



## OBITUARY FOR DR. OSWALD HILBER\*



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Dr. Oswald Hilber (Ossi) passed away on May 26, 2007, in Regensburg, Germany, after a long-lasting serious illness.

Dr. Hilber was born on June 13, 1942. From 1953 to 1962, he attended the secondary school of Kelheim specialising in natural sciences, he also learned Latin and English. After finishing the secondary school, Dr. Hilber studied natural sciences, especially biology at the Leopold-Franzens-University of Innsbruck, Austria, from 1962 to 1971. He graduated at the same University and finished his doctoral thesis in 1971 with the topic: "Der Einfluss von Fungiziden auf die Indolwuchsstoffbildung bei Mykorrhizapilzen" (Influence of fungicides on the production of indol growth promoters by mycorrhizal fungi). Dr. Hilber received the degree of Dr. Phil. in 1971. His supervisor was the well-known mycologist Prof. Meinhard Moser, head of the Institute for Microbiology at the University of Innsbruck.

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Dr. O. Hilber was a member of the international editorial board from *MICOL. APL. INT.*

Dr. Hilber received his first position in November 1970, at the Department of Botany of the Technical University of Karlsruhe, Germany, where he started to deal with mycological and botanical subjects. From 1973 to 1977, he continued his research work at the Institute for Botany of the University of Regensburg. While he was staying at Regensburg, he was intensively involved in studies of the genus *Pleurotus*, and he laid there the foundation of his reputation as one of the world's leading *Pleurotus* experts, especially as a *Pleurotus* taxonomist.

From 1983 to 1985, Dr. Hilber was a member of the staff of the Institute for Environmental Protection in the city of Darmstadt, where he focused his activities more on botanical topics. In 1985, Dr. Hilber received an invitation to lecture in mycology, especially in *Pleurotus* and *Pyrenomyces*, from the Department of Biology of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, U.S.A. He spent one year in the U.S.A.

The next challenge Dr. Hilber had to

accept was the organisation, together with Dr. Klaus Grabbe, of the XII International Congress on Science and Cultivation of Edible Fungi (ISMS Congress), which was held in Braunschweig in 1987. He was especially responsible for the edition of both volumes of Mushroom Science XII, the proceedings of the Congress.

Finally, in 1988, Dr. Hilber became a member of the staff of the Research Institute for Mushroom Cultivation of the Rhineland Chamber of Agriculture at Krefeld. In our institute, he was involved in different mycorrhizal research projects which were financed by the Forest Administration of the State North Rhine Westphalia. He especially dealt with experiments in activation and revitalisation of declined standing forests by the application of mycorrhizal fungi. He invested a lot of his time and energy in this promising project. During his stay in Krefeld, he accepted an invitation from the Instituto de Botanica at Sao Paulo, and he spent one month in Brazil dealing there with lectures and research.

After his research project at Krefeld was completed and we were just endeavouring to apply for a new research project, Dr. Hilber suffered a cerebral haemorrhage. Fortunately he was found in his apartment by his assistant; Ms. Beeck and he came in time in hospital. However, he never recovered from his illness and remained lifelong seriously handicapped. He was no longer able to return and to continue his research. The damage caused by the cerebral haemorrhage was too severe. Dr. Hilber retired from his position and returned to his old homeland Bavaria, and lived there subsequently close to Regensburg. There he passed away as a result of pneumonia.

Dr. Oswald Hilber published 58 scientific articles and reviews. He was an excellent scientist, a well-known *Pleurotus* expert and a great friend. He had a hard lot and was disappointed many times by his fate. We are sad to loose him in such an early age.