

Phytochemical Society of Europe Silver Medal Laureate 2007 Prof. Dr. Kurt Hostettmann (Geneva, Switzerland)

Professor Kurt Hostettmann studied chemistry at the University of Neuchâtel, Switzerland and was awarded his PhD from the same University. With a passion for plants, he continued his studies at Columbia University in New York. Subsequently, he was appointed to a faculty position at the ETH in Zürich and at the same time started teaching at the Universities of Neuchâtel and Fribourg. Since 1981, he has been a full professor at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, and director of the Institute of Pharmacognosy and Phytochemistry. In 2004, the Institute was transferred to the University of Geneva. The research interests of Professor Hostettmann include studies on the active principles of plants used in traditional medicine and quality control of medicinal plants and phytomedicines. He is the author of more than 450 scientific publications and a significant number of books, several of which have been translated in other languages besides English. He has also published six books for the non-specialist public. More than sixty students have completed their PhD studies under his supervision. His laboratory has hosted a number of visiting scientists, including colleagues from developing countries, illustrating his efforts to reach out to people who do not have immediate access to state-of-the-art technological facilities.

Professor Hostettmann has received several international distinctions, the latest of which are an Honorary Professorship at the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Shanghai, China (2002), the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa at the University of Toulouse in France (2003), an Honorary Professorship at the University of Panama (2003), and an Honorary Professorship at Shandong University of Jinan, China (2005). In December 2005, Prof. Hostettmann was elected foreign corresponding member of the National Academy of Pharmacy of Paris.

Professor Hostettmann has served as Vice-Chairman and Chairman of the Phytochemical Society of Europe between 1986–1992 and as a committee member for 9 years.

He has organized four international symposia for the PSE and five symposia and three workshops for the International Organization for Chemical Sciences in Development. He is currently Chairman of the IOCD Working Group on Plant Chemistry and President of the International Society for the Development of Natural Products (ISDNP).

His numerous activities in phytochemistry, in research, in training and in publicizing the role of phytochemistry in human health make Prof. Hostettmann a very worthy recipient of this Silver Medal. Unfortunately, just before the meeting Prof. Hostettmann was involved in a skiing accident which was sufficiently severe to prevent him being present in person to receive the Silver Medal. This was accepted on his behalf by his wife Maryse and his presentation was given by Dr. Jean-Luc Wolfender.

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Kurt Hostettmann in pursuit of new phytochemicals