

In memoriam:
JÜRI MARTIN
(29.09.1940–21.01.2025)



Jüri Martin had a long and eventful life, lasting 84 years; lichens and their indicative properties, as well as the relationships of organisms with the environment, remained the objects of interest throughout his life. He was born on September 29, 1940 in Tallinn, into a family of actors. In 1964 he graduated from the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the State University of Tartu, specializing in biology. He continued to complement his education by post-graduate studies at the Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology of the Ural Branch of the USSR Academy of Sciences. In 1968, he defended his thesis for a candidate of biology (equivalent to a PhD) on the topic “Dynamics of lichen synusia on the moraines of the Polar-Ural glaciers”.

In 1969, Jüri Martin started his working career at the Tallinn Botanic Garden where he worked as a senior researcher, scientific secretary, scientific director, director (1978–1988) and head of the laboratory of bioindication. At that time his main research interest was focused on the ecology of lichens and monitoring of anthropogenic changes in the environment. During this period, Jüri Martin and his colleagues organized several all-union scientific events (e.g., the conference ‘Lichen indication of the environmental conditions’ in 1978) or even international events (e.g., ‘International school on lichen indication’ in 1982) to reach a wider audience for their work and find opportunities for collaboration.

In 1988, Jüri Martin defended the thesis “Biochemical role of lichen synusia in extreme environmental conditions” for a doctor of biology. Two years later, in 1990, he was elected a member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences. In 1991–1994, he was the director of the International Plant and Pollution Research Laboratory and in 1994–2000, the director of the International Center for Environmental Biology (ICEB). In 1997, he and his co-workers founded the private college Euroacademy of which he was the rector until its closure in 2020.

Jüri was a passionate traveler and wherever he traveled, he always collected and brought with him lichen specimens. He has participated in dozens of expeditions to the Caucasus, the Polar Urals, Western and Southern Siberia, the Russian Far East, Antarctica, Greece, Kenya, the Seychelles, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, India, Thailand, the Maldives, the USA (including Alaska and the Great Smoky Mountains National Park), etc. Originally his lichen collections were kept in the herbaria of Tallinn Botanic Garden (TALL) and in ICEB, but currently part of his collections are being transferred to the fungarium of the University of Tartu (TUF). Jüri Martin was one of the founders of the Estonian Polar Club in 1984 and the first president of the club during 1984–1991.

We have lost a close friend who much enjoyed good company and good fun. To the wider public, Jüri Martin was a renowned ecologist, science organizer and popularizer, and also a politician, serving as a member of the Parliament of the Republic of Estonia from 1991 to 1998. And last but not least – Jüri was a loving husband

to Ljudmilla Martin for 57 years, a father to their four children, and a grandfather to six grandchildren.

Tiina Randlane & Andres Saag