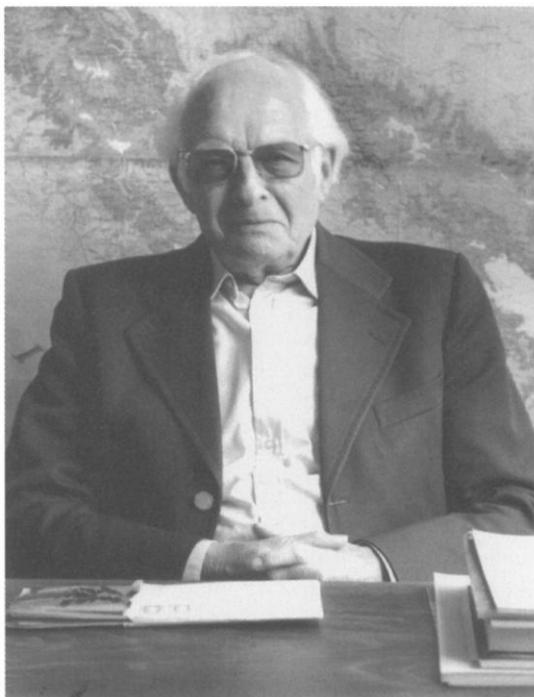


IAVS NEWS

Heinz Ellenberg, 1913-1997



A very sad news from Germany was the recent death of Heinz Ellenberg, former President and Honorary Member of the International Association for Vegetation Science, on May 2, 1997 in Göttingen. His scientific works and outstanding personality have touched and influenced several generations of vegetation and plant ecologists, not only in Europe, but also throughout the world.

The fifth edition of his life's synthesis work (in German), 'Vegetation Mitteleuropas mit den Alpen', Eugen Ulmer Verlag, Stuttgart, 1996, had only recently arrived on my desk. The fourth (1986) edition was translated into English and appeared under the title 'Vegetation Ecology of Central Europe', Cambridge University Press, 1988. An earlier book in English, 'Integrated Experimental Ecology', edited by Heinz Ellenberg, was published by Springer-Verlag in its now well-known 'Ecological Studies Series' as Volume 2 in 1971. It dealt with the methods and preliminary results of the German contribution to the IBP (International Biological Program), the first internationally coordinated big biological science program. In Germany, this was directed by Heinz Ellenberg and there known as the 'Solling Project'. The complete results appeared as a

20-year study in 1986 in an Ulmer book entitled 'Oekosystemforschung - Ergebnisse des Solling Projekts 1966-1986', edited by H. Ellenberg, R. Mayer and J. Schaueremann.

I had the great fortune to attend H. Ellenberg's introductory botany lectures in 1948/1949 at the University of Stuttgart-Hohenheim. At that time, he had just obtained his habilitation as university lecturer and was teaching the course in tandem with the botanical institute's director, Professor Heinrich Walter. Both were impressive teachers and, as I later realized, their lectures and personalities inspired me for the rest of my life. Dr. Ellenberg, at that time, introduced vegetation ecology by field excursions in which we learned how to do relevés (vegetation samples). Later, after I had immigrated into Canada in 1952, and when I was inspired by Vladimir J. Krajina to continue my studies with a Ph.D. in forest ecology, I resumed active contact again with both Profs. H. Walter and H. Ellenberg.

One of Ellenberg's fundamental questions in vegetation ecology was: "what controls the combination of plant species in field communities?" For this, the 'Hohenheimer Groundwater Experiment', suggested by

H. Walter and carried out by H. Ellenberg, gave a compelling answer. Ellenberg clearly demonstrated the difference between physiological and ecological behavior of plants, the first relating to the absence of competition, the second to plants growing in competition with other plants. He coined the terms physiological optimum and ecological optimum, which helped to clarify the causality of plant distribution patterns in nature.

These, and other aspects, such as Ellenberg's 'ecological group concept', were retained in the book by D. Mueller-Dombois and H. Ellenberg 'Aims and Methods of Vegetation Ecology', Wiley and Sons, New York, 1974, which represented the first synthesis of European and Anglo-American approaches to vegetation ecology. The book could be written because of Ellenberg's prior work, and it undoubtedly contributed to a broader familiarity with Ellenberg's name among English-speaking ecologists.

Another major achievement was the development of the system of 'Zeigerwerte', ecological indicator values of vascular species – now also of cryptogams – which are used all over Europe as 'Ellenberg indicator values'.

Heinz Ellenberg produced over 200 scientific papers, including several books, listed in part in his first 'Festschrift', published by the German Ecological Society (Göttingen 1983) at the occasion of his 70th birthday. A second 'Festschrift' in honor of his 80th

birthday appeared in *Phytocoenologia* Vols. 23 (1993) and 24 (1994). Excellent accounts on H. Ellenberg's professional life and his impact on modern ecology, including ecosystem analysis and landscape ecology as well as the application of vegetation science to agriculture and forestry, are summarized in both his 'Festschriften' by Wolfgang Haber, Gisela Jahn and Otti Wilmanns.

Heinz Ellenberg's great contributions were increasingly and repeatedly recognized. For example, he was invited by the British Ecological Society to give the prestigious Tansley Lecture in 1977, which was subsequently published with the title 'Man's influence on tropical mountain ecosystems in South America' in *J. Ecol.* 67: 401-416, 1979. Moreover, he received honour degrees from four universities: Dr. agr. h.c. (München), Dr. rer. nat. h.c. (Zagreb), Dr. phil. nat. h.c. (Münster), and Dr. phil. h.c. (Lüneburg).

His major works, the five successive editions concerned with the 'Vegetation Ecology of Central Europe', were always dedicated to his closest and strongest supporter, his wife for 60 years, Charlotte Ellenberg, herself a professional geographer and partner in his life's work. I cannot conclude this short obituary without thinking of her unimaginable suffering by losing her husband, the man who will continue to live in the memory of all those who were touched by his outstanding personality.

Dieter Mueller-Dombois,
Kailua, Hawaii.

Field course in the Arctic

A new field course, EEB 5842: Arctic Field Ecology, will be offered next summer by the Itasca Biology Station at the University of Minnesota. The course will be held from July 1 to August 22, 1998 and include two four-week sections along the rivers of the Canadian Arctic. The course will involve study of regional natural history and current ecological research in the Arctic, practical experience with field techniques in vegetation

and landscape ecology, and practice generating and refining research ideas by creating a research proposal. Ten students, two staff, and one instructor will camp and travel along a remote river, experiencing the wildlife, wildflowers, and wild water of the short Arctic summer.

For more information contact the instructor, William Gould, at gouldw@taimyr.colorado.edu.
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