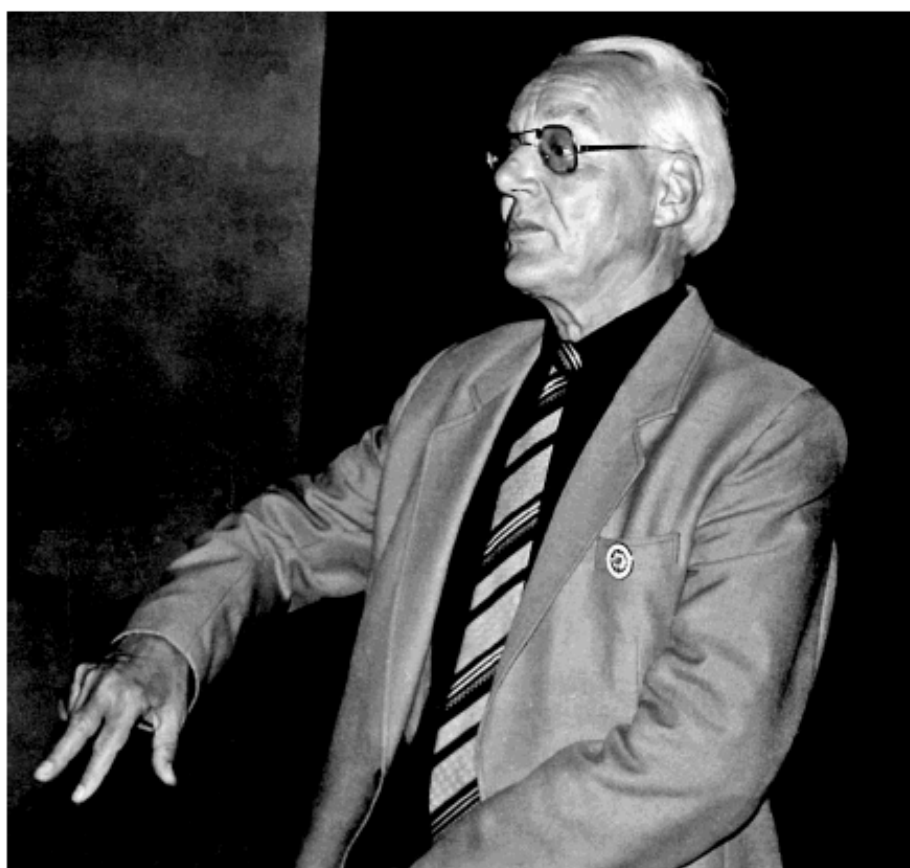


HANS-VOLDEMAR TRASS
2 MAY 1928 – 14 FEBRUARY 2017



Hans-Voldemar Trass, the grand old man of Estonian lichenology, died on February 14th at the age of 88. With his death the lichenological community lost a prominent member who had admired lichens and studied them throughout his long life.

Hans grew up in the suburbs of Tallinn, capital of Estonia. During the early years he spent much time in nature, collecting lichens—among other things—together with his classmate and good friend, and later, prominent mycologist Erast Parmasto. In 1947–1952 Hans Trass studied biology in the University of Tartu where he chose botany as his main speciality. His diploma paper (= master paper) presented a review of *Cladonia* species in Estonia. Three years later, in 1955, Hans defended his first scientific degree (candidate of biology, a substitute for Ph.D. in the former Soviet Union). The subject of his candidate thesis was “Flora and vegetation of the West-Estonian eutrophic mires”; the topic was important at that moment as mires were considered a potential economic benefit during this period. In his second degree, a doctoral degree of biology, Hans returned to lichens and presented the thesis titled “The analysis of the Estonian lichen flora” (1969). In this major research contribution, the first total list of Estonian lichens (comprising 677 species) was presented, together with an analysis of geographical flora elements and a survey of the post-glacial development of lichen biota in Estonia. This thesis gained the wide appreciation of his colleagues throughout the Soviet Union, and became a kind of model for several later treatments of local lichen floras throughout the country. Hans had two favourite families among lichens, Cladoniaceae and Physciaceae, both rich in species and both plagued by complicated systematics. In addition to his studies of Estonian lichens, Hans led expeditions to several remote areas of Russia, such as the Taymyr Peninsula in the Far North, Kamchatka Peninsula and Primorsky Krai in the Far East, the surroundings of Lake Baikal in Siberia, etc. He had an unusually sharp eye, and a

good hand for collecting rare or even undescribed lichen species. The best known of these is *Cladonia alinii* Trass, described from the Sikhote-Alin Mountain Range in Primorye in 1978. He also promoted the study of lichens as pollution monitors and developed his own Index of Poleotolerance (IP) based on quantitative analyses of study squares, in which both degree of coverage and pollution tolerance level of each species is determined.

Hans Trass worked as a lecturer at the University of Tartu for nearly forty years (1955–1994); in 1971 he was promoted to the position of professor, and for more than thirty years, he acted as the head of the Department of Botany. In 1975 he became a corresponding member of the Estonian Academy of Sciences; twice, during 1964–1973 and 1985–1991, he was the president of the Estonian Naturalists' Society; in 1998 he received an Order of Merit of the White Star, III class (national honour medal); and in 2006 he was elected an honour citizen of Tartu, where he lived for a total of seventy years. But of all his numerous rewards, Hans appreciated most highly the Acharius Medal, which was ascribed to him in Sweden in 1992, during the 2nd IAL symposium “to honour his lichenological research, effective teaching and ... his most useful activities in promoting international cooperation in lichenology” (Teuvo Ahti in the presentation speech).

Hans Trass was a charismatic person of wide interests and many talents. Besides lichenology, he was also engaged in vegetation studies, as exemplified by his 1976 book, “Vegetation science: history and contemporary trends of development” (in Russian), which received wide the respect of ecologists in both the Soviet Union and abroad. Hans loved music, and he also wrote hundreds of short commentaries about literature, theatre and music—but also about everyday life in several newspapers and journals. In addition, in his later years, he published two memory books (in Estonian; in 2002 and 2010).

Hans will be greatly missed by his wife Raine Loo, two children, and grandchildren. We, his closest colleagues, remember him at every step—we are surrounded by his lichen herbarium with thousands of samples; his vast lichenological library including an old-fashioned, but most valuable, collection of reprints; and, finally, we have our memories of jointly spent years.



Hans Trass in Tartu in 2009 (Photo: *Tiina Randlane*).

Tiina Randlane & Jüri Martin