

Fourth Aroid Conference—Moscow 1992

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INTRODUCTION

Though a number of people were interested in Araceae and had been working independently on the family Araceae since the early 1960s no organized meeting of aroid specialists was held before the founding of the International Aroid Society in Miami. That organization was founded on June 17, 1977. Little research had been carried out on the family since Adolf Engler's epoch studies around the turn of the century. The initiation of the International Aroid Society and the onset of publication of the journal *Aroideana*, instigated primarily through the efforts of its first editor, Michael Madison, have brought great progress in investigation of the Araceae.

The first aroid conference was organized by Michael Madison and was held March 28, 1980, at Selby Botanical Garden in Sarasota, Florida. The number of aroid workers in those days was somewhat fewer than today but the percentage of researchers in attendance was very high. Those attending included: John Banta (Alva, Florida), Monroe Birdsey (Miami, Florida), Marija Bedalov (Zagreb University, Croatia), Josef Bogner (Munich Botanical Garden, Germany), Libby Besse (Sarasota), Derek Burch (Florida Agricultural Research Station, Ft. Lauderdale), George S. Bunting (New Jersey), Thomas B. Croat (Missouri Botanical Garden), James C. French (Rutgers University), Jake Henny (Florida Agricultural Research Station, Apopka), Richard Keating (Univ. of S. Illinois, Edwardsville), Marianne Knecht (Switzerland), Simon J. Mayo (Royal Botanic Garden, Kew), Mark Moffler (Tampa, Florida), Dan Nicolson (Smithsonian Institution), Thomas S. Ray (Univ. of Delaware), M. (Das) Sivasadan (Kerala University, India), and Barry Tom-

linson (Harvard Forest, Petersham, Massachusetts).

The second aroid conference was organized by Dr. Barry Tomlinson of Harvard University and was held May 25–27, 1984, at Harvard Forest research station in Petersham, Massachusetts. Additional new researchers were in attendance, including William Carvell (Miami University, Oxford, Ohio), Lloyd Goldwasser (California), Alistair Hay (Royal Botanical Garden, Sydney), Bruce McAlpin (Selby Botanical Garden), Richard Sheffer (Univ. Indiana Northwest, Gary), and Helen Young (currently Barnard College, New York, NY). Other aroid researchers in attendance were John Banta, Tom Croat, Simon Mayo, Jim French, Dan Nicolson, and Barry Tomlinson. Though Michael H. Grayum did not attend the conference at Harvard Forest he was certainly on the minds of other researchers after his major professor James Walker of the University of Massachusetts presented part of Grayum's thesis and introduced for the first time his revolutionary new system of suprageneric classification.

The third aroid conference was organized by Josef Bogner and was held August 29, 1987, in conjunction with the XIV International Botanical Congress in Berlin. Aroid researchers attending an aroid conference for the first time included: Li Heng (Kunming Institute of Botany, China), Mitsuru Hotta (Kyoto University, Japan), Jin Murata (Tokyo University), Denis Barabé (Montreal Botanical Garden), Wim Cruzio (Heidelberg, Germany), Arie de Graaf (Wageningen, Holland), Michael H. Grayum (Missouri Botanical Garden), Niels Jacobsen and Gitte Petersen (Copenhagen, Denmark), Harald Riedl (Rijksherbarium, Vienna), and Elke Seubert (Kaiserslautern, Germany). Others in attendance included:

Marija Bedalov, Josef Bogner, Tom Croat, Richard Keating, Marianne Knecht, Simon Mayo, and Dan Nicolson. The Berlin Congress had the best attendance in terms of percentage of aroid researchers for any congress held for the Araceae.

MOSCOW AROID CONFERENCE

The fourth aroid conference was organized by Drs. Michael (Misha) Serebryanyi and Wilbert Hetterscheid and was held at the Main Botanical Garden, Moscow, during the week of August 23, 1992. Aroid researchers attending an aroid conference for the first time included: Kerim Alpınar (Istanbul University, Turkey), Joseph Arditti (Univ. California, Irvine), Peter Boyce (Kew), Kao Pao-Chung (Chengdu Institute of Biology, China), Natalja Denisjevskaya (Kiev Botanical Garden, Ukraine), Wilbert Hetterscheid (Vaste Keurings Commissie, Holland), A. Kuznetsov (Severtsov Institute, Moscow), A. Lavrentyeva (N.N. Grisho Central Bot. Garden, Kiev), V. Tarasevich (Komarov Institute, St. Petersburg, Russia), and Andras Terpo (Hungarian Natural Museum, Budapest). Other aroid enthusiasts present were: Josef Bogner, Marija Bedalov, Tom Croat, Li Heng, Simon Mayo, Jin Murata, James Symon (San Francisco), Vadim L. Shelejkovsky (Main Moscow Botanical Garden), and V. Zaivy (Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine).

