

In memoriam Mihály Kosztarab (1927–2022)

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Mihály Kosztarab, the worldwide noted scale insect specialist, passed away on 6 September 2022. He was born in Bucharest (Romania) and his family emigrated to Hungary in 1940. After secondary school, he worked as an assistant with Tibor Jermy, while he continued his studies at the Hungarian University of Agricultural Sciences. He received his horticultural engineering degree in 1951. In the same year, he started his work as a lecturer at the Department of Entomology of the College of Viticulture and Horticulture. After the end of the revolution of 1956, Mihály Kosztarab left Hungary and started a new life in the USA, where he first worked in Baltimore as an entomologist. He also earned a PhD. degree at Ohio State University in 1962 and accepted a teaching position at Virginia Tech becoming a professor of entomology in 1967. Parallel with this job, he also became the president of the organising committee of the American National Biological Survey. Another step in his career was being curator of the insect collection of the university. This collection was the base of a new museum, the Museum of Natural History at Virginia Tech, which was established and led by Mihály Kosztarab. He retired in 1992, but he continued his research as professor emeritus.



Mihály Kosztarab (1927–2022)

Mihály Kosztarab was a scale insect specialist who studied scale insects as a university student. The Virginia Tech Museum of Natural History, which was established by Kosztarab, has one of the most important scale insect collections in the USA and maybe in North America. He was one of the first organisers of the Symposium on Scale Insect Studies.

During his career he described 12 new scale insect genera and 57 new species alone or with co-authors, and he wrote and co-wrote 165 scientific papers and 4 books. Some of his most important books were the Scale Insects of Central Europe (together with Ferenc Kozár) in 1988 and the monumental work Scale Insects of Northeastern North America, which was published in 1996.

He was a distinguished scientist who got numerous grants and awards in Hungary and in the USA. The last award that he received was the Gusztáv Szelényi Memorial Medal in 2022. He was a member of several scientific committees, but it is important to mention that he was a member of the National Academy of Sciences in the USA and an external member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

We shall never forget him!

Viktor Markó and Jenő Kontschán