

AWARDS

CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre Awards

On the second day of the “Fungi and Global Challenges” symposium in Amsterdam on Friday 15 April 2016, the CBS-KNAW Fungal Biodiversity Centre presented its two prestigious awards. The awards are made at irregular intervals by the institute following discussions by its senior staff. This is the seventh time these awards have been made, and the citations were read, and the presentation of certificates made, by the Centre’s Director, Pedro W. Crous.

Johanna Westerdijk Award: Meredith Blackwell

Awarded on special occasions to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to the culture collection of the CBS Fungal Biodiversity Centre, marking a distinguished career in mycology. Nominees for the award will be evaluated on the basis of quality, originality, and quantity of their contributions to the collection, and on the basis of associated mycological research in general.

Meredith Blackwell is one of the World’s leading authorities in mycology with particular expertise in ascomycete systematics and insect-associated fungi. Throughout her career, she has had a monumental and tangible impact on mycology in North America and globally. She is a sought after speaker and

organizer and continues to inspire the next generation of mycologists. She has had many research highlights, most notably the discovery of yeast diversity associated with fungus-feeding and wood-inhabiting beetles, and is known to many as being “The Blackwell” in Alexopoulos, Mims & Blackwell (1996, *Introductory Mycology*, 4th edn, New York: John Wiley), the famous mycological textbook. She has also had many other academic successes, awards, and recommendations. She is recognized as a special recipient of the Westerdijk Award today, however, as she has deposited a huge collection of yeasts in the CBS culture collection, thereby ensuring that these fungi remain available for research by future generations. These cultures were collected by her and her team over many years, and as such represent a major investment of time and resources. As a mycological community, we thus thank her for this incredible

foundation, and trust that students in years to come will continue to build on this wonderful platform.



Meredith Blackwell receiving the Johanna Westerdijk award from the Director of the CBS-KNAW, Pedro Crous.

Josef Adolf von Arx Award: Keith Seifert

Awarded on special occasions to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to taxonomic research of fungal biodiversity, marking a distinguished career in mycology. Nominees for the award will be evaluated on the basis of quality, originality, and quantity of their contributions in the field of fungal taxonomy.

Keith Seifert obtained his PhD in Utrecht while working at CBS in 1985. After a few years at Forintek, he accepted a position in Agriculture Canada in 1990, and was appointed as adjunct professor at the University of Ottawa in 2006. In 1993 he received the Alexopoulos Award from the Mycological Society of America (MSA), and in subsequent years served as chair or member of numerous committees of the International Commission on the Taxonomy of Fungi (ICTF) and MSA, and is presently the

President of the IMA. He has been an invited and keynote speaker at numerous meetings, and is best known for the role he played as co-chair of the “Working Group on DNA Barcoding of Fungi” in getting the ITS locus accepted as the official barcode gene for fungi. Keith is presently on the editorial board of several journals, including *Canadian Journal of Plant Pathology*, *CBS Biodiversity Series*, *Mycologia*, *Mycoscience*, *Persoonia*, *Studies in Mycology*, *Sydowia*, and *IMA Fungus*. During his career, Keith has published a great number of papers, but most important of all, he has contributed greatly to the taxonomic advances in mycotoxigenic *Fusarium* and *Penicillium* species, and the discovery of new components of Canadian and global fungal biodiversity. Over the years he has edited and published several books and monographs, the most significant being the *The Genera of Hyphomycetes* (Seifert KA, Morgan-Jones G, Gams W, Kendrick B, 2011, Utrecht: CBS-KNAW

Fungal Biodiversity Centre), which took more than 30 years to complete; this has become a standard reference manual in almost every mycological laboratory. I for instance have a copy in every laboratory,



Keith Seifert receiving the Josef Adolf von Arx award from the Director of the CBS-KNAW, Pedro Crous.

