

Acharius Medallists

Josef Hafellner

Josef Hafellner has dedicated his scientific life to the classification and taxonomy of lichens and their inhabitant lichenicolous fungi. Josef became irreversibly attracted to mycology despite earlier interests in plant systematics. Already in his first publication about *Thelocarpon*, with his mentor Josef Poelt, he settled one of his main interests: the significance of ascus structural characters for ascomycete classification. He continued with this theme during his doctoral studies on *Karschia*, a poorly known genus that included fungi with different lifestyles (Hafellner 1979). The monograph of the primarily tropical genus *Letrouitia*, Josef's habilitation treatise (Hafellner 1981), was a further milestone. A taxonomic revision of the families Lecanoraceae and Lecideaceae – his contribution to the Festschrift of Josef Poelt – was probably also his most influential work in lichenology (Hafellner 1984). At that time, both of these large families were heterogeneous, and classification within them was puzzling. Josef's new concept to recognize no less than 48 families was controversially discussed in the beginning, but provided a solid framework for the classification and taxonomy of Lecanoralean lichens. In the years to follow, his outline as well as his focus on reproductive characters for classification became increasingly accepted. Josef's taxonomic concepts provided a coherent framework for lichen systematics and helped to classify newly discovered lineages. Phylogenetic tests of his ideas also influenced the developing molecular era of lichenology.

Josef Hafellner dedicated a second important line of research to the knowledge of lichenicolous fungi. Equipped with an equal expertise about lichens and non-lichenized fungi, Josef explored the diversity and specificity of these lichen colonizers. This work resulted in the description of a significant number of new species and genera, and new insights about their relationships.

Further scientific interests concerned the distribution of lichen diversity („lichen floristics“). Josef's list of major collecting trips and expeditions to explore these questions is too long for details, but they provided a basis for numerous papers that expanded our knowledge about the distribution of lichens across the globe. As his specimens are stored in public herbaria, Josef's outstanding collecting activity also represents an invaluable community resource for lichenology. Presently, Josef Hafellner has collected around 100000 specimens so far, and his scientific output comprises more than 288 publications. His recent retirement from academic duties did not lower his activity, and the years to come will increase these figures.

References

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