

**Botanical Society of America
Honors and Awards Committee Report**

26 July 2005

Richard Olmstead, Edith Taylor, Allison Snow (ex officio), and Lynn Bohs (Chair)

One nomination was received this year for the BSA Merit Award: Dr. Scott Russell of the University of Oklahoma. Dr. Russell's research centers around the morphological, physiological, and developmental aspects of double fertilization in plants, and in particular the structure and behavior of sperm cells during reproduction. In addition to his nomination letter, four letters were received supporting his candidacy. The BSA Honors Committee reviewed these documents and unanimously voted to honor Dr. Russell with the BSA Merit Award.

During their deliberations, the Honors Committee members were split on the criteria for the Merit Award. Although all committee members agreed that scientific research accomplishments were the main criteria for the award, there was some debate about the role of service to the BSA in the Merit Awards. The criterion stated in the call for nominations is simply stated as "outstanding contributions to botanical science." The BSA Council or President might want to consider clarifying the award criteria to the Merit Award Committee in the future before they begin their deliberations.

The Merit Award Committee would also like to encourage more BSA members to submit nominations for this award. We were disappointed to have only received one nomination and know that there are many distinguished botanists who would be worthy candidates for this award. It reflects well on our society and discipline to honor accomplished botanists in our midst. We would like to see more nominations for this award in the future, on a par with the several recipients per year that the BSA had in the past.