Anniversary of RNDr. Jaromír Lukavský, CSc.

Jaromír Lukavský was born on 22 September 1943 in Neumětely. In the 1960s, he studied in Prague at the Department of Botany, Faculty of Science, Charles University under the guidance of the legend of world algology, professor Bohuslav Fott. Thanks to this, he gained a very solid background in the determination of algae, and this is also probably where his lifelong interest in floristic work stems from. Although the current advancements of molecular methods offer possibilities that were difficult to imagine previously, we increasingly find that a well-founded view on a sample under the light microscope is indispensable. Jaromír belongs to a small group of people who can provide it.

Jaromír's life has been connected with Třeboň since 1967, when he began his postgraduate studies at the Algological Laboratory of the Institute of Microbiology of the the Czech Academy of Sciences. He has been interested in the methodological aspects of the algae cultivation of under laboratory conditions, focusing on the optimisation of the evaluation of a large number of samples. The result of his work was, for example, the development of a miniaturised test for evaluating the potential for algae growth and water toxicity, or a device for cultivation in so-called crossed gradients, which enables effective determination of the growth optima of algal strains. Jaromír smoothly followed these activities with an interest in applied research, which remains the focus of his work in the current projects. Within the framework of the long-term cooperation with companies such as Nuclear power plant Temelín, Algamo or Rabbit, he has worked on a wide range of problems, starting from the suppression of unwanted algae growth, through the selection of algal strains suitable for the production of valuable substances, up to the improvement of livestock production through algae feed supplements. I like to tell my students a story about the alga *Trachydiscus minutus* that Jaromír accidentally isolated from the cooling tank of the Temelín nuclear power plant, whereby the main task was actually to prevent the algae growth. As it turned out, this strain produces a large amount of EPA, one of the omega-3 fatty acids that are used as food supplements. With nine patents, he is undoubtedly the most successful author of applied outputs in our field. But the main thing is what no database can capture – thanks to his experience based on working with dozens or perhaps hundreds of algal strains, Jaromír is the ultimate choice for those who need some advice regarding cultivation of algae.

He fully used his professional skills for many years when he managed as a curator the Culture Collection of Autotrophic Organisms (CCALA) at the Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Třeboň. Besides being an extremely valuable set of several hundred laboratory cultures of cyanobacteria, algae and bryophytes, it is also very interesting from a historical point of view, because it derives from the collections of Václav Uhlíř and Ernst G. Pringsheim at the Charles-Ferdinand University since 1913, and thus belongs to one of the oldest in the world. During Jaromír's time at the head of the collection, thanks to his involvement in international projects, cryopreservation of the strains was introduced, which guarantees the long-term preservation of their properties.

Jaromír was also the year-long head of the Center for Algology at the Třeboň workplace. Then, our paths also crossed, within the framework of the research of algae from extreme habitats, which I would not hesitate to call Jaromír's professional hobby. Snow, hot springs or mountain lakes, all these habitats always attracted him very much, because there was a great chance to observe and isolate interesting and perhaps even hitherto undescribed species. The two of us were united by our interest in snow algae, which cause the eye-catching colors of snow fields in mountain and polar regions. When I came to Třeboň for the first time as a naive student more than 20 years ago, he supported fundamentally my enthusiasm for the study of these extraordinary organisms. Our cooperation dates to that time, during which we also experienced a number of unforgettable field trips together. In Bulgaria we sampled hot springs and walked around the snowfields in the Vitoša Mountains, in the winter Krkonoše we dug through a two-meter layer of snow to the streams. Jaromír is a great companion in the field and the same applies to laboratory work. As far as I can remember, I have never caught him in a bad mood in the long time we have known each other. If there was a problem, he calmly found a solution, and if it couldn't be solved, he was on top of things. For many years he also worked at the Department of Botany of the Faculty of Science of the University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice. His other significant service to the algological community was the long-term organisation of conferences of the Czech Phycological Society at the Rožmberk Castle. He always humbly took on this thankless task, which usually brings a lot of nerves and complications to ordinary mortals, with surprising ease.

Finally, I must also mention the very active involvement of Jaromír in public life in Třeboň. During the Velvet Revolution, he was one of the founders of the Civic Forum in the city, and then he was a long-term member of the Třeboň city council. Thanks to his membership in the editorial board of the Třeboňský svět magazine, we

regularly received, among other things, well-founded information about the current water quality in the Svět pond, including interesting facts about its plankton.

Last but not least, I would like to mention that last year the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic granted to Jaromír the Gregor Johann Mendel medal for outstanding results in the biological sciences as an award for his lifetime work. On behalf of the Czech Phycological Society, I would like to thank him for sharing his wisdom and experience with us and wish him good health and unceasing energy in the years to come.

Linda Nedbalová