

In memory of RNDr. Václav Skuhravý CSc.

RNDr. Václav Skuhravý, CSc., the excellent entomologist and ecologist, and one of the founders of the Institute of Entomology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, passed away on 1 April 2018, the day of his 90th birthday.

Václav Skuhravý was born in Kadov, a small village near Blatná in the Strakonice District in South Bohemia. After five years in the elementary school in the village, he attended the grammar school at Příbram from 1939 to 1947. Then he enrolled in the Faculty of Natural Sciences at Charles University in Prague. After graduation in 1951 he joined the staff as a lecturer.

Václav since his youth had been interested in nature. During school holidays he often visited the Hydrobiological Station at Lnáře which was close to his home place. At this station he had opportunities to meet recognized Czech biologists of those days – university professors Karel Schäferna, Bohuslav Fott, Walter Černý and especially Julius Komárek who started his interest in insects and in entomology. This contributed to his decision to study natural sciences which he started in 1947. After finishing his studies of zoology, botany and geography at the Faculty of Science of the Charles University in Prague he received in 1951 the academic degree “Rerum Naturalium Doctor” (RNDr.) after defending his thesis “The sex ratio of *Lymantria monacha* and of *Lymantria dispar* on the basis of anatomy of gonads” (written in Czech) and later, in 1960, the scientific title “Candidate of Sciences” (CSc.). After graduating he joined as assistant to professor Julius Komárek at the Institute of General and Experimental Zoology at Charles University.

Václav Skuhravý was one of the founders of the Laboratory of Entomology in 1952, which later became the Institute of Entomology of the Czech Academy of Science. He worked as a head of the Department of Insect Ecology, at first in Prague and from 1985 in České Budějovice. Václav has been a major contributor to the creation of the scientific concept of the institute and he was one of its prominent scientists. He finished his active work at the institute in 1993 and then had been a member of the institute with denomination as “emeritus”.

Throughout his career the main interests of Václav have been in insect ecology, with particular emphasis on pest species, and he pioneered many improvements in long-term field studies of pest populations and the use of non-chemical controls to reduce environmental damage. His ecological and biological investigations of *Leptinotarsa decemlineata* have provided valid theoretical grounds for revision of the methods for controlling this pest which resulted in substantial reduction of the amounts of insecticides used. He was the first to introduce the method of pheromone traps for monitoring and controlling outbreaks of *Lymantria monacha* in Czechoslovakia. He also studied the complex of insects developing on *Phragmites australis* in the framework of the International Biological Program and of the program Human and Biosphere.

Václav has made important contributions to research on the biology, ecology and control of insect pests in agriculture (Colorado beetle, *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*; beet leaf miner, *Pegomyia betae*, now *Pegomya hyoscyami*; alfalfa leaf-bud gall midge, *Dasineura medicaginis*; saddle gall midge, *Haplodiplosis marginata*), and in forestry (spruce bark beetle, *Ips typographus*; larch tortrix moth, *Zeiraphera diniana* and black arches moth, *Lymantria monacha*; needle-shortening gall midge, *Thecodiplosis brachyntera*; larch bud midge, *Dasineura kellneri*; needle-bending pine gall midge, *Contarinia baeri*; gall midges associated with *Quercus cerris*). His coenological and ecological studies dealt with entire field and forest entomocoenoses (potato and clover fields, spruce stands). He investigated the effects of chemical treatments on composition and development of

the entomocoenoses and the impact of human activities on the environment. After finishing his active career in the Institute of Entomology, Václav continued in research together with his wife RNDr. Marcela Skuhrová, CSc., especially on faunistic investigations of her “heart” group of insects – the gall midges (Cecidomyiidae). In the course of fifty eight years from 1955 to 2013 they carried out investigations of the occurrence of gall midges in twenty three countries of Europe, in Siberia and Turkey, and in twelve islands in the Mediterranean Sea. Altogether they collected galls of gall midges at 1898 localities. Results of their investigations were published in a series of articles and summarized in the article “Species richness of gall midges (Diptera, Cecidomyiidae) in Europe (West Palaearctic): biogeography and coevolution with host plants” which was published in the journal *Acta Societatis Zoologicae Bohemicae* in the year 2010. Thanks to their lifetime efforts, the gall midges of central and southern Europe and of central Siberia are among the best investigated countries of the world.

