

Orvo Vitikainen, an 80th birthday tribute

Orvo Vitikainen celebrates his 80th birthday on the 11 October this year. Orvo was born in Taipalsaari in Southeast Finland and is now retired and lives in Lappeenranta in the same area. For a long time he worked as a curator of lichens in Helsinki (H), being especially responsible for the internationally highly valuable herbaria of Erik Acharius and William Nylander. For instance, Orvo compiled a catalogue of Acharius collection and supervised its treatment by a professional conservator. He also made a list of collectors in the Nylander herbarium and for many years ably managed the loan and consultation activity from these herbaria.

Orvo is internationally known as a worldwide specialist of the genus *Peltigera*. His first *Peltigera* paper was published in 1977 on the species from Newfoundland, Canada (Ahti & Vitikainen 1977). His PhD thesis *Taxonomic revision of Peltigera (lichenized Ascomycotina) in Europe* (Vitikainen 1994) is certainly a classic. Orvo's taxonomic skills are highly esteemed by his fellow researchers. For instance, Jolanta Miadlikowska from Duke University, USA, and Isabel Martínez from Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Spain, have visited the lichen herbarium in Helsinki to learn *Peltigera* taxonomy. Orvo is still active in *Peltigera* research, participating, for instance, in the phylogenetic revision of *Peltigera* lead by Miadlikowska and Nicolas Magain, who have shown how the genus is taxonomically extremely complex and still insufficiently understood (Magain et al. 2018).

Orvo's expertise and interests are not limited to *Peltigera*. He has a wide knowledge of other lichen groups such as the *Lecanora subfusca* group in Finland. Although this work was not published, he did publish on *Lecanora*, e.g. describing *L. circumborealis* with Ernie Brodo (Brodo & Vitikainen 1984). Orvo has collected thousands of lichen specimens for the herbarium. His collecting areas cover many provinces of Finland, but also Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Russian Karelia, Scotland, Austria, Italy, Hungary, Croatia, Montenegro, Tanzania, Kenya, British Columbia, and Brazil. He also worked on *Peltigera* in South America, Australasia, Papua New Guinea, China, East Africa, and the Azores and identified specimens for numerous colleagues. In addition, Orvo has devoted much time to the study of Finnish lichens and he, together with other Finnish lichenologists, published the first comprehensive catalogue of Finnish lichens and allied fungi (Vitikainen et al. 1997). The data were updated and incorporated into the catalogue of Fennoscandian lichens by Santesson et al. (2004) and its later revisions. Orvo also has a great interest in history of lichenology and this has resulted in many popularized articles and research papers of Finnish lichenologists (Vitikainen 1999, 2001, 2006, 2011). Despite his retirement, Orvo is still active on this field, and is now especially interested in the history of William Nylander.

We know Orvo as a modest, patient, friendly and industrious colleague. He has always been eager to help us with identification of many lichen specimens and has generously shared his vast knowledge and experience in taxonomic problems. His extensive understanding of the complexities and "hidden treasures" of the invaluable historic collections in H has helped his younger colleagues a great deal. Orvo is an important joint in the great chain of lichenological tradition in Finland.

On behalf of the Finnish lichen community, we congratulate Orvo on his 80th birthday and wish him enjoyable moments with his research interests and his hobbies, classical music in particular.



Orvo Vitikainen. Photo: Kimmo Jääskeläinen.

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