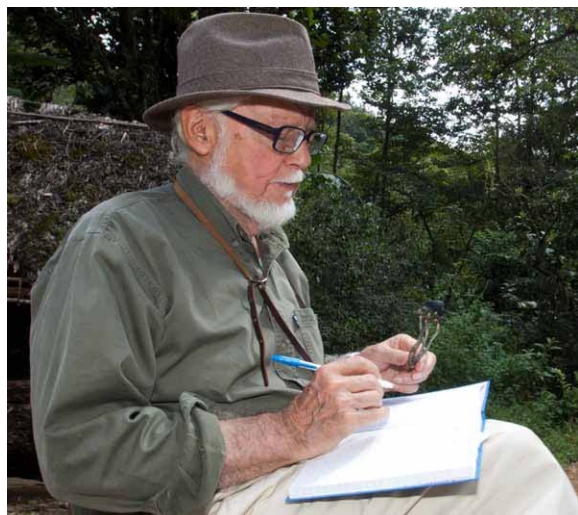
including my office. The contribution of Seifert's career to mycology is not seen only in terms of numbers and citations, but especially in terms of quality,

relevance and usefulness. As a young student, Keith knew von Arx personally, and thus I think that this award also has a special meaning for him. It thus gives us

great pleasure to award Keith Seifert with the Josef Adolf von Arx award for fungal systematic research.

IN MEMORIAM

Gastón Guzmán (1932-2016): leading expert on psychotropic mushrooms



Gastón Guzmán.

We are sad to report that Gastón died after a short illness on 12 January 2016. He was born in Xalapa, Mexico, on 26 August 1932 and studied at the Escuela Nacional de Ciencias Biológicas del Instituto Politécnico Nacional (1951–1956) from which he obtained his doctorate degree in 1967 following pre-doctoral study at the University of Michigan. His interest in Mexican fungi had started in earnest in 1955, following work as a student looking for pharmaceutical products in plants for drug companies, including Pfizer SA. He started as a laboratory assistant in the Escuela in 1956, and established a collection of fungi which has grown to be largest in Mexico today.

He is best known for his interests in edible and psychotropic mushrooms, producing the first catalogue of edible species found in Mexico in collaboration with Teófilo Herrera, which appeared in 1961. The focus on psychotropic mushrooms in the country was stimulated by collaboration with Rolf Singer; his first paper on these appeared in 1958, and they were the topic of a thesis in 1959.

Gastón is widely known for assisting R. Gordon Wasson, Roger Heim, and Richard E. Schultes in their experiences with these fungi, and a feature on these in *Life* magazine in 1957 (“Seeking the Magic Mushroom”) is credited with initiating a wider use of *Psilocybe* species in Europe and North America. More recently he collaborated in producing a major worldwide analysis of neurotropic fungi (Guzmán *et al.* 2000). His mycological interests were very broad, including gasteromycetes and lichen-fungi, but *Psilocybe*

remained his favourite, producing a world monograph in 1983 (Guzmán 1983), with a supplement 12 years later (Guzmán 1995). A new edition of the monograph was being prepared, with the assistance of his mycologist daughter Laura Guzmán-Dávalos, at the time of his death.

Gastón was a great advocate of the importance of fungi and did all he could to promote interest in them amongst students and the general public. This was achieved through works including the first identification guide to Mexican fungi (Guzmán 1977; re-issued many times), a scholarly account of the colloquial names used for mushrooms in Latin American countries (Guzmán 1997), and superbly illustrated accounts of fungi in the Edén reserve (Guzmán 2003) and Panamá (Guzmán & Piepenbring 2011). In addition, he founded the Sociedad Mexicana de Micología in 1968, and the Association of Latin American Mycologists in 1990 which serves as one of the regional organizations of the IMA.

For much of his career he was based at the Instituto Nacional de Investigaciones

sobre Recursos Bióticos (INIREB) in Xalapa, where he established a mycological laboratory. This gave him the chance to supervise over 100 theses, as well as to publish extensively himself, accruing around 400 publications. These included the description of more than 300 species new to science, mainly from México but also many other regions, including not only the Americas but Europe, Asia, and Australasia. He remained active after becoming emeritus in the Instituto de Ecología de Xalapa in 1989, and continued to attend numerous conferences around the world including all the International Medicinal Mushroom Conferences, from the first in Kiev in 2001.