Václav Skuhrový is the author or co-author of about six hundreds publications (exactly 594), 380 of them are original scientific papers, six monographs, 17 books, seven lists of Czechoslovakian institutes of entomology including addresses of the workers in entomology, 44 short articles devoted to jubilee and death of zoologists and entomologists, and 140 are popular-scientific papers and short notes.

Václav Skuhrový worked as a member of several editorial boards of the natural historical journals: for twelve years in the *Vesmír* journal, for eight years in the *Živa* journal and more than 20 years in the journal *Agrochémia*. He was also a member of the editorial board of the international scientific journal *Zeitschrift für angewandte Entomologie*.

Václav Skuhrový was an outstanding entomologist who worked in the fields of general and applied entomology. Some of his results have been included into textbooks and compendia of agricultural and forest entomology and ecology (as for example Balogh 1958, Tischler 1993). His studies on the epigeon of various agroecosystems, together with the results of his numerous students in Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia, provide classical sources of basic data on biodiversity in the fields in the second half of the twentieth century and are the starting point for studying long-term anthropogenic changes in the landscape. Václav was able to establish very good collaboration with colleagues and researchers not only in his department but also in other institutes and organizations in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, with farmers and foresters who helped him to realize his experiments and research works in fields and forests.

Václav organized three conferences on *Leptinotarsa decemlineata* (1965, 1966, 1967), and one conference on pests of root crops (1967). He organized also two conferences on gall midges, both were held in České Budějovice. The conference on gall midges damaging cereals was held in 1981 and the conference on gall midges as pests in forestry and agriculture in 1987. He organized and took part in several congresses and conferences and was often invited to lecture not only in the Czech Republic but also in foreign countries.

Václav made several journeys in foreign countries, some of which were on the invitation of foreign organizations, mostly universities, some were focused on the collection of scientific material. From 1957 to 1968 he visited nine countries, some of them several times: Germany, Russia, Austria, Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, and France. After 1968, that is after the Soviet occupation of Czechoslovakia, it was not possible to realize such journeys.

The scientific activities of Václav Skuhrový were recognized by the award of several medals: the silver Medal of Gregor Mendel (1988); the Medal of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (1988) for his contribution to agricultural sciences; the Medal of J. E. Purkyně (1988); the gold and silver Medals from the Forestry and Game Management Research Institute, Jíloviště-Strnady, for his contribution to forestry sciences (2001, 2008); the Medal of Ctibor Blatný from the Czech Phytopathological Society for significant contributions to the development of phytopathology,

shared by Marcela Skuhrová and Václav Skuhrový. In addition, the article of Marcela Skuhrová and Václav Skuhrový “Gall midges (Diptera: Cecidomyiidae) of Austria. Annotated list of species and zoogeographical analysis” published in the journal *Studia Dipterologica* (2008: 49–150) was awarded the prize for entomofaunistics in Central Europe in 2009 by the organization Förderkreis für Allgemeine Naturkunde (Biologie) in Jena (Germany). In 1989 the team of researchers including Jan Vrkoč, Ivan Hrdý, Jan Žďárek, Karel Konečný, and Václav Skuhrový was awarded a prize of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences for the publication: “Chemical Communication of Insects”.

Václav was a member of the Czech Entomological Society from 1942 (since the age of 14 years); in 2000 he was appointed an honorary member of this scientific society. He was also a member of the Czech Zoological Society from 1948 and in the years 1948–1959 he was a member of the committee. He was also the member of the Czech Bioclimatological Society from 1965.



Václav Skuhrový at the meeting in the Forestry and Game Management Research Institute at Zbraslav-Strnady held on the occasion of celebration of the 85th anniversary of his birthday on 1 April 2013.

The following three taxa were named to honour Václav Skuhrový:

Acerentomon skuhrovayi Rusek, 1965, small species of the order Protura;

Resseliella skuhrovayorum Skrzypczynska, 1975, species of gall midges (Cecidomyiidae) larvae of which develop in cones of *Larix decidua* and *Larix polonica*;

Skuhroviana Mamaev, 1963, genus of the family Cecidomyiidae; larvae are associated with decaying wood.

In the person of Václav Skuhrový we have lost not only an excellent entomologist but, above all, a great and kind person who will forever remain in the minds and memories of all of us who have personally known him.

František Marec, Jan Žďárek & Marcela Skuhrová