

# Dániel Fehér

(1890–1955)

**Professor Fehér** („Weis”) is one of the classics of the Hungarian soilscience, an internationally recognised soilbiologist, botanist, plantphysiologist and microbiologist. Doctor (D.Sc.) of biological sciences (1952), corresponding member of Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Finnish Scientific Body of Natural and Forest Sciences (1954). Founder of the „*Sopron School of Soil-biology*” at the University of Sopron, Hungary. His main book of the „*Soilbiology*” is an outstanding work, written about the (forest) soils and the affecting environmental factors of the soils, as living entities. **Professor Fehér** had a charismatic personality and his name is still living among students in several legends, called „fehériada”.



## Curriculum vitae

**Professor Dániel Fehér** „the outstanding representative of Hungarian soilbiology” was born at 27th of October 1890 in Tekepuszta (Mórichida), in West Hungary. After the secondary school in Budapest, he was educated as M.Sc. *forest-engineer* in 1912 at the College of Mining and Forest Research in Selmechánya. Between 1913–1914 he was studying in the Berlin University, Germany.

In 1918, he become an *assistant professor* at the Department of Plant sciences in Selmechánya. Later the College was moving to Sopron, when he become finally a *lecturer of forest sciences* from 1926. He gained the Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) level in Vienna from the chemical and plant sciences. He was founding and heading the botanical garden in Sopron and he was also the director of the Library between 1924-1930.

At the years of 1920–30 he was participating in several study trips in Norway, Finland, Switzerland, Germany and Italy. At 1930 he was the leader of a Lapland study trip for examining the forest ecosystems at that climate conditions. At 1936 he was leading a study trip also to East-Africa (Sudan) nominated by the French Academy of Sciences. Results and achievements of those study trips were internationally accepted and highly appreciated among the scientists in the World.

**Dániel Fehér** become a *dean at the Sopron University* between 1949–50. In 1951 He was creating and leading the Soil-biological Research Team of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences the „*Sopron School of Soil-biology*” in Sopron, Hungary. D.Sc. in biological sciences (1952), *corresponding member of Hung. Acad. Sci.* (H.A.S.) in 1954, and also the Natural and Forest Science Society of Finnland. Member of the Management Committee of Hungarian Microbiological Society (from 1951). Professor **Dániel Fehér** has died at 22th of February in 1955.



In the Botanical Garden of Sopron (West Hungarian) University, Hungary with former colleagues.

## Scientific achievements:

**Dániel Fehér** was studying several disciplines, such as the forest plant sciences, the plant physiology and plant ecology...etc. before he find the most prominent field of his expertise the study on the ecophysiology of micro organisms in various soils and their interrelations with the plant nutrition. He was currently examining the chemical- and microbiological composition of the soils (nitrogen-, humous-, phosphor- and potassium content), and its interrelations with the soil-pH, electric conductivity and the soil-life, soil carbon-dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) release. He was studying the seasonal and spatial variability of the soils, initiated mainly by the climatic factors, and was searching the biological reasons and consequences of those ecological parameters. His main interest was to study the interrelations between forest soil characteristics and the tree-physiology on the background of Hungarian and international forests. He was also studying the effect of radiation on the soil-plant-microbe systems. He was the leader of the foundation of *Soil-biological Laboratorium in Balatonfüred* and the *Research Centrum of the Soil-life-sciences in Kisújszállás* (Hungary).

**Dániel Fehér** had more than 200 published articles in Hungarian and in international journals, periodicals.

## Main publications:

**Dániel Fehér** has an outstanding scientific activity. Between 1928-1935 he was writing a 3-volumed *Forest Plant Sciences*, as the morphology, physiology and detailed plant-sciences (Sopron, 1929–1935). He was the author of 2 other important books (co-authored by István Vági): *Basics of organic chemistry*, and the *Basics of Soilsciences* (Sopron, 1930,1931). In 1933 he was publishing a book in German language: *Microbiology of forest soils* (Berlin, 1933).

As the result of his arid research he had a book in 1939 in French language, titled: *The microbiological research of arid soils. Across the Sahar* was published in Sopron (1943) and the *Soilbiological methods* (1944), furthermore *The examination methods of soil bacteria and fungi* (1953) book in Budapest.

His main book of the *Soilbiology* (Budapest, 1954) is being still nowadays an outstanding volume in the World. It has more than 1200 pages and consisting of up to date results on the soilbiocenology and the impact of ecological factors of the soil-life.

