

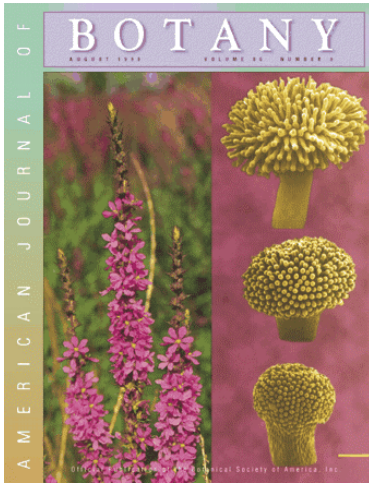
# Botanical Society of America

## **Annual Report 2002 – 2003**

### **Webpage Committee Report, Botanical Society of America**

**To be presented to the Botanical Society of America Council Meeting  
July 27, 2003 – Mobile Alabama**

#### **1. Overview of Changes**



In October 2002 the Executive Committee (EC) agreed that the position of Web Committee Chair would be shifted to the business office under the position of the Executive Director. In April, after the spring meeting of the EC, initial contact was made with committee members, and we began dialog for progressing with webpage developments. Special thanks to Janice Glime and Marshal Sundberg for providing feedback and information that enabled us to go live with the new overall format. Karl Niklas has added the support and expertise of the Editorial Office into the mix. Thank you all for the assistance. I look forward to engagement of the committee as the year progresses.

The Executive Committee also considered the importance of the BSA websites to the Botanical Society as a means of supporting its mission to promote the science of botany. It was felt we have the base and potential to provide a strong support system for the science and for plant/biological/botanical education. It was agreed we would alter the format of the main BSA site and provide a vibrant and colorful image for the science of botany. It was also agreed we would seek to expand services for members. A highlight to date came in early June when we added access to the American Journal of Botany archives (1914 – 1997) by providing a link through the main BSA site to JSTOR.

As part of the process, it was felt the Webpage Committee, the Education Committee/Teaching Section and all the sections would need to become active as a support system for developments undertaken by the business office (the non-botanical folks). I'm pleased to say the Committee is becoming involved and that the pace of development will increase over the coming months.

#### **2. Statistics – BSA site**

When viewing statistics, it is important to remember that the website is a tool with two main purposes: 1.) It acts as a means of storing and communicating information to the BSA membership; and 2.) It acts as a medium for the dissemination of information that supports our wider mission. Consider the fact that the vast majority of people visiting our website are not botanists. They are coming to research, explore or find out something about botany. The website's job, if it is aimed at our mission, is to promote botany by

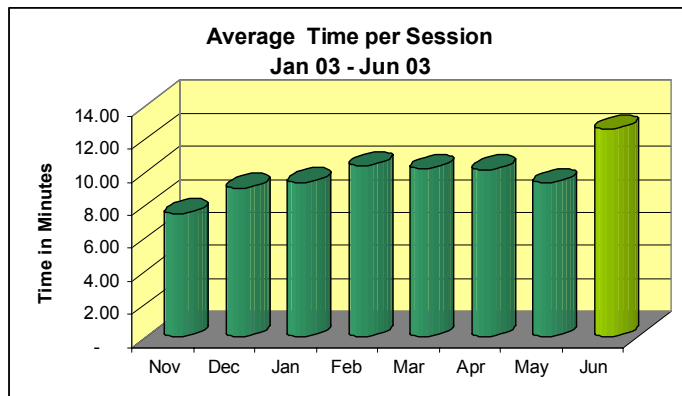
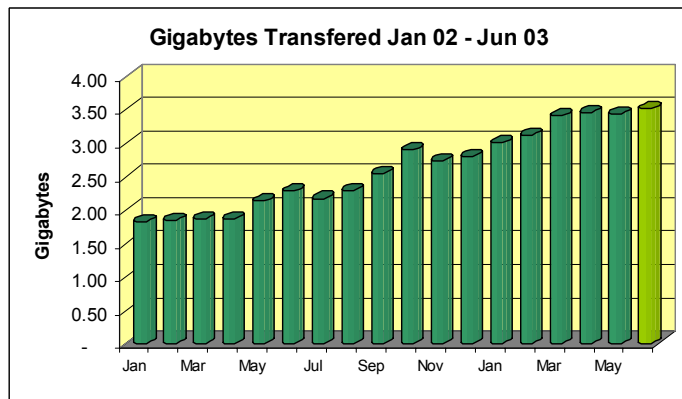
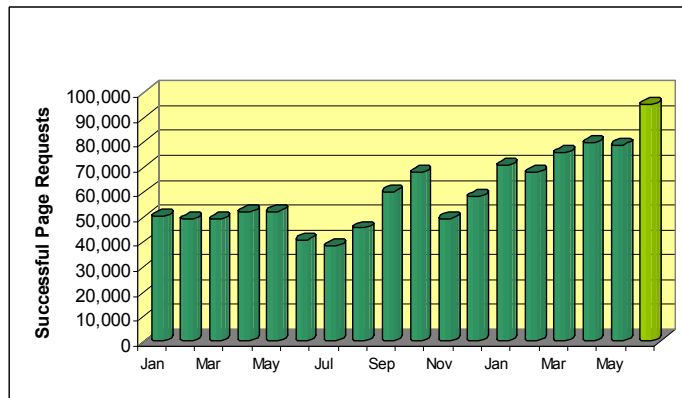
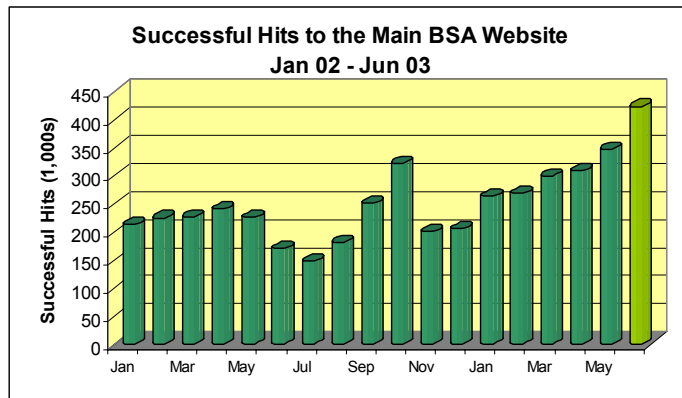
getting people to the website and having them stay and explore what we/it has to offer. Over time our goal is to ensure more people are coming to the site, they are visiting more pages and they are staying longer.

