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# In memoriam Ferenc Radics (1910-1989)

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Our colleague Ferenc RADICS passed away on February 30, 1989, at the age of 79. He was born in Győr on November 19, 1910. He spent his childhood in Ajka and Komarno (now in Czechoslovakia). He started school in Komarno, the hometown of his maternal grandparents, and continued in Ajka. He entered the secondary school in Kőszeg and later transferred to the Benedictine Secondary School in Pápa where he graduated. His parents' greatest wish was to see him as a priest. However, he developed a strong affection for natural history and started studies at the Pázmány Péter University in Budapest. He was an eminent student of several famous Hungarian professors such as the geographer Jenő CHOLNOKY and the botanist János TUZSON. During his university years he had to work hard tutoring other students to help his parents in providing education for his four brothers and sisters. He graduated from the university as a teacher and started his carreer in the schools of Szentendre and Nyergesújfalu until he was appointed to the principal of the secondary school in Ajka. Later he taught at the St László Secondary School in Budapest, of which he also became principal subsequently. The next stages in his teaching carreer were the Economic Technical School of Buda and the Institute of Continuing Education of Budapest.

István BOROS, the general director of the Natural History Museum appointed him to deputy director of the Museum in 1958. RADICS hoped to fulfil his long-time dreams to devote his energy to scientific research but his job included predominantly administrative tasks. For this reason he resigned as a deputy director and became a staff member of the Botanical Department of the museum. He did not become a full time botanist until 1964 but he had been working as a researcher almost to his last days.

His early publications prior to 1955 as well as his latest ones were concerned with various aspects of pedagogy.

As a research associate of the Botanical Department he revised the herbarium specimens of *Nymphaea alba* s.l. (RADICS 1967, 1968). He considered this species a multiple hybrid occurring at different localities of Hungary.

Questions of the hybridization led him to study the history of research on birch-hybrids. Later he studied different species and hybrids of *Rorippa* (Cruciferae). He investigated similar problems related to species of *Carex*. Together with Prof. J. O. MARTINOVSKY of Prague he summarised the phytogeography of the Hungarian *Stipa* species in 1967.

He carried out a statistical analysis of the fossil leaves of *Platanus acerifolia* and modern specimens of *P. aceroides*. He came to a conclusion that *P. aceroides* has been continuously represented since the Tertiary and it is of hybrid origin, although not every botanists accepted his opinion.

The third major field what interested him perhaps the most was the history of botany. In several of his papers he dealt extensively with the scientific work of two outstanding Hungarian botanists Vince BORBÁS and Pál KITAIBEL.

The first contribution was written on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of BORBÁS's death. He stated: "the floristical studies of BORBÁS as well as biological, physiological observations based on floristical data still have a lively influence" (RADICS 1975).

His most challenging enterprise was to sort out and transcribe KITAIBEL's travelling diary. Selected botanical findings recorded in KITAIBEL's diary were

published by GOMBOCZ (1945). KITAIBEL's heritage was preserved in the herbarium and looked after by JÁVORKA from 1926 to 1936. JÁVORKA (1957) wrote the most authentic biography of KITAIBEL. The manuscripts of KITAIBEL included unpublished journal papers and correspondence. The diary was written by hand, often by small letters, and using a mixture of German and Latin languages. In many cases KITAIBEL's diary is the first source of botanical, zoological, agricultural, mineralogical, architectural and agrohistorical data (e. g. about Mezőhegyes and Mosonmagyaróvár) as well as the description of the distribution of population of towns and villages by religion and nationalities. In some cases KITAIBEL also provided sketch maps. KITAIBEL's diary together with his herbarium is a valuable source for not only the botanists and zoologist but also many other disciplines dealing with the Hungarian land and people.

RADICS spent many months interpreting KITAIBEL's handwritten diary and managed to transcribe and arrange this voluminous material chronologically, following the route of KITAIBEL's journeys. This work took him almost seven years. Perhaps the greatest achievement of RADICS is that KITAIBEL's diary is now ready to publish.

With the death of Ferenc RADICS we lost a dedicated botanist always ready to help and share his knowledge with his students and colleagues.

## PUBLICATIONS OF F. RADICS


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-- (1973): A nyírhibrid-kutatás története. (Investigational history of birch-hybrids.) - *Studia bot. hung.* **8**: 99-110.

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-- (1974): "Filodendron", "könnyező pálma" vagy "levélfa"? ("Philodendron", "palm", or "leaf-tree"?) - *Búvár* **29**(19)(1): 37-40.
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-- (1990): *Ajka környékének növényvilága.* - Ajka Városi Tanács V.B. Művelődési Osztály, Ajka, 20 pp.

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