The conference was opened by Dr. Boris Golovkin, Curator of Tropical and Subtropical Plants at the Main Moscow Botanical Garden. A wide array of papers were presented on both the taxonomy and horticultural aspects of the Araceae. In addition to handling the routine events at such a large conference, Misha was kept busy throughout the conference translating papers presented from Russian to English and from English to Russian. Excellent lunches and periodic tea breaks were provided each day of the conference. Each day concluded with a social hour in the Winter Room of the Main Moscow Botanical Garden.

The conference session for the first day opened with a paper entitled "Genera of Araceae Project" by S. Mayo, J. Bogner, and

P. Boyce. First Mayo described his soon-to-be published work which presents detailed descriptions of all genera of Araceae; then Bogner, over the course of two different sessions on two different days, presented details of the genera to be included. Tom Croat also presented a paper entitled "Taxonomic status of neotropical Araceae" over a period of two different sessions on two days. Other papers presented on the first day of the conference included the "Aroid habitats in central and south Vietnam" by A. Kuznetsov; "Vietnamese aroid flora" by M. Serebryanyi; and "Genera *Remusatia* and *Gonatanthus*" by Li Heng.

On succeeding days presentations included "Cladistics and classification of the Araceae" by S. Mayo; "Fossil aroids" by J. Bogner; "Palynological data on the evolution within the family Araceae" by V. Tarasevich; "A monograph of *Amorphophallus*: preliminary results" by W. Hetterscheid; "A taxonomic revision of *Pseudodracontium*" by M. Serebryanyi; "Distribution and taxonomy of *Arum* species in Pannonian territories" by A. Terpo; "Infraspecific classification of *Biarum*" by P. Boyce; "Tissue culture of Taro" by J. Arditti; "Some features of clonal propagation of Araceae" by A. Lavrentyeva and N. Denisjevskaya; "Differentiation of a tropical group of *Arisaema*, section *Fimbriata*" by J. Murata; "Phytogeography of *Arisaema* in Sichuan Province" by Kao Pao-Chung; "Unusual methods of aroid cultivation" by V. Shelejkovsky; and "Cultivation of aroids on gravel" by N. Denisjevskaya.

The Moscow aroid conference was the longest and most extensive congress ever held. It lasted nearly five days and included three full days of paper sessions, poster sessions, cocktail parties, a magnificent banquet, a public aroid show, visits to the aroid collections at the Moscow Botanical Garden greenhouses, a field trip to a natural habitat of *Calla palustris* L. in the Moscow District, and even organized tours of principal tourist sites in Moscow. One of the final events of the aroid conference was a spectacular fashion show featuring bright lights, music, fashionable models, food, wine, and competitive flower arranging. A

good time was had by all and some aroiders even managed to be the highest bidders for the prize-winning flower arrangements. They were donated in turn to a few of the very elegant young ladies of the Moscow Main Botanical Garden staff who were so valuable to the success of the aroid conference, acting in many capacities but especially in the very necessary job of translating to allow conference attendees to communicate with one another.

The number of attendees at the Moscow aroid congress was also the largest for any aroid conference to date with about 50 paid conference members. Many were researchers and horticulturists from the Moscow Main Botanical Garden who were instrumental in the organization and smooth management of the congress. Many other botanists and horticulturists interested in aroids from other parts of the former Soviet Union were in attendance including several from Byelorussia.

One of the final actions of the Moscow Aroid Conference was to make a decision on the location of future aroid conferences. The next aroid conference will be held during the XV International Botanical Congress in Tokyo in August 1993. This conference, one of only three systematic sessions at the I.B.C.-Tokyo, is being organized by Jin Murata and Tom Croat.

Finally the group decided to accept an invitation by Dr. Li Heng of the Kunming Botanical Garden in Hunan Province, China, to manage a future aroid conference. The meetings in China will be held at the Kunming Botanical Garden and are scheduled for June 26–July 2, 1995. It will provide many aroid researchers the first opportunity to see and study Araceae in China and hopefully in adjacent tropical countries as well.

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