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OBITUARY

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Plant hunter Hans Nooteboom passed away (1934–2022)

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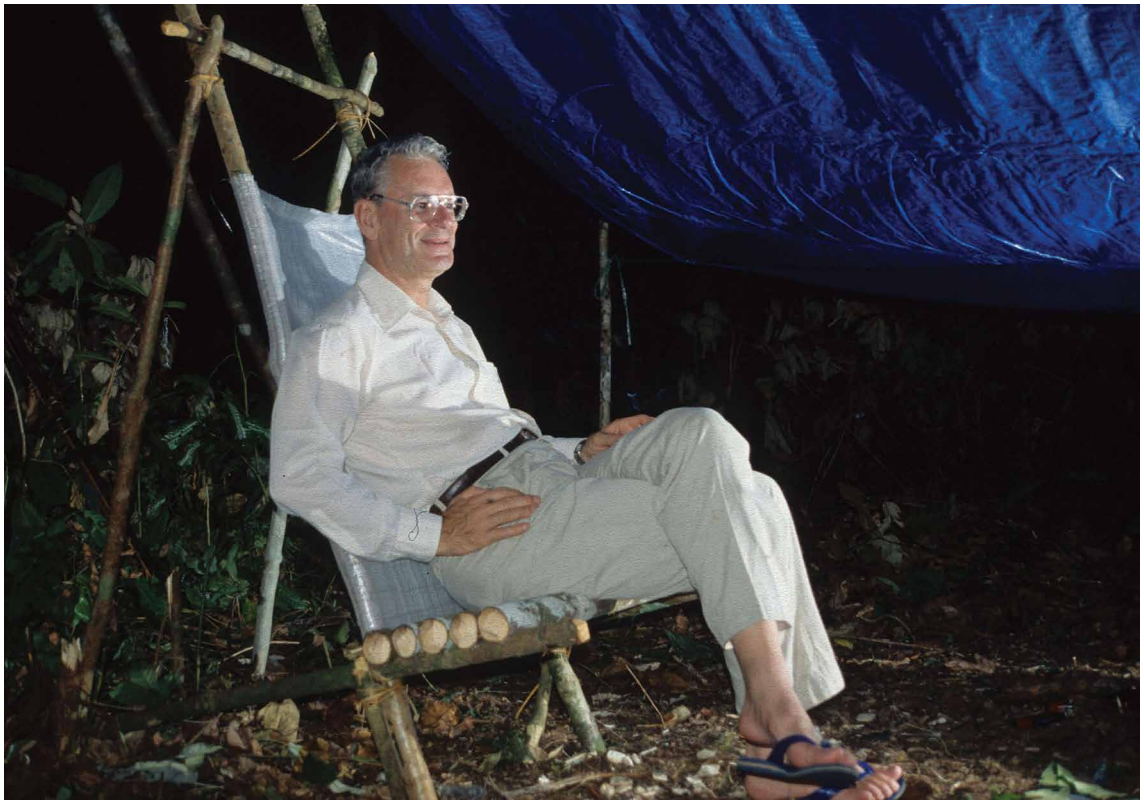

Fig. 1 Hans Nooteboom on expedition in the Aru Islands, 1993, resting after a day of collecting. Photo likely made by Max van Balgooij.

Hans Peter Nooteboom passed away on Wednesday 20 April 2022, at the age of 87 after a long and distinguished career in systematic botany. This obituary borrows heavily from a privately published autobiography (Nooteboom 2017) and a laudatory paper published on the occasion of his 80th birthday (Baas et al. 2014).

Hans was born in Waingapu, on the island of Sumba (Indonesia; then still the Dutch Indies) on 2 July 1934, where his father was a civil servant. In 1939 the family went on leave to the Netherlands, but could never return to Indonesia due to the Second World War and an accident that disabled his father for further civil service.

Hans attended elementary school and highschool in Leiden and Rotterdam. Before embarking on his study of biology in Leiden he first fulfilled his military service, ending as an officer in the anti-aircraft artillery. For his MSc he studied olfactory orientation in Isopods, worked on *Fabaceae* (his first publication) and the chemotaxonomy and leaf anatomy of the *Simaroubaceae*, a then still highly polyphyletic assemblage of genera, presently monophyletically classified in other families. He obtained his teacher's degree and finished his MSc with honours (12 December 1961). In the meantime Hans was already teaching in a grammar school (1959 till 1974), also during his PhD study on the old-world representatives of the *Symplocaceae*. He successfully defended his thesis in 1975. The *Simaroubaceae* and *Symplocaceae* were the first families Hans contributed to Flora Malesiana, a project aiming to describe the flora of the Malesian area (roughly the triangle Malaysia – The Philippines – Papua New Guinea, including Indonesia) in two series, one for the Angiosperms and Gymnosperms and the second for the Ferns and Fern allies. In fact, Hans was one of three authors who ever published species with a multi-ranked infraspecific classification in Flora Malesiana. Hans' circumscription and

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classification of *Symplocos cochinchinensis* (Lour.) S.Moore is legendary (see below).

