

Dr. Sergius A. Wilde, born April 27, 1898 in Moscow, Russia, died August 7, 1981. Professor Wilde came to the United States in 1929, and joined the Department of Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin in 1934. This appointment involved collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service, Wisconsin Conservation Department and later with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

A pioneer in the field of forest soils research, Dr. Wilde carried out important studies on soils, woody-plant nutrition, tree-mycorrhiza relationships and reforestation. He authored several books and over 200 scientific papers.

Dr. Wilde was a resident of Wisconsin for 49 years, and his contributions in forestry to the people of Wisconsin are invaluable. In his pioneering effort, he aimed to interpret forest soils as carriers of definite floristic associations, as media for the growth of nursery stock or forest plantations, and as dynamic systems that react to different forms of silvicultural cuttings. His primary aim was to enhance the production of wood without depleting the soil's fertility or contaminating the environment. He authored one of the classical and most widely used reference books on forest soils.

Cutting the virgin forest deprived Wisconsin of one of its major resources and confronted the state with numerous problems associated with restoring valuable tree growth to millions of depleted acres. Dr. Wilde illustrated by concrete examples the important part soils and soil science play in the various aspects of forestry practice, etc., selection of species for reforestation, tree-planting techniques, silvicultural cuttings, rate of stand growth, nature of forest products, production of stands against parasites, fire control, and general conservation. His work pointed out that a satisfactory solution to silvicultural problems usually requires a knowledge

of the below-ground conditions and the entire biological make-up of forest cover which cannot be solved on the basis of acreage and number of trees alone.

Dr. Wilde actively participated in the reforestation programs and surveys of forest plantations in Wisconsin. He helped establish many analytical procedures for special application to soils supporting woody plants. Under his supervision, minimum soil fertility standards for planting important native conifers of Wisconsin were established. His work on the site-soil requirements for successful establishment and development of planted species is acknowledged as a classical research effort.

Dr. Wilde's contribution to the establishment of a systematic nursery soil fertility management program has been invaluable to Wisconsin and is widely accepted nationally. He had an appreciation of the holistic nature of plant-soil systems that enabled him to anticipate by more than three decades present-day concerns with toxic chemicals, soil ecology, groundwater quality and interrelations among all of these components. Professionally, the soil system was the center of his universe, and his concern with the significance of nursery practice for future forests was with him until death.

Dr. Wilde educated two generations of students, and over 1,000 students have had the opportunity to take the course in Forest Soils at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he helped them become acquainted with the out-of-doors and to unravel some of nature's secrets. Popular as a teacher, he drew students from all parts of the world. Many of his students hold leadership positions in public and private institutions concerned with forestry and forest soils. He and his students contributed greatly to the establishment of forest soils as a scientific discipline. Dr. Wilde's contribution to forest soils research has had an impact on scientists in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Oriental countries.

Wisconsin benefited enormously from Dr. Wilde's work which made a large and positive impact on the science of forest soils evaluation and management, particularly soils and their water/fertility relationships with a sound environmental ethic that enhanced plantations, natural forests, nursery soil nutrition and the very necessary underlying basic sciences. Not only did he develop management tools in a highly scientific manner, but his investigations had an enormous impact on the forest economy of the state. Practicing foresters in Wisconsin managing private and public lands, state, Forest Service and private nurseries, the pulp and paper industry, and owners of Wisconsin's private woodlots are better off today because of Dr. Wilde's insight and approach to sound forest management.

Dr. Wilde's major publications, *Forest Soils and Forest Growth*, 1946; *Soils of Wisconsin in Relation to Silviculture*, 1949; *Forest Soils: Their Properties and Their Relation to Silviculture*, 1958; *Analysis of Soil and Plants for Foresters and Horticulturists*, 1955; *Soil and Plant Analyses for Tree Culture*, 1964, 1972, 1979; *Growth of Wisconsin Coniferous Plantations in Relation to Soils*, 1965; *Mycorrhizae: Their Role in Tree Nutrition and Timber Production*, 1968; *Tree Spacing in Forest Plantations as Related to Soils and Revenue*, 1968; *Woodlands of Wisconsin*, 1976; and numerous other publications are the rich legacy he has left for the people of Wisconsin.

