Professor Antonina Rumińska (1914–2014) in memoriam

Prof. Antonina Rumińska (family name: Wysocka) was born on January 17th, 1914 in Libawa. In 1932 she graduated high school and begun her studies at the Stefan Batory University, Department of Agriculture in Vilnius. She quickly became interested in medicinal plants, which would later impact her career. Her Master thesis of 1937 was entitled "Impact of the time of sowing and spacing on the yield of chamomile flowers (*Flores Matricaria chamomillae*)". In 1938, thanks to the grant of the Ministry of Agriculture, she specialised in medicinal plants. After World War II she worked at the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reforms, where she dealt with the introduction and restitution of the production of medicinal plants. In 1948 she became a lecturer on the production of medicinal plants at the Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW). In 1950, she started her work in the Department of Medicinal Plants at SGGW. She received a PhD in 1960, based on her dissertation: "The relationship between the development phase and essential oil and azulene contents in yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*)". In 1966, she published a habilitation monograph concerning the impact of microclimatic conditions on the content and composition of the oil in peppermint (*Mentha piperita*).

In 1967, Antonina Rumińska became the head of the Independent Chair of Medicinal Plants, Department of Horticulture, Warsaw University of Life Sciences (SGGW). In 1978 she became a full professor. In the same year, the Ministry of Agriculture agreed to create the first specialization in medicinal plants in Poland. In 1982 the Chair of Medicinal Plants was incorporated into the Department of Vegetables and Medicinal Plants.

Professor Rumińska always fought for the recognition of medicinal plants amongst other domesticated plants. She mainly focused on:

- methods of cultivation – times and spacing of sowing, fertilization, water requirements, use of herbicides and pesticides, sustainability of plantation. As a result, she developed a long-term method of cultivation of peppermint

(*Mentha piperita*), cultivation of parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa*) sowed directly to the ground, prediction and development of recommendations of the use of herbicides in several medicinal plants of *Apiaceae* family;

- the biology of plant development, especially the relationship between the development phase and the content of biologically active compounds. Experiments were conducted on plants of *Apiaceae*, *Lamiaceae* and *Asteraceae* families. There were basic studies, as cultivation of many of these species were introduced to cultivation;
- work on the species crucial for the pharmacy industry: woolly foxglove (*Digitalis lanata*) and poppy (*Papaver somniferum*) in collaboration with Polfa in Kutno as well as chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla*) and coriander (*Coriandrum sativum*) in collaboration with IHAR. Professor Rumińska was a co-author of two cultivars of medicinal plants: chamomile "Tonia" and coriander "Ursynowska".

The basic work of a university employee is youth education. Until her retirement, for 36 years, Professor Rumińska held lectures, laboratories, field practice, and seminars for the students of the Department of Horticulture and Agriculture. She guided 105 students in their Master degrees, five PhDs, five of her students became professors.

Professor Rumińska is the author of six handbooks and scripts, which are used not only by students. She was a Vice-Dean of the Department of the Horticulture for two terms. She received many Rector awards, as well as the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, National Education Medal and the Golden Medal of the Hungarian Society of Agricultural Sciences.

She was known for her deep knowledge, creativity, determination, problem-solving, and impeccable manners. Always concerned with the well-being of others, she will be remembered as a warm, joyful and positive person. Peace be upon her.

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