By then Hans was employed in the Laboratory for Experimental Plant Systematics of Leiden University under Professor Hegnauer. He worked there from 1961 till 1977, where one of his major tasks was to teach plant taxonomy and related topics to students of various grades. In 1977 he became senior researcher in the Rijksherbarium, then still part of Leiden University, under Professor van Steenis. His first task was to complete the treatment of the *Cyperaceae* for Flora Malesiana, of which the revision of the species rich genus *Carex* was not yet finished by the late Dr. J.H. Kern. Other contributions to the first series of Flora Malesiana were the *Magnoliaceae* (this time completing and redoing the work of Dr. J.E. Dandy of the Natural History Museum in London) and the *Linaceae* and *Ctenolophonaceae*. Hans then volunteered to change to ferns, and for the second series of Flora Malesiana he delivered two big parts, the family *Davalliaceae* and part of the *Polypodiaceae*. Hans is the only author who published in both series of Flora Malesiana. Hans was very productive, he made (alone or in collaboration) 206 new name combinations and described 104 new taxa, these ranged from new sections in the genus *Magnolia* Plum. ex L. to the subspecies and varieties in *Symplocos cochinchinensis*. The quality of his work was excellent as noted by Baas et al. (2014): quite often his broad ('Steenisian') alpha-taxonomic species and genus concepts were later largely confirmed by molecular based phylogenies. Examples mentioned are the merger of the genera *Leptochilus* Kaulf. (*Polypodiaceae*) and *Davallia* Sm. (*Davalliaceae*), lumping c. 50 names under *Davallia repens* (L.f.) Kuhn, and a broad concept of *Magnolia*. Hans also contributed the families he revised to other local (e.g., national) floras, like those of China, Indochina (Cambodia, Laos & Vietnam), New Caledonia, Peninsular Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Thailand. Hans remained interested in his former work and as an expert he was often asked to join in the publication of new species (see his publication list underneath).

In his autobiography Hans portrays himself as a plant hunter, and indeed, he participated or organised many expeditions and field trips in mainly east and southeast Asia (Thailand, Singapore, Java, Borneo (Sabah, Sarawak, Kalimantan), Sri Lanka, Andaman Islands, Buru, China, Myanmar, Aru Archipelago). The Leiden database shows that he made 4822 collections as first collector and 238 as additional collector. In the beginning the plants were mainly collected in Europe, later especially in SE Asia. Hans also attended many symposia with their additional field trips and was happy when he was invited as an expert to come and collect or give advice. During his travels he made many friends and acquaintances, who in turn found a hospitable home with Hans and his wife Heleen, when visiting Leiden.

Hans was engaged in many societal and outreach activities. He was a long term activist in the union for university staff. At the beginning of his career, when still working in the Laboratory for Experimental Plant Systematics Hans was already a member of the Leiden University Council and of the council of the Faculty of Sciences during several years. When working in the Rijksherbarium Hans somehow took over the task of nature conservation from the late Dr. M. Jacobs and became involved in the founding of 'Tropenbos International', but also participated in the International Timber Trade Organisation (ITTO), the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the Dutch Commission for International Nature Conservation ('Van Tienhoven Foundation'), and the Dutch scientific committee of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

Hans was one of the first to start using a personal computer, in those days with 8 inch floppy discs as memory and data holders. He was also among the first in the Rijksherbarium to use software to create identification keys. When he became editor of Flora Malesiana he continued this work by adding CD-Roms with identification keys and extra images to each new volume and also by placing the data on internet (unfortunately no longer accessible).