Professor Wilde was a poet, novelist and translator as well as scientist who won honors from the Czechoslovak Agricultural Academy in Prague, was elected honorary member of the Society of Finnish Foresters, was a distinguished guest at the University of Helsinki, and was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Science Society of America. He was also given the Distinguished Service Award from the Wisconsin-Michigan Section of the American Society of Foresters. In 1980, Dr. Wilde received

Certificates of Appreciation from the USDA-Forest Service and the Canadian Forestry Service at the North American Workshop in Nursery Soils at Syracuse, New York. These certificates recognized his many years of fine service to the forestry profession through teaching, scientific and popular publications, and invaluable technical counsel. He was awarded the Certificate of Appreciation posthumously for his outstanding contribution to the preservation and management of Wisconsin's natural resources by the Soil Conservation Society of America. He was a member of numerous national and international professional societies.

Professor Wilde's passing marks the end of an era of pioneering research and teaching in the field of forest soil science. Together with his professional skills, Dr. Wilde's vibrant personality and colorful demeanor stimulated and accelerated the pursuit of knowledge.

Dr. Wilde almost single-handedly pioneered the science of forest soils in Wisconsin, the United States, and the rest of the world. His qualifications to be an inductee into the Wisconsin Forestry Hall of Fame are impressive and deserving of full consideration.

Dr. Sergius A. Wilde

1898-1981

Dr. Sergius A. Wilde's pioneering work in natural resources began as a collaborative effort between several agencies. He was hired in 1934 to work in the Department of Soil Science at the University of Wisconsin. The U.S. Forest Service, Wisconsin Conservation Department, and Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources all had an interest in Wilde's work. Their goal was to replenish, conserve, and effectively manage forest ecosystems in the state, and Wilde played a significant role in accomplishing that goal.

Although Wilde was born in Moscow, Russia in 1898, he was a resident of Wisconsin for 49 years. During that time, he contributed enormously to the field of forestry in the state. The extensive harvesting of virgin forest had damaged Wisconsin's ecosystems in many ways, and reforestation of millions of acres was a true challenge. Wilde's studies of forest soils, woody-plant nutrition, tree-mycorrhiza relationships, and reforestation led to methods of enhancing the production of wood without depleting the soil's fertility or contaminating the environment. His work showed that a satisfactory solution to silviculture problems usually requires a knowledge of below-ground conditions and the entire biological make-up of forest cover, which cannot be solved on the basis of acreage and number of trees alone.

Either directly or indirectly, Wilde's research contributed to a wide range of natural resources. Directly, he actively participated in the reforestation programs and surveys of forest plantations in Wisconsin. He established minimum soil fertility standards and guidelines for woody plant species, and was far ahead of his time in understanding the impact and relationships of toxic chemicals, soil ecology, and groundwater quality to forest ecosystems. Indirectly, the success of forest ecosystems effects game management, non-game wildlife, predator/prey dynamics, and the quality of life in general.

The impact of Wilde's Wisconsin-based research has been appreciated worldwide. On a state level, Wilde educated over 1,000 students in forest soils at the University of Wisconsin.

Many of his students went on to hold leadership positions in public and private institutions concerned with forestry and forest soils. Wilde has authored several books and over 200 scientific papers. Some of these are specific to Wisconsin, such as "Soils of Wisconsin in Relation to Silviculture," (1949), and "Woodlands of Wisconsin," (1976).

Wilde's other publications have national or international relevance, such as "Mycorrhizae: Their role in Tree Nutrition and Timber Production," (1968), or "Tree Spacing in Forest Plantations as Related to Soils and Revenue," (1968). Wilde's contribution to forest soils research has had an impact on scientists in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Orient. Some noteworthy foreign awards include honors from the Czechoslovak Agricultural Academy in Prague, honorary membership in the Society of Finnish Foresters, and distinguished guest status at the University of Helsinki.

Sergius A. Wilde was a poet, novelist, and translator as well as a scientist. He was a member of numerous national and international professional societies. Wilde contributed to conservation through applied resource management, conservation and forest soil education, conservation-oriented research, and extensive publications.

Nationally, Wilde received recognition from many organizations. He was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Agronomy and the Soil Science Society of America. He was given the Distinguished Service Award from the Wisconsin-Michigan Section of the American Society of Foresters. In 1980, he received Certificates of Appreciation from the USDA-Forest Service and the Canadian Forestry Service at the North American Workshop in Nursery Soils at Syracuse, New York. These certificates recognized his many years of public service in forestry through teaching, scientific and popular publications, and technical counsel. The Soil Conservation Society of America honored him with a Certificate of Appreciation posthumously, acknowledging how Dr. Sergius A. Wilde almost single-handedly pioneered the science of forest soils in Wisconsin, the United States, and beyond.