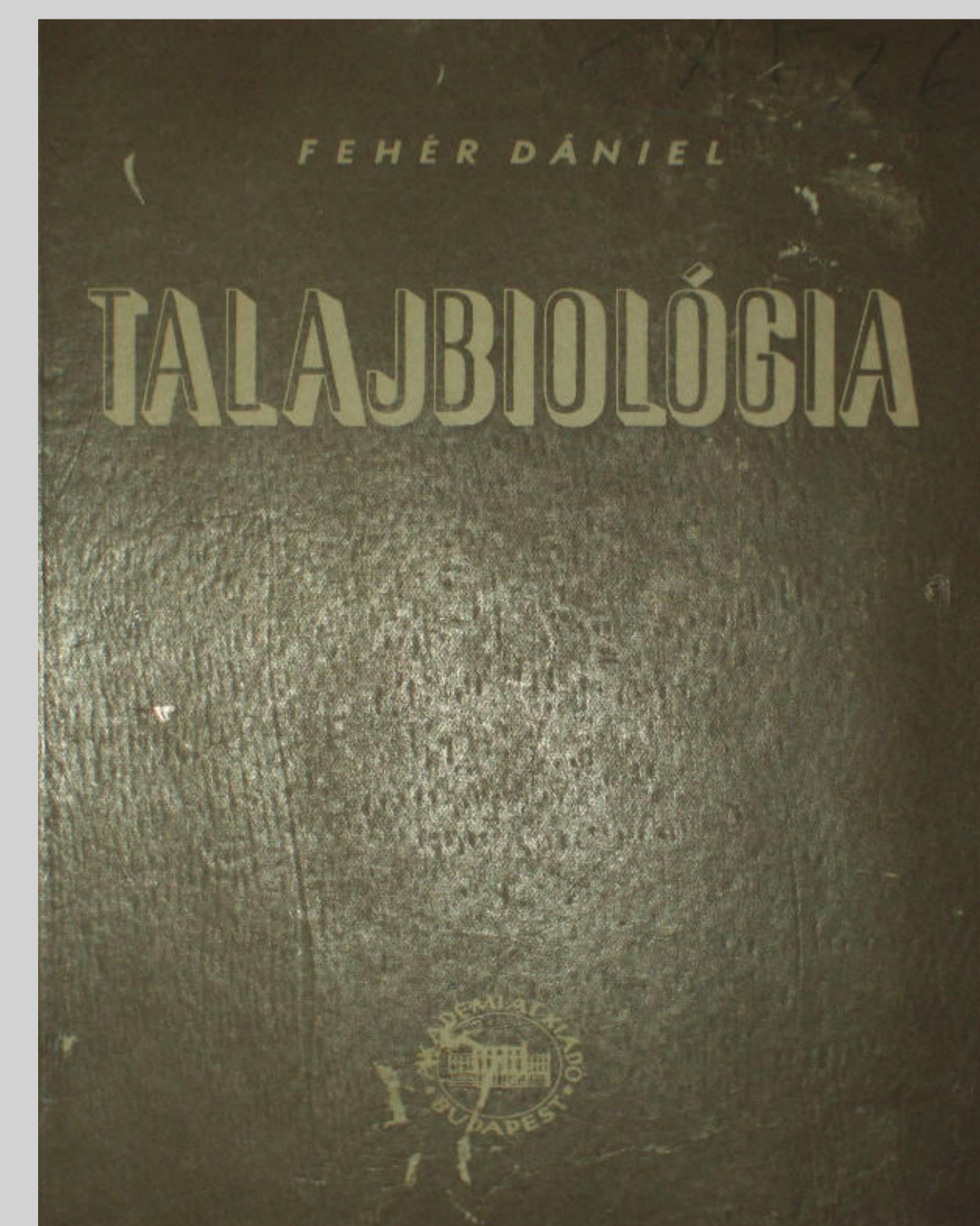
## How it happened?

**Dániel Fehér** personality was such a charismatic one, that nobody could be non-influenced by him.

It happened, that a Swedish guest has arrived to Sopron, whom he wanted to show the Asztalfő-forest. He thought to join the teaching and scientific activity and therefore invited the 12 students to accompany them for the next „*forest living plant practical lessons*” on Sunday together with his guest. The students were not welcoming the idea, so they asked from the secretariat, whether: „*Is it potentially possible not to participating on the Sunday practical lesson?*”. The answer was: „*It is possible but They should not advise it!*” Still the students was not accompanying the professors. After that **Dániel Fehér** was holding all of the remaining lessons of the semester at outside sites of the forest, which needed to reach more than half a day on foot. The students were not complaining for that situations, but were participating in all. On the last lessons the professor was evaluating the situation. „*Dear students, you were unwilling to accept my request, therefore I punished you. However you were all survived it, so we can now drink some beers of my own costs*”.



„**Dániel FEHÉR**” award, founded by the Worldcouncil of Hungarian Professors (MPV), headed by Mihály KECSKÉS as former PhD student of **Dániel FEHÉR**.



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Designed by:

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