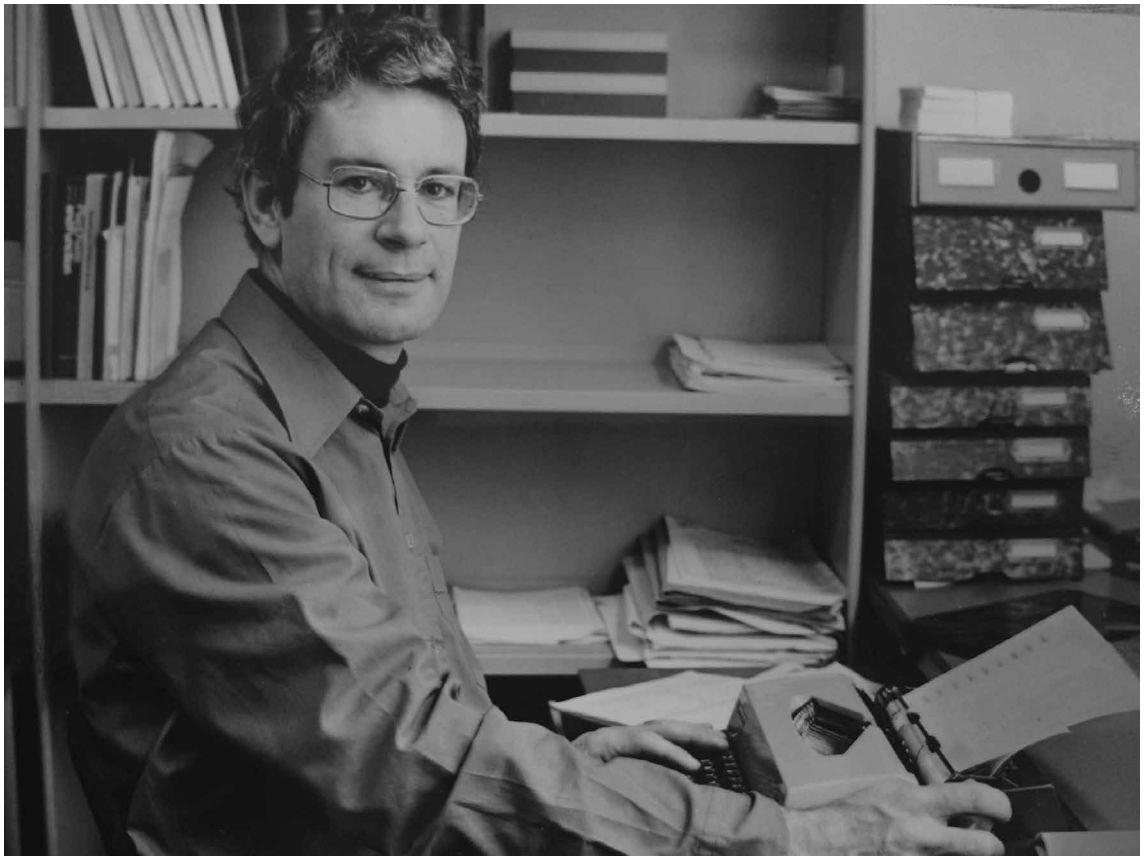

Fig. 2 Hans Nooteboom in his working room in the Rijksherbarium, 1978. Photo by Ruth van Crevel.

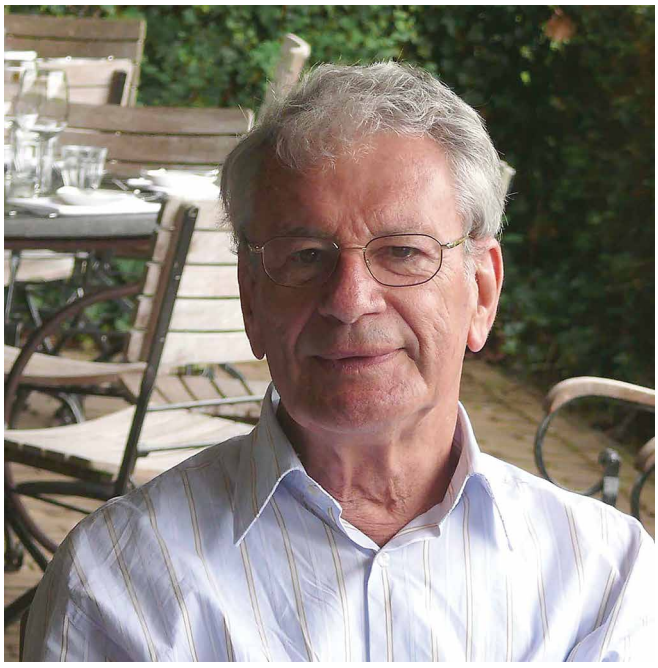

Fig. 3 Hans Nooteboom, c. 1995. Photo by Heleen de Vos, his wife.

Hans was for many years editor of two major publications of the Rijksherbarium: the journal Blumea and Flora Malesiana, to which he contributed so much himself as an author as well. Editing and making CD-Roms for Flora Malesiana were the last tasks that he performed when still an honorary researcher after his retirement. The transition from Rijksherbarium (then National Herbarium of the Netherlands) to Naturalis Biodiversity Center did not meet with Hans' standards of research and he terminated the cooperation.

The two major hobbies of Hans were sailing and wine. His father made him into an excellent sailor and Hans in turn, did teach his children and other youngsters the art of sailing. Hans had various sailing boats and also made one himself (one on a balcony with just enough space to walk around it). In his house in the Roodenburgerstraat in Leiden Hans created a special, isolated room for his wine, which he filled with yearly purchases made in France. Hans became a member of '*La Commanderie de la dive Bouteille*', being enthroned by his friend Pierre Jamet, grand master of the order.

Hans had two sons, Sibout and Menno, and a daughter, Marije. Our thoughts are with them and their families.

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