



Dr. Charles B. Heiser Jr.

V. S. Pustovoit Award Winner 1985, U.S.A.

Dr. Charles B. Heiser Jr. is the world's leading authority on the taxonomy of sunflowers. In 1942, as an undergraduate student at Washington University, Dr. Heiser began a study of the common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*) at the suggestion of Dr. Edgar Anderson. While studying for his doctorate at the University of California, Dr. Heiser researched hybridization between *H. annuus* and *H. bolanderi*.

Dr. Heiser continued his research into natural and artificial hybridization of the common sunflower with other annual species. He also studied the ethno-botany, origin and variability in domesticated sunflower. A study of the biosystematics of the perennial sunflower in collaboration with a group of scientists, led to the publication of a monograph "The North American Sunflowers (*Helianthus*)" in 1969, which has been the reference work on the genus since then. Dr. Heiser has worked on and published 135 scientific papers and four books.

Since that time, Dr. Heiser has devoted his study to cytoplasmic male sterility and released the CMS germplasm, Indiana-1 in 1982. At present, Dr. Heiser is working on the origin of the Jerusalem artichoke (*H. tuberosus*) and is attempting to develop new ornamental sunflowers.

Dr. Heiser has collected wild sunflower species in almost all their natural habitats and has grown many of them in his garden, generously sharing the seed with other researchers around the world. He has helped sunflower breeders working with wild *Helianthus* species in many countries, assisting in the identification of their materials, or confirming their identity. In 1976 he published an informative and entertaining book for the general public titled simply "The Sunflower".

Charles Heiser has been the President of four national and international scientific societies, he is a Fellow of two, and has served on the executive of others. His list of honours include: a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Senior Postdoctoral Fellowship of the National Science Foundation and merit awards from many botanical societies.