



REMEMBRANCE



Professor (Dr.) R. S. Mehrotra (4th January 1937–25th October 2025)

Dr. R.S. Mehrotra, an eminent mycologist and plant pathologist, an inspiring teacher, and a distinguished academician, passed away on 25 October 2025. His demise marks the loss of a towering figure who significantly shaped mycology and plant pathology education and research in India.

Born on 4 January 1937 in village Anantram, District Etawah, Uttar Pradesh, Dr. Mehrotra pursued higher education at the University of Saugar, Sagar (now Dr. Hari Singh Gour University), Madhya Pradesh, where he earned his M.Sc. in 1958 and Ph.D. in 1961. His doctoral research, conducted under the supervision of the late Prof. S. B. Saksena, focused on foot rot and leaf rot diseases of *Piper betle*, laying the foundation for his lifelong engagement with fungal plant diseases.

Dr. Mehrotra began his academic career in 1964 as Assistant Professor in the Department of Botany, University of Saugar. In 1970, he joined Kurukshetra University as Reader and was promoted to Professor of Botany in 1978. He served the institution with distinction until his retirement in 1997, during which he shouldered several academic and administrative responsibilities with commitment and integrity. His research career was strengthened by significant international exposure. From 1968 to 1970, he worked as a Post-Doctoral Fellow at the University of Western Ontario, Canada, in collaboration with Prof. C.J. Hickman, investigating the biology of *Phytophthora* zoospores in soil using fluorescent microscopy. In 1979, as a Fulbright Fellow at the University of California, USA, he collaborated with Prof. G. A. Zentmyer, a world authority on *Phytophthora*.

Dr. Mehrotra was closely associated with several scientific societies and contributed to them in leadership roles. He was elected Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad. He served as President of the Indian Phytopathological Society (1992), President of the Mycological Society of India (1996), and President of the Botany Section of the Indian Science Congress (1997). In recognition of his outstanding contributions to botany, he received the Birbal Sahni Gold Medal of the Indian Botanical Society in 1988. At Kurukshetra University, Dr. Mehrotra established a strong and vibrant school of mycology and plant pathology through his dynamic leadership and sustained research efforts. His major research interests included *Phytophthora* diseases of crops, fungal ecology, seed pathology, soil-borne diseases, biological control of plant pathogens, post-harvest pathology of fruits and vegetables, and the physiology and taxonomy of fungi. He published over 200 research papers in journals of repute and authored several influential review articles.

A committed mentor, Dr. Mehrotra supervised numerous M.Phil. and Ph.D. students who now serve in academia and research institutions across the country. He co-authored widely used textbooks such as *An Introduction to Mycology, Plant Pathology, and Fundamentals of Microbiology*, and a seminal monograph, *Phytophthora Diseases in India*, which continue to guide students and researchers. Beyond his academic achievements, Dr. Mehrotra was admired for his intellectual depth, humility, warmth, and humane approach to teaching. He earned the affection and respect of generations of students and colleagues. Though he is no longer among us, his legacy endures through his students, his writings, and the scientific foundations he helped build.

Dr. Mehrotra is survived by his wife, two daughters, four grandchildren, and a vast community of students and admirers who will continue to cherish his memory.

...May his soul rest in peace.

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