy Award "Traian Săvulescu" for a notable work entitled *Weeds in agricultural crops and their control*. After 1990, due to the recognition of his professional competence and exigency in scientific research, Professor Vasile Ciocârlan gets right to drive PhD theses at the Faculty of Biology, University of Bucharest, specialty Botany, contributing thus to the formation of a plethora of young botanists. In those 53 years of teaching and scientific career, he led lot of practical laboratory and field undergraduate works. His activity resulted in the publication of many scientific papers, alone or in collaboration, of 18 books and about 90 scientific articles in various journals, all targeting the knowledge of the Romanian flora.

Many published works concern the study of weeds in crops and their control, identification books of weeds, an atlas of the main weeds in Romania, and so on. He published a monumental book of the identification of the vascular Romanian flora, published first of all in 2 illustrated volumes (vol. I in 1988, vol. II in 1990); after it, this book was published again in two succesive, enlarged, updated, and revised editions, in 2000, and 2009. This books was appreciated by all specialists, both in Romania and abroad. This latest edition is the quintessential of his concerns and experience as a teacher and scientist, placing the author in the gallery of the great botanists of Romania. This identification book was requested in England, France, Germany, Netherland, Serbia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Poland, Ukraine, and Moldova.

Hailed as a specialist in Systematic Botany, he was requested and conducted the chapter no. 4 of the 1st volume called *Ampelografia Republicii Socialiste România – Sistemática familiei Vitaceae*. He was part of the team that studied the flora and vegetation of the "Iron Gates", coordinated by the Romanian Academy. Since 1990 he participated in many research projects, funded by the national authorities or the European Commission, concerning the biodiversity in the Biosphere Reserve Danube Delta, National Park Piatra Craiului, and so on.

He participated in several international scientific symposiums, in Bratislava, Halle, Sofia, where he held papers on taxonomy and chorology of some plant species in Romanian flora.

He was an avid and carefully documented observer of the plant world, publishing a total of 64 taxa new to Romania; also, he discovered and published five taxa new to science and published 19 new nomenclatural combinations. Through his studies of taxonomy, chorology, phytogeography, plus many others related topics in weeds and agricultural crops, Professor Dr. Vasile Ciocârlan was known and appreciated all over the country, by all who working in plant biology, as botanists, phytocenologists, agronomists, foresters and pharmacists, enjoying an unanimous appreciation.

Being one of the greatest personalities of Romanian botany, he passed through different stages of his life with verticality, facing many difficulties, but he did not make any compromises in the scientific truth and asked the same thing of his colleagues, or aspiring young people to get into the scientific world. As a botanist he was a nature lover, crossing the whole country over the years, from the seashore to the highest peaks of the Carpathians, helped by a robust constitution and a good health, believing that nature is the best teacher and the most perfect botanical book. His entire life has proven reliability, depth of competence and professionalism, ambition and perseverance, with a deep passion for floristic studies, all of these contributing to the settlement of Professor Vasile Ciocârlan among the greatest botanists of Romania.

We all are bringing a pious homage to Professor Dr. Vasile Ciocârlan, and we will bear our utter gratitude for what he has done for us, as Romanian botanists.

Adrian OPREA
December, the 5th, 2013