

K. Haselwandter

## ***In memoriam* Hannes Schüepp 1931–2006**

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The scientific community, and more especially mycorrhiza research, lost an outstanding member when Hannes Schüepp passed away on 7 February, 2006. Hannes began his research career at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH, Zürich) where he was awarded his PhD in mycology and plant pathology in 1959 in the presence of E. Gäumann and A. Frey-Wissling. After working on the revision of the taxonomy of the sub-family Pseudopezizoideae in his thesis, he carried out postdoctoral research at the University of Pretoria (South Africa) then worked as plant pathologist at the Swiss Federal Research Station in Wädenswil (1961–1962), before being appointed Assistant Professor in soil microbiology at Purdue University (Indiana, USA, 1963–1965) to study soil fungistasis.

On his return to Switzerland in 1965, Hannes resumed his work as plant pathologist and soil microbiologist at the Swiss Federal Research Station in Wädenswil where he was appointed Head of the Department of Plant Pathology and Soil Microbiology in 1986, a position he held until

retirement. His research interests covered a wide field which included the taxonomy, intra-specific variability and life cycles of pathogenic fungi, the integrated control of fungal diseases, development of resistance to fungicides, side-effects of plant protection practices on the soil ecosystem, soil fungistasis, and the role of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in sustainable soil–plant systems. He and his co-workers are probably best known for their research on drought and heavy metal tolerance in mycorrhizal plants, mycorrhization of micropropagated plants, the role of arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi in nitrogen acquisition, quantification methods for extraradical mycelium and its contribution to soil microbial biomass. In addition to his scientific activities, Hannes taught courses in plant pathology and soil microbiology at the ETH (Zürich) and was engaged both in the official registration of fungicides for plant protection and in the development of spray schedules for controlling fungal diseases. He provided advice to both farmer associations and individual farmers, as well as to the public and politicians regarding issues like biosafety and environmental protection.

Hannes Schüepp was also greatly appreciated for his expertise and his engagement in science at the European and international level. He was member of the European Plant Protection Organisation (EPPO) since 1971, co-ordinator of the joint Council of Europe and EPPO Expert Group on Soil Microbiology since 1989, member of the Co-ordination Board of the European Co-operative Research Network on Pesticides within the FAO and member of several expert groups within the OECD. He made an unforgettable contribution to European research by bringing researchers together in the COST Action 8.10 (European Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research) which focussed on arbuscular mycorrhizal fungi as components of the soil microbiota, and their importance for plant nutrition and plant health in a sustainable soil–plant system. Through this initiative, Hannes encouraged the creation of an efficient network comprising a huge number of scientists and which expanded through subsequent COST Actions (8.21, 8.38) to include as many as 32 different countries. This network

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K. Haselwandter (✉)  
Department of Microbiology, University of Innsbruck,  
Technikerstr. 25,  
A-6020 Innsbruck, Austria  
e-mail: Kurt.Haselwandter@uibk.ac.at  
Tel.: +43-512-507-6003  
Fax: +43-512-507-2928

will be remembered as a driving force for cooperative research activities and especially for the friendly atmosphere under which it operated. The resulting coordination of research activities within Europe not only provided the basis for rapid progress of mycorrhiza research in Europe but also for the publication of two books (Birkhäuser Verlag, Basel), co-edited by Hannes Schüepp, on the “Impact of Arbuscular Mycorrhizas on Sustainable Agriculture and Natural Ecosystems” and “Mycorrhizal Technology in Agriculture”, each of which reached 70% of sales within the first twelve months after appearance. After his retirement, Hannes continued to work as Scientific Officer for COST in Brussels (1996–1999), unselfishly supported

by his wife Annelies, and in this position he was responsible for the organisation and co-ordination of up to 14 COST Actions in the field of agriculture, biotechnology and food science.

Because of his wide knowledge, Hannes Schüepp has always been a reliable source of scientific information and advice which many of us were able to appreciate from personal discussions or at scientific meetings. His publications will ensure that he will be remembered in the scientific world in the years to come. He will be missed not only for his scientific merit but also for his friendliness and sincerity towards all those that have had the privilege to know him.