

**DR. CONSTANTIN BÂNDIU, A COMPETENT
FOREST ECOLOGIST (1927–2019)
IN MEMORIAM**

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In April 2019 passed away the highly reputed forest ecologist and the most sincere friend in my botanical career, **Constantin Bândiu**. He was born on the 19th of April 1927, in Ciudei (today Mejdureci), Storojineț County, Northern Bucovina, to Nicolai and Floarea Bândiu. His father was a forester in the area where they used to live, this is why they called themselves *silvani* (forest servants). His family called him *Tin*.

On the 25th of March 1944, in order to avoid the Soviet danger, the family (parents, aunt and the seven children) fled to Romania in a carriage drawn by two horses (Brahm and Derisch). Their destination was Sânnicolau Mare, the westernmost town of the country, which they reached after a six weeks journey on a distance of 1,100 km. Later he returned to Southern Bucovina, and established in Argel, Suceava County, among the huțans, as he used to say.

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He attended the high school in Storojineț and Suceava, and the Forestry University at Câmpulung (1948–1952). He obtained his PhD in forestry sciences in 1973, and ended his career as a senior researcher.

The modern plant ecologist C. Bândiu was an intelligent, cultured and well-doing person. As no one else, he wrote his ecological texts straightaway, with a mathematical precision, making no further revisions. His handwriting was small, readable, ordered, and firm. Unfortunately, he did not succeed to establish a family of his own, which gave him dark thoughts. Loneliness, especially after his retirement, has been a dark spot of his life. His life took a direction lacking harmony. A pity for a man of such humaneness!

He lived alone in the Drumul Taberei neighbourhood of Bucharest, where one morning, as he was crossing the street on the crosswalk, was hit by a car, causing him a leg and hip fracture. He had great difficulties and pain afterwards, for which he was transferred to a home for elderly in Moldova, where he ended his life in constant anguish. During the last period of his life, he could barely speak on the phone and he couldn't move at all.

He spent most of his scientific career at the Institute for Research and Development in Forestry, where he started immediately after he graduated from the university, and where he worked between 1952–1958 and 1970–1989, until his retirement. In 1986 he received the Award of the Romanian Academy, and in 2009 he became honorary member of the Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences from Romania.

Between 1958 and 1970, he worked at the Institute of Biology of the Romanian Academy, and was my colleague in the Gebotany and Ecology lab. After two years of research of the riverain vegetation from the Romanian Plain, he became the sparking representative of the modern vegetation ecology studies from the Babadag Plateau. For seven years, he recorded the main ecological factors day and night, summer and winter, in order to identify which are the ones that differentiate the hilly and valley vegetation, or the vegetation from the slopes with different exposures. He is the main author of the second volume about Babadag, *Cercetări Ecologice în Podișul Babadag* (1971 – Ecological researches on the Babadag Plateau). Based on his field studies, he built up a formula showing the connection between the ecological factors and the plant communities.

He published alone or with collaborators 30 books and 120 scientific papers on various ecological subjects (sapling cultures, plant-ecotope, the structure and ecology of virgin forests and especially forest aesthetics – silvocalia), out of which I would like to mention some of the books written in collaboration with other authors: *Molidișurile presubalpine din România* (1988 – The pre-subalpine spruce forests from Romania), *Pădurea seculară – cercetări ecologice în Banat* (1995 – The ancient forest – ecological researches in Banat) and *Silvocalia – o estetică a pădurii* (1997 – Silvocalia – a forest aesthetics), with scientific information presented in a lovely language, and impressive forest community profiles! On one of these books he wrote to me, remembering the picturesque Babadag, where both

of us were once caught by a scary downpour: *To Gică Dihoru, in order to remember him that we have once wandered on canvases painted by Van Gogh, without being aware. It was once, at Babadag, C. Bândiu.* On another book, waken by the reality of the haute école of Babadag, which hardened all of us, he added: *To Mr. Dr. G. Dihoru, my colleague and good friend, with whom we roamed the forests of Babadag, laying the foundation-stones of modern Romanian ecology, with love, from a solitary soul, brother of the forest, C. Bândiu (Bucharest, January 1996).*

The intellectual qualities, the memory and vocabulary in particular, as well as his sincerity are demonstrated fully in the volume *Silvanii – memorial* (Chişinău, 2008), signed with the pseudonym Constantin Pădure (Forest), dedicated to me as: *To Gică Dihoru, old friend and colleague, together with whom we experienced the great and fascinating adventure of Babadag, an epic in fact. C. Bândiu–Pădure, June 2008.*

He also wrote about me with friendship, as shown in one of his reviews “written by the known botanist Dr. Gh. Dihoru, a researcher with a vast field experience, knower of the world of plants under various aspects and in all phenophases...”

I have always seen in Constantin Bândiu a *worthy* and *sincere* researcher, a *good man* with a *good mind*, and even the most valuable forest ecologist from Romania.

