

*Contribuții Botanice* – 2019, LIV: 151-153  
Grădina Botanică “Alexandru Borza”  
Cluj-Napoca

## ANNIVERSARY



### **On the 90th birthday anniversary of Professor Nicolae DONIȚĂ**

On 20th November 2019 Prof. Nicolae Doniță, one of the most prominent forest scientists in Romania, turned 90 years of age. On this occasion, he was celebrated by the entire scientific community of Romania at the Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Mihai I" in Timișoara and at the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences "Gheorghe Ionescu-Șișești" in Bucharest.

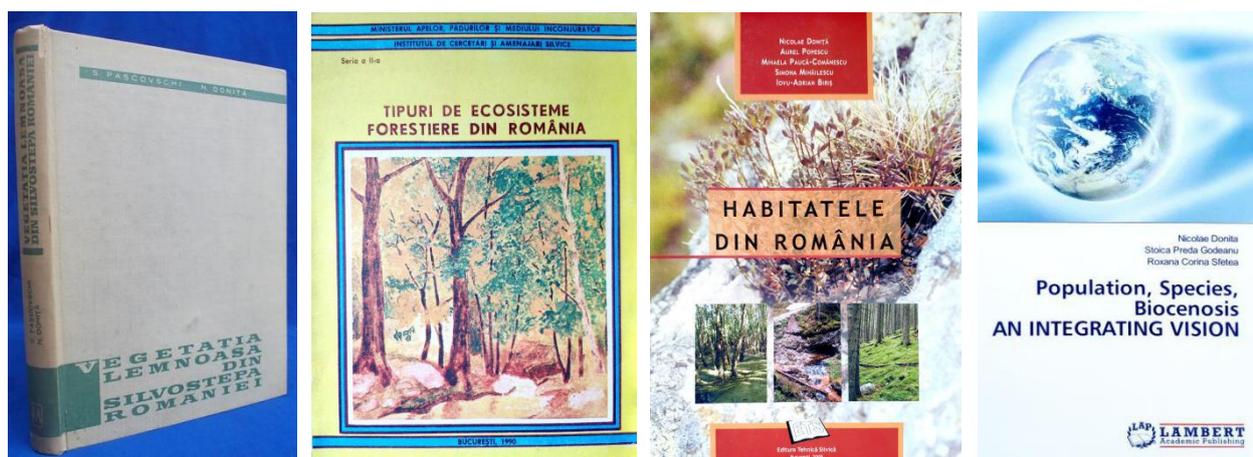
Prof. Doniță was born in Chișinău (today the capital of the Republic of Moldova) into a family of erudite individuals, his grandfather acting as a priest and his father working as a judge and lawyer. After the Soviet Union seized Bessarabia in 1940, his family decided to seek refuge on the right side of the Prut river. He graduated from high school in Turda, and subsequently in 1950 was admitted as a student to the Faculty of Sylviculture within the Forest Institute in Brașov. He was about to be excluded from university because of his social background (considered “unhealthy” at that time) and because he had escaped from the communist regime imposed in Bessarabia. Fortunately, his colleagues saved him by voting unanimously against the exclusion at the local meeting organised by the communist party.

After his graduation in 1955, on the recommendation of one of his professors (Academician C.C. Georgescu), he started his scientific career at the Forest Department of the Academy of the People’s Republic of Romania under the supervision of Prof. Sergiu Pașcovschi. From the beginning he was involved in two large research projects: the study of woodlands at the transition between the nemoral and steppe zones, and the geobotanical mapping of Romania. Later, from 1959 and continuing for seven years, he carried out a complex, multidisciplinary research project on the forests extending over the Babadag High Plain in Dobrogea. Based on

these data, he prepared his PhD thesis that he defended in 1970 at the University of Braşov. Given the high level of his professional skills, Prof. Doniţă received two “Alexander von Humboldt” scholarships in Germany: at the University of Göttingen (1970–1971) and at the Forest Institute of the Baden-Württemberg Land (1985–1986). He has been active for 20 years in the international team of scientists that worked on the *Vegetation Map of Europe*, which was eventually published in 2000. In addition, he was involved in a series of international programmes, including CORINE, Habitats Directive, LIFE and others.

Prof. Doniţă has worked most of his career as a researcher. He was the head of the Forest Ecology Laboratory within the Institute of Forest Research and Management in Bucharest from its foundation in 1975 until he retired in 1997. Nevertheless, after 1990 he started to give classes in Dendrology, Forest Ecology and Integrated Phytocoenology at universities in Bucharest, Arad and Timişoara. From 1995 to 2005 he was active as a full-time professor at the University of Oradea. He also supervised no less than 14 PhD theses.

During the 64 years of scientific activity, Prof. Doniţă has published as main author or co-author over 250 papers, of which two are treatises, and 30 books, monographs or book chapters. Many of them are acknowledged as important references at national and international level: *Forest Ecology* (1978), *Types of Forest Ecosystems in Romania* (1990), *The Vegetation of Romania* (1992), *Sylviculture on Ecosystemic Bases* (1997), *The Virgin Forests of Romania* (2001), and *The Habitats of Romania* (2005–2006). Benefiting from good health, a clear mind and robust body (strengthened during years of field work), Prof. Doniţă has never stopped working scientifically even after retiring from university work. Indeed he subsequently published, among others, an outstanding map – *The Forests of Romania by Ecosystemic Units* – in 2008, and recently a textbook entitled *Population, Species, Biocenosis - An integrating Vision* in 2019. Three of his scientific works were presented awards by the Romanian Academy. He was also invited to serve on the editorial board of several journals: *Revista Pădurilor*, *Studii și Cercetări de Biologie* [of the Romanian Academy], *Annals of Forest Research* and *Braun-Blanquetia*.



As an acknowledgement of his professional reputation, Prof. Doniţă was elected a full member of the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences "Gheorghe Ionescu-ŞiŃeşti" in 1991, was granted the Dimitrie Cantemir medal by the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Moldova, and was twice awarded the title *Doctor Honoris Causa* by the University Ştefan cel

Mare in Suceava and the Banat University of Agricultural Sciences and Veterinary Medicine "King Mihai I" in Timișoara.

Prof. Doniță has long been known as a prominent forest scientist, with remarkable contributions to the development of forest ecology, typology, mapping and biodiversity conservation in Romania. Moreover, his mild character, patience, moral conduct and altruism have made him beloved by all his assistants and students, who have benefited from his guidance and generous spirit.

For his contributions to forest sciences, for his relentless passion for study, for his love for forests, for his endeavours toward mentoring new specialists, we would like to express our appreciation and gratitude, and fondly wish him good health and Many Happy Returns of the Day!

Dan GAFTA

### References

- Ciornei L., 2019. Interviu cu dl. dr. ing. Nicolae Doniță, membru al Academiei de Științe Agricole și Silvicultură „Gheorghe Ionescu-Șișești”, Secția Silvicultură. *Bucovina Forestieră*, 19(1): 51-57.
- Postolache G., 2010. Academicianul Nicolae Doniță la 80 de ani. *Revista Botanică (Chișinău)*, 2(2): 193-201.