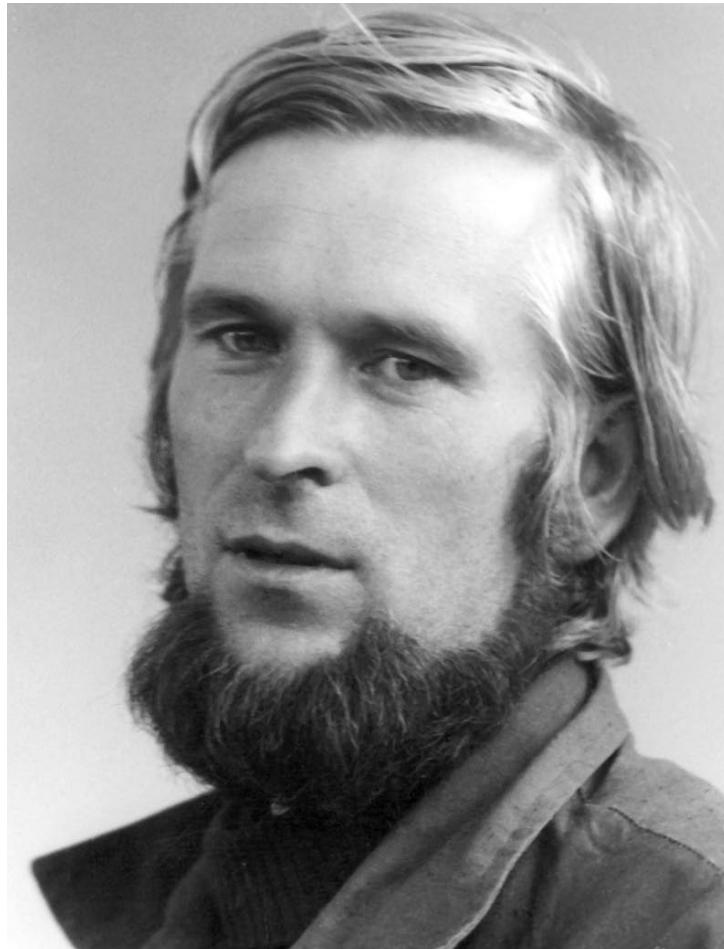


In memoriam: Ain Raitviir

(July 10, 1938 – September 17, 2006)



On September 17, 2006, the distinguished Estonian mycologist, Ain Raitviir, passed away at his home in Tartu County. He was a person with a deep knowledge of mycology and general biology and with wide-ranging interests and talents in humanities.

Ain Raitviir was born in Tallinn on July 10, 1938 and received his early education at Secondary School No. 22. He entered Tartu State University in 1957 and received a diploma as biologist-botanist in 1961. His deep interest in mycology started already in his early student years;

after graduation he continued studies as a postgraduate student at the Institute of Zoology and Botany of the Estonian Academy of Sciences (IZB) in Tartu. In 1964 Ain Raitviir was promoted in the Academy of Sciences (Tallinn) as *Cand. Biol. Sci.* with a thesis in Botany, *Tremellaceous Fungi of the Soviet Union*. Since 1961 he worked at the IZB (currently the Institute of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences of the Estonian University of Life Sciences) as Research Scientist in Mycology. His field of research was taxonomy, phylogeny, biogeography and ecology of discomycetes and heterobasidiomycetes. In

1987 he defended his Doctor of Science thesis in Biology, *Quantitative Taxonomy of Fungi on the Example of the Family Hyaloscyphaceae* at Moscow State University.

During 45 fruitful years Ain published more than 220 scientific papers including 10 books; he described 226 fungal species new for science and made many new taxonomical combinations. He applied the most modern methods in his work, as such he was among the first mycologists in the 1960–70s to use mathematical methods in taxonomy and the electron microscopy. He travelled widely and collected fungi in the Russian Far East, Central Asia, Caucasus, Italy, Spain and USA. Ain Raitviir participated in the international working group of arctic and alpine mycology, and worked in joint expeditions in Norway, French Alps, Switzerland and Greenland, collecting valuable samples of discomycetes, many of which were published as new species.

Under his supervision Ernestas Kutorga (Thesis: Vakaru ir pietvakarių Lietuvos diskomicetai (rusine sudetis, paplitimas ir struktura). Vilnius, 1991) and Bellis Kullman (Thesis: A revision of the Genus *Scutellinia* (Pezizales) in the Soviet Union. Tartu, 1983) received *Cand. Biol.* degrees, and Helle Järv and Kadri Pärtel MSc degrees.

Ain Raitviir knew how to popularize knowledge on fungi and plants to the people; he wrote numerous popular papers and several books illustrated with his own original photos, and he was enthusiastically received as a well-known specialist on fungal exhibitions and at public lectures. During 1990–1995 he was Chief Editor of the popular-scientific journal, *Estonian Nature* (*Eesti Loodus*). He enhanced Estonian scientific terminology by translating books, such as James D. Watson's *The Double Helix*, Ritchie R. Ward's *The living clocks*. Ain Raitviir had wide interests and knowledge of humanities, visual art, literature and music. *Inter alia*, he translated into Estonian Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*, and a collection of Isaac Asimov's stories, *Little Lost Robot*.

Ain Raitviir was active in social life representing the interests of scientists of his Institute. He was a Member of Tartu City Council. During 1999–2004 he served as the Chairman of the Estonian Mycological Society. He was the

Co-chairman of the Association of Estonian Scientists (1990, 1992, 1995, 2004), a Member of Council of the Estonian Science Foundation (1990–1993) and a Member of the Estonian National Science Council (1990–1993).

Ain Raitviir's work was acknowledged by presentation of the Professor August Vaga award in botany (1988) and Karl Ernst von Baer honorary medal (1992).

He is greatly missed by his colleagues and friends. Ain Raitviir was a devoted family man. Early in his career he married Tiina Raitviir (néé Muna) and later Malle Raitviir (néé Pallo). He is survived by his sons, Erik and Tõnu, and daughters Elo and Mari. To them all the mycologists and friends extend the deepest sympathy.

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