For the month of June the Botanical Society of America's website had 423,993 successful hits (50,813 visitors). The "successful hits" trend for the period January 2002 through June 2003 is highlighted in the figure above. The trends for all visitor related statistics are similar.

In June of 2003 the site registered 3.51 gigabytes of data downloaded by visitors. This represents the highest usage of the site since its establishment. The previous high was June of 2002.

As we reintroduce the tracking of statistics as a webpage feature, we will also look to other meaningful indicators that the site is supporting our mission. For example:

- In June the average length of stay per visitor session increased by 19% on the time registered for May. If people are staying longer, hopefully they are learning more and we are promoting botany.
- In May 57% of visitors entered and went on to more than one page. In June this increased to 70%. If they are going to more pages within the site hopefully they are .....



The BSA office team is excited about developing the BSA with the involvement of the committees and sections. The potential and possibility for establishing a base that can create impact on our mission (and the promotion of the science of botany) is botanically limitless.

Website statistics are now online in the reports section of the website at: <http://www.botany.org/newsite/reporting/webstats.php>

### **3. Statistics –Conference and *American Journal of Botany***

#### **a. Conference site activity:**

	June 2001	June 2002	June 2003
Visitors	3,967	7,046	1,752
Gigabytes Transferred	1.17	1.56	.78

We have established the Botany 2004 website at: [www.2004.botanyconference.org](http://www.2004.botanyconference.org)

#### **b. *American Journal of Botany* activity:**

We are in the process of establishing these numbers for the 2002-2003 year. The results will be posted with other BSA web statistics as noted above.

We currently have 1505 members and 182 institutions activated for online connection to the *American Journal of Botany*.

### **4. BSA Online Teaching Images**

Collection of information for this site has also lapsed over the past nine months. As with all other web statistics, these will soon be posted on the BSA site. It is, however, important to note that this site will form a vital component as we continue with the development of the main BSA site. You'll note that one of the features of the revised main site is that all images have one-line explanations that appear when the cursor is over the image. All images also link to a botanical explanation for that specific image (most currently link to the cover story that appeared in the *American Journal of Botany*).

Over the next few months we will add information alongside each image in the collection and ensure the online teaching collection is at or mentioned at the final explanation page of each image link.

With this in mind we need more high quality images. Please, if you have images you are willing to share, let us use them to promote botany through the BSA website and Online Teaching Images.

### **5. Added Features**

Over the past nine months we focused on development for members and institutional subscribers by adding the following features to the website, many of which had been in the planning for some time:

- a. Online payment for dues, subscriptions and the purchasing of BSA paraphernalia. <http://www.botany.org/newsite/membership/join.php>
- b. Established and connected a new BSA database and connected it to the website as a platform for development.
- c. Access to the archives of the American Journal of Botany (JSTOR). [http://www.botany.org/newsite/publications/jstor\\_login\\_botany.asp](http://www.botany.org/newsite/publications/jstor_login_botany.asp)
- d. Revised the Membership Look-up function and connected it to the BSA database. <http://www.botany.org/newlook/membersearch.asp>
- e. Established a “Review & Change Your Details” component. This will hopefully eliminate data entry errors (at least the ones we make). <http://www.botany.org/newlook/login.asp>

## **6. Future Concepts**

For the vast majority of BSA members the web is a viable tool for communication. For some it is not. We need to cater for both groups. I’m aware that mailings have caused us (the Society) many problems in the past. Voting this year is one such example. Everything was lined up and people still didn’t get ballots until after the cut-off date. We are currently exploring ways in which people can register to vote online. By doing so we will save on postage, paper and having to rely on a mail system (bulk post) that doesn’t seem to do the job. With the money saved we can shift to “faster snails” for the members who are not able to access the Internet.

Mailings on the website—is it a thought worth considering? Please feel free to put forward ideas. Ideas will be assessed in regards to potential impact on the mission, our ability to provide the support (do the work) and the BSA’s ability to fund the initiatives. Please note: there is now a secure section on the site for the development of BSA “members only” activities (i.e. places for discussion of items that impact on the BSA).

## **7. Summary**

Over the past few months (and for many years previous) a great deal of effort has gone into the BSA website. Development has been kept focused towards creating impact on our mission. As it grows, it will need to be managed and maintained in line with the wishes of the society. I see the Web Page Committee taking a leading/governance role for development. I look forward to working with the committee in the year ahead and to expanding the possibilities to promote botany we can bring to the people who visit the BSA website.

On behalf of the Web Page Committee thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Bill Dahl