

In memoriam



Anton Lang

1913–1996

Anton Lang, Honorary Editor of *Planta*, died on 24 June 1996. Born in St. Petersburg, Russia, on 18 January 1913, Anton Lang was educated at the University of Berlin, where he received his doctorate in natural science in 1939. He was a scientific assistant to Georg Melchers at the Kaiser Wilhelm Institute in Berlin from 1939 to 1949 and then briefly at Tübingen before departing for the New World. An appointment at McGill University, Canada, preceded a move first to Texas A & M University and then to the California Institute of Technology at Pasadena. He subsequently became Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, before returning in 1959 to a Chair at the California Institute of Technology. In 1965, Anton Lang was invited by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to be the founding Director of its new Plant Research Laboratory at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. He retired as Director of the Laboratory in 1978 and as a Member of its Faculty in 1983.

Anton Lang was a distinguished whole-plant physiologist whose work showed great flair, imagination and originality. His contributions to the mechanism of flowering in plants were of great significance despite his own statement that he was a member of that distinguished group of plant physiologists and biochemists who had failed to isolate and identify the mystical floral hormone "florigen". His work encompassed cytology, hormone physiology, and the control of flowering in plants, particularly in relation to night length. But in the later stages of his career as Director of the Plant Research Laboratory, he gathered together a distinguished team of scientists and acted as a catalyst and facilitator to make the laboratory one of outstanding success and an internationally acclaimed centre of excellence.

Anton Lang served on many important U.S. Government committees and commissions and was awarded numerous honours and distinctions. He was elected a member of the U.S. National Academy of Science, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and the German Academy of Natural Sciences (Leopoldina), and a Fellow of the AAAS. He was Vice-President of two International Botanical Congresses, President of the American Society of Plant Physiologists, in which he was a recipient of the Stephen Hales and the Barnes awards, and an Honorary Member of the German Botanical Society. He had also been awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Laws at Glasgow University.

After many years on the Editorial Board, Anton Lang served as a Managing Editor of *Planta* from 1977 to 1991 and thereafter as Honorary Editor. He set himself, and others, the very highest literary standards. His attention to detail was astonishing, but this ensured that the standard of papers published in *Planta*, and the quality of production, maintained its traditionally high standard. Nothing escaped his eagle eye: authors, Editorial Board, Managing Editors and Springer-Verlag would all receive a lengthy letter setting out his comments and criticisms in definitive terms. Anton was a literary scholar of considerable talent, equally at home in Russian, German and English. With the passing of Anton Lang, plant physiology has lost a distinguished student, *Planta* an outstanding Editor, and all of us a good and loyal friend.

Russell L. Jones
 Andreas Sievers
 Malcolm B. Wilkins

Managing Editors