

# Professor Marta Mizianty – a plant taxonomist and cytologist

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The group of prominent botanists, we dedicate pages in *Biodiversity: Research and conservation*, joins Maria Mizianty, a titular professor of the Władysław Szafer Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. An excellent occasion for this commemoration is the 10<sup>th</sup> scientific conference devoted to grasses. This extremely fruitful meeting series of specialists in the various aspects of grass diversity, takes place on the initiative of two persons: Professor Marta Mizianty and Professor Ludwik Frey. About the achievements of the latter, Professor Karol Latowski also writes in this issue of BRC (pp. 7-12).

Marta Mizianty was born in Wałbrzych. She spent her childhood and school period in Nowy Sącz, where she completed the Primary School No. 2 and Maria Konopnicka High School II. In 1969, straight after five-year studies in biology at the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, she took a position in the Institute of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kraków. Her whole professional carrier, i.e. over 40 years, has been connected with this meritorious for Polish and world botany institution. Prof. Marta Mizianty conducted her first scientific investigations under the supervision of Prof. Jerzy Szweykowski, who, at that time, initiated biosystematic studies on bryophytes. In her master's thesis, she focused on the variability of Polish population of *Plagiochila asplenioides*. She often and willingly thinks back to the years in Poznań, emphasizing the significant influence of Prof. Szweykowski on her further scientific choices and attitude to scientific work.

In the first period of stay in Kraków, i.e. in the years 1969-1976, Prof. Mizianty connected her scientific studies with the work as a technical assistant. Her research concentrated on the biosystematics of vascular plants and her key scientific works revolve around these issues:

- doctoral thesis “Zmienność *Rhinanthus serotinus* (Schönheit) Oborny na terenie Polski” [Variability of *Rhinanthus serotinus* (Schönheit) Oborny in the

area of Poland], written in 1987 under the supervision of Prof. Adam Jasiewicz

- habilitation thesis “Biosystematic studies on *Dactylis*” published in 1992 in *Fragmenta Floristica et Geobotanica* as a series of 7 publications.

The scientific output of Prof. Marta Mizianty comprises over 120 publications, including 61 scientific works, 54 review articles, chapters in monographs, reviews of important publications, popular-science articles, and also numerous scientific announcements and conference reports. The results of her original studies she mostly published in *Fragmenta Floristica et Geobotanica*



Fig. 1. Professor Marta Mizianty (photograph by W. Paul)

and *Acta Societatis Botanicorum Poloniae*, while the review articles and announcements in *Wiadomości Botaniczne* and *Kosmos*. She also published in international journals, such as *Plant Systematics and Evolution*, *Plant Biology* and *Webbia*. The single articles appeared in *Polish Botanical Studies*, *Ecological Quaternary* and *Biodiversity: Research and Conservation*.

The first years of her scientific work, Prof. Mizianty devoted particularly to the karyology of Polish flora representatives. The numbers of chromosomes she reported, where often first notifications for Poland and, for some species, even for the world. She used traditional karyological methods and also the technique of differential chromosome staining (so called, banding patterns) that she learnt in the Laboratory of Professor F. Ehrendorfer, at the University of Vienna.

Among botanists, Prof. Mizianty is well known as an expert in grass issues. It is justified, considering that she devoted to this interesting group of plants over 80 original and review works and announcements. However, it is worth of noting that she studied also other taxa, such as aforementioned *Rhinanthus* and the species of *Euphrasia*, *Myosotis* and *Onobrychis*. Among others, she discovered a new species for the Polish flora – *Rhinanthus borbasii* (Döfler) Soó.

An analysis of thematic structure of publications by Prof. Mizianty reveals the high diversity of research topics. In the course of her research on variability of vascular plants, particularly, of grasses, she concentrates on the issues from the area of systematics and taxonomy, including numerical taxonomy, and cytology and genetics. She presents many phenomena also in the phytogeographical and ecological aspect. Her scientific output comprises important floristic reports, including the first reports on the occurrence of not always recognized taxa in several European countries. The achievements of Professor Mizianty in grass area include the discovery of a new subspecies for the flora of Italy – *Dactylis glomerata* L. subsp. *slovenica* (Dom.) Dom., and for the flora of the Caucasus – *D. glomerata* L. subsp. *slovenica* (Dom.) Dom. Also, worth of notice are numerous publications published in the recent years, among

others, on the genus *Brachypodium*, grasses of the tribe *Triticeae*, including the genus *Hordeum*, and the *Agropyron-Elymus* complex, which helped in solving many difficult taxonomic and phylogenetic problems.

The culmination of her scientific career was the title of professor of biological sciences, which she received from the president of the Republic of Poland on the 17 November 2003. On several occasions, she was honoured with the awards of the director of W. Szafer Institute of Botany, PAS.

Professor Marta Mizianty served over ten scientific internships in the foreign institutions and cooperated with some university's botanical centers (Udine – Italy, Ljubjana – Slovenia). She is a member of many international and national scientific organizations, including: International Organization of Plant Biosystematists (IOPB), Research Association of the American Biographical Institute, International Triticeae Consortium, Committee of Botany of the Polish Academy of Sciences and Polish Genetic Society. She was a chief editor of *Fragmenta Floristica et Geobotanica* (1997-2000) and currently she is a member of the journal's Editorial Board.

Besides scientific work, Professor Marta Mizianty was involved for many years in the organizational activities of the W. Szafer Institute of Botany, PAS. Among others, in the years 1993-2011, she was a deputy director for scientific affairs. For two, 3-years long tenures, she was a deputy of Prof. Leon Stuchlik and for three, 4-years long, of Prof. Zbigniew Mirek. She carried out her tasks to perfection, which was expressed on many occasions by the members of the Committee and both directors. Her activity was characterized by a concern for scientific development of her mother institution and well-being of employees. In addition, since 1991, she is a deputy head of the Department of Vascular Plants Systematics and a secretary of the Supervisory Board of the W. Szafer Foundation of Polish Botany.

From the perspective of Poznań, the city in which Professor Marta Mizianty obtained her initial scientific experience, we express our high appreciation and respect for her scientific outcome and other achievements for the Polish science.

#### Chronological list of selected publications by Prof. Marta Mizianty

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- MIZIANTY M. 1975. Wpływ *Rhinanthus serotinus* (Schönheit) Oborny na produkcję i skład florystyczny łąkowego zespołu roślinnego. *Fragm. Flor. Geobot.* 21(4): 491-505.
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