

HIRAM FREDRICK THUT
1900-1974

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Dr. Hiram F. Thut, professor of botany at Eastern Illinois University, died at 6:30 A.M. on Monday the 23rd of December, 1974, in Charleston, Illinois. His long and distinguished career as a teacher and enthusiastic botanist came to an end after a prolonged fight with cancer. Even when seriously ill, however, he always had time to help others and to give advice on plants and gardening. Until late fall he would occasionally take short field trips, and go to friends homes to enjoy their gardens and to answer questions about plants.

Dr. Thut was born on October 21, 1900, in Allen County, Ohio. Most of his botanical training and early teaching also took place in Ohio. He received his B.A. degree in biological sciences from Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio, in 1925, and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in 1926 and 1930, respectively, from Ohio State University, where he specialized in plant physiology. After taking his degree, Dr. Thut taught at Ohio State University in 1930-31, and at Alabama Polytechnic Institute in 1932-33 before coming to Eastern Illinois University in 1933.

While at Ohio State University he conducted many experiments demonstrating the lifting power of evaporation and transpiration. He became well known due to the two papers that he published on this subject. In the first article, he described how, by using an Askenasy apparatus, it was possible to raise a column of mercury 226.6 cm. This is equivalent to lifting a column of water about 100 feet. Later he conducted similar experiments using plant material. Not only did he substantiate and expand on the results of earlier workers, but he also made the experiment more practical for classroom demonstration. Many students taking general botany at Eastern Illinois University still remember the transpiration pull experiment that he set up each year.

Although well versed in many botanical subjects, including genetics, economic botany, plant taxonomy, and plant physiology, Dr. Thut's first "love" was general botany. While at Ohio State University he had assisted Dr. H. C. Sampson and Dr. L. H. Tiffany in the development of what is now known as the Ohio State Method of teaching general botany. He brought this method to Eastern Illinois University where he modified and adapted it into an excellent general botany program. Dr. Thut always felt that the goal of a general botany course should be to study plants so they are known and enjoyed, not necessarily for commercial purposes, but as an enjoyable avocation. His enthusiasm and skill as a teacher inspired numerous students to major in botany. Even the non-majors left his course with a keen awareness of the out-of-doors.

Dr. That believed that the acquiring of fresh material for class was indispensable in the teaching of general botany. This conviction prompted him to outline his philosophy in two articles in the Plant Science Bulletin. Here he stated that "After many years of experimentation along the lines of procedure and material, I have found that the most meaningful course was one in which live, fresh material was abundant". To him the teaching of general botany was a way of life, for one was constantly looking for fresh plants and new ideas. This belief in the use of living material accounted for so many of his students going on into graduate school. "They simply fell in love with plants". Dr. That was also firm in the conviction that field trips for the purpose of looking at plants and studying their habitats were an indispensable part of nearly every botany course. His own excursions with students, "for the joy of seeing and discovery", carried him as far as the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee and the Rocky Mountains of Colorado.

At Eastern Illinois University, Dr. That was active on many committees, helping to found a chapter of the American Association of University Professors, and the EIU Faculty Senate. He served for many years as chairman of the homecoming dance and the faculty social committee, as well as Head of the Botany Department from 1960 to 1962. He was involved with the planning of the present Life Science Building and was instrumental in getting our present greenhouse, which was named for him at the time of his retirement. He was a member of the Illinois State Academy of Science, the Botanical Society of America, the Ohio State Academy of Science, the American Society of Plant Physiology, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and was an emeritus member of Sigma Xi. He also found time to be active in church and civic affairs, and was an inventor, having received a patent in 1943 on a bimetallic light meter manufactured by a division of Bendix Aviation Corporation.

Dr. That retired in the summer of 1969 after 37 years of teaching at Eastern Illinois University. After retirement he remained active by teaching at Redlands University in California until the spring of 1971. On many occasions he mentioned that "as long as I can teach for the fun-of-it, I would like to continue". At all times Dr. That's first concern was his students. He was never too busy to help nor was a specimen too common to evoke interest from him. His major goal was to see that his students and friends became acquainted with the wonderful world of plants and the joy of the great out-of-doors.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

- 1928. Demonstration of the lifting power of evaporation. Ohio Jour. Sci. 28:292-298.
- 1929. A study of plant food deficiencies in tomatoes for the canning factory. Proc. Amer. Soc. Hort. Sci. 26:132-136. (with J. H. MacGillivray, G. J. Raleigh, and F. VonOhlen)
- 1931. Germinating seeds and demonstrating root hairs for class use. School Sci. Math. 31:1103-1104.
- 1932. Demonstrating the lifting power of transpiration. Amer. Jour. Bot. 19:358-364.
- 1932. The movement of water through some submerged plants. Amer. Jour. Bot. 19:693-709.

1938. College grades in the biological sciences as related to secondary school training. *Trans. Ill. St. Acad. Sci.* 31:115-115. (with E. L. Stover)
1938. Relative humidity variations affecting transpiration. *Amer. Jour. Bot.* 25:589-595.
1939. The relative humidity gradient of stomatal transpiration. *Amer. Jour. Bot.* 26:315-319.
1944. Relation of light to growth of plants. *Plant Phys.* 19:117-130. (with W. E. Loomis)
1961. Trees and shrubs of the campus and east central Illinois. *Eastern Illinois University Bull.* 236:1-78.
1966. Is a microscope a viewer or a research tool in the beginning college botany or biology course? *Pl. Sci. Bull.* 12(1):5-6.
1968. Where to, general botany. *Pl. Sci. Bull.* 14(3):3-4.
1970. Woody plants of east central Illinois. Kendall/Hunt Publ. Co. Dubuque, Iowa. xii+135pp. (with J. E. Ebinger)