

Skin, Plants – and Poets

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Another angle is given in this short report of the Botanical Dermatology Course and Workshop: “Plants are with us; not only from birth to grave, but as physical signs of the beauty of life.”



During the recent international workshop on Plants and Skin held in Odense, Denmark, and chaired by Drs Evy Paulsen, Klaus Ejner Andersen and Lars Kristensen, an ILDS Award was presented to Dr Richard Rycroft, former editor of Contact Dermatitis, by Kristian Thstrup-Pedersen (Fig. 1).

The Award reads: *“This Certificate is awarded to Richard John Graham Rycroft MD in recognition of his outstanding contribution to dermatology, both nationally and internationally, and, in particular, through his work as Editor of Contact Dermatitis.”* The award is signed by Jean-Hilaire Saurat, President of the International League of Dermatological Societies.

The workshop began in the University fields, where plants were examined and discussed. Interestingly, Professor Lars P Christensen mentioned that, through selection, growth conditions, etc., plants could yield more than genetically modified plants. A large amount of work is done to select variants that can feed the world’s fast-growing population.

Dr Chris Lowell from Bath, UK, gave excellent introductions to the various clinical pictures arising from contact with plants – from the needles of the cactus to more sophisticated plant-induced cases of eczema. Most cases of plant dermatitis are “irritant” and sunlight is an additional factor. This can be a severe problem: did you know that approximately one-third of fire-fighters in California cannot participate in fighting the devastating forest fires because they are allergic to poison ivy?

Dr Richard Rycroft gave a lecture on Plants and Poets; a most stimulating journey on how much poetry includes plants, the “rose” being the utmost symbol of beauty and love.

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Fig. 1. Professor Kristian Thstrup-Pedersen (right) from ILDS hands over the award to Dr Graham Rycroft.