

## Professor Ryszard Załęcki (1933–2014) in memoriam

Professor Ryszard Załęcki was born on January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1933 in Wójcice, former Kalisz district. He graduated at the Adam Asnyk Secondary School in Kalisz in 1951. Afterwards, until 1954, he worked as a teacher in primary schools in Iwanowice and Kamienna. At that time, he passed his exams at Pedagogic School in Kalisz and received a teacher's diploma. From 1954–1958, he underwent engineer studies at the Faculty of Agriculture, Higher School of Agriculture in Poznań. Next, he began a postgraduate course in agricultural chemistry and pedology at the same Faculty, receiving master's degree in 1960. From 1959–1967, he was a part-time teacher at the School of Agriculture in Skoki.



In 1961 he began his work at the Branch of Biology and Agriculture of the Institute of Medicinal Plants in Plewiska (currently Institute of Natural Fibres and Medicinal Plants) where he worked for 38 years. In 1970 he got a PhD in agricultural sciences based on a dissertation entitled “Cultivation of tetraploid German chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla* L.) for medicinal raw material”. In 1978 he obtained a habilitation at the Faculty of Horticulture, Agricultural University in Poznań based on dissertation: “Influence of cultivation and fertilization of German chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla* L.) cvar. Złoty Łan on the crop of raw material, content of oil and chamazulene”. In 1990 professor Załęcki became a contract professor at the Institute, and in 1992 he became a full professor. He officially retired in 1998, but continued research work up until 1999.

During his work at the Institute, he went through all levels of the career ladder, from assistant, through the adjunct professor and associate professor, to full professor. From 1965–1975 he was the head of the Laboratory of Pot Experiments of Department of Agriculture. From 1976, he held the positions of the head of the Laboratory of Cultivation and Fertilization, and the coordinator of the Institute at the Herbal Experimental Centres “Herbapol”. In 1991 he became the head of Department of Plant Breeding and Agricultural Science, which he ran until his retirement.

Apart from the work at the Institute, from 1972–1975 he was employed at the Herbal Experimental Centre “Herbapol” in Stryków as a manager of Scientific Department, and from 1973 as a specialist of herbal production. From 1971–1972 he taught the university class in experimentation and statistics for 4<sup>th</sup> year students (herbal specialization) at the Faculty of Pharmacy, Medical University in Poznań. From 1979–1994 he also gave lectures on herbalism for 5<sup>th</sup> year students (vegetable specialization) at the Faculty of Horticulture, Agricultural University in Poznań.

He was a long-term member of the scientific council of the Institute and of the scientific council of the Research Centre for Cultivar Testing (COBORU). His academic achievements include 230 scientific and popular works concerning the cultivation and fertilization of herbal plants and other factors influencing the crop of the raw material and the content of the active substances.

Along with his co-workers, he drew up technologies of the cultivation of herbal plants which were popularized as instructions of the cultivation issued by the Institute. He was a co-author of detailed instructions of cultivations of the following species: flea wort (*Plantago psyllium* L.), southernwood (*Artemisia abrotanum* L.), black cumin (*Nigella sativa* L.), savory (*Satureja hortensis* L.), St. John’s wort (*Hypericum perforatum* L.), greater celandine (*Chelidonium majus* L.), purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea* Moench.), gipsywort (*Lycopus europaeus* L.), caraway (*Carum carvi* L.), coriander (*Coriandrum sativum* L.), fenugreek (*Trigonella foenum-graecum* L.), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium* L.), sweet marjoram (*Majorana hortensis* Moench.), peppermint (*Mentha piperita* L.), common borage (*Borago officinalis* L.), milk thistle (*Silybum marianum* Gaertn.), red pepper (*Capsicum annum* L.), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica* L.), Roman chamomile (*Anthemis nobilis* L.), German chamomile (*Matricaria chamomilla* L.), motherwort (*Leonurus cardiaca* L.), sage (*Salvia officinalis* L.), evening primrose (*Oenothera biennis* L.), feverfew (*Chrysanthemum parthenium* Bernh.).

Professor Załęcki supported many implementations of results of scientific works conducted at the Institute at Herbal Experimental Centres “Herbapol”, he also initiated numerous new studies in the fields of agriculture and plant protection.

One of professor Załęcki’s greatest achievements was probably his research into getting the chemical methods of fighting weeds on plantations of medicinal plants into the farming practice. He recapitulated his research in “Herbicides in the cultivation of medicinal plants” published in 1982.

He was also a co-author of two patents: No. 68618 of 1972: “New technology of the preparation of the infectious liquid from ergot” and No. 113808 of 1980: “Method of receiving infection material for the cultivation of ergot on plants of the rye”.

Professor Załęcki was a member of the editorial board of the quarterly “Herba Polonica” and the programme board of the magazine “Wiadomości Zielarskie”. He led the popularisation of herbalism in trade journals and directly in the production as a part of training of agricultural advisers of the Herbal Companies “Herbapol”. He was a member of the managing board of the Section of Herbs,

Union of Engineers and Technicians of Food Industry, Polish Federation of Engineering Associations (NOT).

He was honoured with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Polonia Restituta, Gold Cross of Merit, honour award "For Service and Development of the Poznań Province", and the honour committee of Science and Technology Engineers and Technicians of Food Industry and other departmental and trade decorations. In 1986 he received the award of the second degree from the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Food Economy for the participation in the completion of the work "Extension of cultivations of medicinal plants as raw material for the production of herbal drugs".

The greatest passion of Professor Załęcki was literature. Always surrounding himself with historical books and belles-lettres, he was particularly interested in Napoleonic times (18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries). A teacher and mentor for his younger partners, he has taught the secrets of the field of experimental practice to many. He was an exquisitely kind and understanding person, as humble as he was knowledgeable. He died on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2014 following long-term illness. Peace be upon him.

*Associate Prof. Waldemar Buchwald  
Marzena Załęcka*