

A OBITUARY NOTICE

Obituary of Associate Professor RNDr. JOSEF ŠEDIVÝ, DrSc. (1925–2008)



JOSEF ŠEDIVÝ was born on 11 September 1925. He graduated from the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Charles University in Prague in 1949, passing the state exams for teaching natural sciences and geography at secondary schools. In 1950, he defended his doctoral thesis in this field and obtained the RNDr academic title. In 1953, after working for a short time as an entomologist at the Hop Research Institute at Žatec, JOSEF ŠEDIVÝ joined the Crop Research Institute in Prague-Ruzyně where he worked until his death. From 1953–1990 he served as head of the Department of Entomology and, until 1985, he was the Deputy Director of the Division of Plant Medicine. In 1960 he defended his candidate dissertation in Plant Protection (CSc.), and in 1984 his doctoral thesis in Agricultural and Forestry Sciences (DrSc.). In 1992 he habilitated as lecturer of Agricultural Entomology at the Czech University of Life Sciences in Prague. He retired in 2004, but remained actively involved in a number of research projects until the beginning of 2008.

Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ was an outstanding researcher, specialising in agricultural entomology and plant protection and an indefatigable organiser of agricultural research. His work influenced the direction of both research in phytopathology and practical pest control in crop production for the entire second half of the 20th century. JOSEF ŠEDIVÝ worked as an entomologist ever since his student years. He was a member of the Czechoslovak Entomological Society since 1941. The scope of his research was extremely broad, including applied entomology, acarology and nematology with a special focus on bionomy and harmfulness of pests attacking permanent cultures and crop plants. In addition, he devoted time to systematic entomology as his life-long hobby. Systematically he studied trophic relationships of pests and the methods of directed protection, later referred to as integrated protection. Furthermore, he researched the topics of biology, ecology, and harmfulness of a wide range of animal pests of cultivated crops. He was the first to introduce the notion of the threshold of harmfulness to the Czech research community. Based on the results of this research, he determined the economic thresholds of harmfulness for a group of pests attacking winter rapeseed, for the alfalfa plant bug on the seed stands of alfalfa, for aphids, wheat blossom midges and cereal leaf beetles on small grain cereals, for the bean aphid on broad bean. On a long-term basis, Ass. Professor Šedivý studied the pests attacking small grain cereals, rapeseed, potatoes, alfalfa, hop-plant, poppy, apple trees and how to protect the crops against these pests.

In the area of systematic entomology, Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ worked as a taxonomist, classifying the extensive family Ichneumonidae, which is very difficult to determine. This family consists mainly of parasitoids many of which play an important role in regulating pest populations. He became one of the top European experts specialising in the Ichneumonidae family. He described 15 new and until then unknown species living in the Czech Republic, Mongolia, the Near and Middle East and the Canary Islands. He is the author and co-author of revisions of European checklists and monographs focusing on

the Ichneumonidae family. Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ determined and reviewed a significant part of the Czechoslovak museum collections belonging to the Ichneumonidae as well as a number of collections located at museums in other countries.

Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ's publishing activities were extraordinarily extensive, with over 440 publications to his credit, of which more than 130 were scientific works. He was the author or co-author of 40 books and brochures, eight of which were published abroad.

Starting in 1977 Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ lectured at the University of Agriculture in Prague (later renamed the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague) on special chapters from applied entomology in both regular and graduate programme courses. At this university he was a long-standing chair of the final state examinations with a specialisation in plant protection. Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ was an advisor for many master's and doctoral theses. He was often chair or committee member for the defence of candidate of science and doctoral theses. He was also a sought after opponent for candidate of science and doctoral theses of both Czech and foreign scholars.

His popularising and educational activities were also extensive. For decades Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ was a much sought after lecturer for practical training in agricultural entomology and plant protection. Every year he gave several lectures, always on timely subjects, at events for farmers organised by the Ministry of Agriculture, research institutes and companies as well as gardeners' associations. His expert broadcasts on Czech television were well known to the public. He was the co-author or expert consultant for a number of short films and television broadcasts.

As a leading scientist, Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ participated in an important way in shaping the concepts of plant protection, in research as well as in practical protection, and both at the level of the Institute and of central authorities. In particular, he was most active in the *Plant Protection Committee* of the *Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Sciences* (ČAZV) that he chaired from 1973 to 1993. In the 20 years of his chairmanship, the committee discussed, prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Agriculture numerous proposals which had a significant impact on the development of practical plant protection in Czechoslovakia. In 1993 Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ played a major role in the establishment of the Division of Plant Medicine at ČAZV, and became its first chair and member of the board of directors. He was a member of scientific councils and other panels of numerous research organisations and was a member of the editorial boards of a number of scientific journals. He played a pivotal role on the editorial board of the journals *Plant Protection Science* and *Plant Health* (Plant Medicine).

For his work Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ won a number of awards and distinctions in agriculture, as well as awards for his scientific contributions and book publications. Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ became an honourable member of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Czech Entomology Society at AV ČR and the Czech Society of Plant Medicine. Everyone who knew Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ highly valued the scope of his professional knowledge in many different fields, and the high demands he placed on himself and others, his diligence and efforts to fulfil his set tasks. The high quality of research in agricultural entomology and plant medicine that Ass. Professor ŠEDIVÝ helped to achieve, created the conditions for further development in these fields. His readily shared experience and the advice he gave us were invaluable – for his colleagues, practical farmers as well as students. His organisational and conceptual work was a model for us and a pledge for the future.

František Kocourek (Prague)