Gastón was internationally respected in his field, and special issue of the *International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms* was dedicated to him in 2006 to celebrate his the 50 years of mycological studies. I first met him at the 1st International Mycological Congress (IMC1) in Exeter in 1971. He was an engaging and fun-loving man, always ready to share his knowledge, and his presence amongst us will be sorely missed.

Additional information on Gastón's career and publications is provide by Wasser (2016) and Guzmán-Dávalos (2016).

Florencia Ramírez Guillén kindly provided a cv. in Spanish which was pf particular assistance in preparing this synopsis, and Teresa Iturriaga is thanked for forwarding other notices about his passing.

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macroscópicos. Xalapa: Instituto de Ecología.

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Wasser SP (2016) In memory of Professor Gastón Guzmán (1932–2016). *International Journal of Medicinal Mushrooms* 18: 269–273.

Chirayanthumadom Venkatachaliar Subramanian (1924–2016): doyen of Indian mycology

"CV" was born in Ernakulam (now in Kerala State), India, on 11 August 1924, and along with his fellow mycologists in India, IMA paid tribute to him on the occasion of his 90th birthday in 2014 (*IMA Fungus* 5 (1): (48)–(49), December 2014). It is with especial sadness that so soon after we now have to record his death in his 92nd year at the home of one of his sons in Bangkok on 4 February 2016.

His fascinating and distinguished career is described in detail in his own words in a 102-page memoir prepared for *Kavaka* (the journal he founded in 1973), and which appeared the week before his death (Subramanian 2016). That work included a full list of his publications, and should be consulted for in-depth information on about CV's mycological journey, along with accounts published for his 90th birthday (Bhat *et al.* 2014, Bhat & Vital 2014); only selected highlights can be picked out here.

CV obtained the degrees of PhD and DSc from the University of Madras in 1948 and 1957, respectively. As a post-doc he came to the UK in 1950, studying at the University of Cambridge and what was then the Commonwealth Mycological Institute (CMI) in Kew (which he recounts in Aitchison & Hawksworth 1993). It is from that visit that he gained his life-long fascination with hyphomycetes. His first appointment was to the inaugural chair of Plant Pathology at the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) in New Delhi in 1957, but soon after he moved to the Centre of Advanced Study in Botany of the University of Madras, serving as Director from 1973 until "retirement" in 1985.

The first major fruit of his love of hyphomycetes was his 930 page monograph of the Indian species (Subramanian 1971), and a succession of papers flowed, alone and with his students. He explored sexual/asexual morph connections and development, often using Sanskrit names for newly discovered genera and species. He maintained his

links with CMI (later International Mycological Institute) into the 1990s; in addition to his own visits, he sent graduate students to the Institute, and arranged for Institute staff to teach short courses in Madras. Sadly, he was not to see his dream of a major centre for tropical mycology established in India.

He had a lively, inquisitive, and perceptive mind, which was active into his last days. Indeed, on 22 January 2016, the week before he died, he wrote to me:

"I was always for 'ONE FUNGUS, ONE NAME.' Only, I thought the time had not come. Time has shown I am wrong. I want you to know I am now fully with you."

CV held numerous prestigious positions, including serving as the second President of the IMA from 1977–1983, during which time he played a major role in securing the recognition of mycology as a subject equivalent to botany within the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS). Amongst numerous committees, he was a member of the University Grants Committee in India from 1977–1982. Major awards included the highest award for science in India, the Shanthi Swarup Bhatnagar Award, in 1965, and the prestigious Jawaharlal Nehru Fellowship (1976–1978).

His had deep interests in literature and philosophy, and was passionate about music and a good singer. CV was an ardent follower of Swami Vivekananda and Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and closely connected with The Ramakrishna Mission for which he lectured on Vedanta. A gentle and generous



C.V. Subramanian.

man, often with a mischievous twinkle in his eye, and never complaining about his battle with diabetes. He will be sorely missed by mycologists around the world as well as by his family, to which he was always close.

He is survived by his wife Lakshmi ("his pillar of strength") and two sons, one of whom kindly provided notes on CV's life and achievements.

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Bhat DL, Vittal BPR (2014) Prof. C.V. Subramanian, a doyen of mycology in India – a dedication on his 90th birthday. *Kavaka* 42: 1–6.

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