



**BOTANY 2022, BSA Board and Council Report
July 2022**

The only thing constant is change—and so it is for BSA publications in another eventful year.

Highlights

- 1) Continued negotiations with Wiley over a new 5-year contract
 - a. We are working through the specifics, with the help of BSA Executive Director Heather Cacanindin, Clarke & Esposito Consultants, and legal counsel, and hope to reach mutual agreement on terms and conditions with our partners at Wiley this fall. The new contract anticipates that most of the income in the next several years will come from funding for Open Access rather than through subscriptions and licensing. This is significant, as it affects the financial bottom line for the Society and makes it even more important that we attract good papers for the journals.
 - b. Wiley supports initiatives that are important for the Society, including for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and pledges to help the Society move sustainably to the more Open Access future. We are not alone; many Societies are also trying to adapt to this shifting landscape.
 - c. We are committed to supporting our members and to publishing good and important science. We want to be our community's go-to journals for their research—and **we need our community's support.**
- 2) New Editors!
 - a. Editor-in-Chief for *Applications in Plant Sciences*: After a widely publicized search, we are pleased to report that **Briana Gross**, of the University of Minnesota-Duluth, has enthusiastically embraced the role of the new EIC for *APPS*. We are grateful to Theresa Culley for her leadership as Editor-in-Chief from 2013 through 2021 and for her assistance during the transition.
 - b. *AJB* Reviews Editor: In fall 2021, we sent out a call for applications for a new Reviews Editor. Among several impressive candidates, **Kasey Barton** (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa) was chosen to serve a 2-year term that

began October 1, 2021. We are grateful to Jannice Friedman (Queens University) for leading the effort to set the guidelines for Reviews and recruit authors through September 2021.

- c. **APPS** Recruiting Editor: After an open call, **Tatiana Arias** (Marie Selby Botanical Gardens) was selected for the newly created role of Recruiting Editor and started her two-year term in October 2021. She is working closely with Briana to recruit potential authors and has enlisted guest editors for a special issue, “Bioinformatics for Plant Biology.”
 - d. **AJB** Assistant/Content Editor: In February 2022, we welcomed our new Assistant/Content Editor, **Dr. Staci Nole-Wilson**, who responded to an open call for applications and replaced outgoing editor Marian Chau.
 - e. **New Early-Career Advisory Board**: From over 50 applicants, 10 were selected to serve on the 2022-2024 Early Career Advisory Board for BSA Publications, based on diversity of interests and backgrounds. See <https://botany.org/home/publications/ecab.html>.
- 3) **BSA Strategic Plan**, [https://botany.org/file.php?file=SiteAssets/home/BSA Strategic Plan 2021.pdf](https://botany.org/file.php?file=SiteAssets/home/BSA_Strategic_Plan_2021.pdf). Publications are most focused in the strategic priorities of *Research and Scholarly Excellence*, though we are in alignment with the entire Strategic Plan and fully committed to the Society’s mission.
- a. In support of the BSA’s commitment to *outreach and collaboration*, the Editors-in-Chief of **AJB** and **APPS**, along with early-career researcher Brittany Sutherland and Amy McPherson, hosted free author webinars in May 2022 on “demystifying the publication process” as part of the BSA’s new **Botany360** series (<https://botany.org/home/resources/botany360.html>). An article summarizing the main highlights will be published in the *Plant Science Bulletin* this summer.
 - b. In the spirit of *diversity, equity, and inclusion* (DEI): as of June 2022, authors have the option to include a translation of the abstract in languages other than English to be published with the articles in **AJB** and **APPS**. This is a small step in an effort towards broadening accessibility to the content of our articles.
 - c. Both journals are also issuing more open calls for special issues to expand our author base, and open calls for people to join our editorial teams as Review and Recruiting editors for **AJB** and **APPS**, all in efforts to diversify and be more inclusive.
 - d. The EiCs of both **AJB** and **APPS**, and the managing editor of **AJB**, are participating in DEI training through the NSF-funded Root and Shoot grant.
- 4) **Publishing Highlights** over the past year:
- a. **Journal Impact Factor for both journals**:
 - The Impact Factors were released by Clarivate on June 28, 2022. The **2021 IF for AJB is 3.325** (down from **3.844** last year); **for APPS it is 2.577** (up from **1.936** last year).
 - The 5-year Impact Factor for **AJB** is 4.014, up from 3.657 in 2020. The 5-

year Impact Factor for *APPS* is 2.353, up from 1.929 in 2020.

- We sincerely thank the editors, reviewers, and **authors** who support their Society journals.
 - b. **APPS Reviewing Editor Board:** In 2020, *APPS* expanded the role for its Reviewing Editor Board to provide new opportunities for post-doc and senior grad student researchers to gain a behind-the-scenes understanding of the editorial and publication processes. The two-year term for the current Reviewing Editor board ends at the end of August 2022. A Call for applicants for the new RE board was announced in June, with the new term starting September 1, 2022.
 - c. **AJB Reviews:** We launched our Reviews series in *AJB* in 2019 after much planning and discussion. The decision was based, in part, on the desire to serve our community *and* an analysis showing that reviews contribute disproportionately to impact factors. We published our first Review in October 2020. To date, we have received 18 submissions and published **12** Reviews ([https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1537-2197.Reviews](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)1537-2197.Reviews)). Proposals are welcome! Please send to reviews@botany.org.
 - d. **New AJB Synthesis Papers and Prize:** Thanks to Sean Graham's initiative, and approval by the BSA Board, the call for applications for the *AJB* Synthesis Papers and Prize went out in December 2021. The new *AJB* Synthesis section will feature invited contributions by early-career scientists that concisely summarize and synthesize a focal research area or question. All Synthesis papers submitted, peer-reviewed, accepted, and published prior to July 1, 2023, will be considered for the first *AJB* Synthesis Prize. We received 20 applications and requested reference letters for 13 of the applicants; 8 of these were invited to submit a 3000-word, single-authored synthesis on their chosen topic. From the published papers, one will be chosen to receive the \$2000 prize. The ad hoc committee organizing the effort includes Sean Graham (chair), Kasey Barton, Emily Sessa, Pam Diggle, Lucia Lohman, and Amy McPherson.
 - e. **Plant Science Bulletin:** The *PSB*, now in its 68th volume, is an important outlet for member news and plant-related articles and book reviews. Under Editor-in-Chief Mackenzie Taylor's leadership, assisted by BSA staff Richard Hund and Johanne Stogran, the *PSB* covered numerous topics of importance to the botanical community. See Mackenzie's report for more detailed information.
- 5) Metrics and other information for *AJB* and *APPS*
- a. **AJB:**
 - In 2021, *AJB* handled 407 new submissions for peer review, and published 182 articles. Manuscript submissions in 2021 were down 15% over 2020. So far in 2022, manuscript submissions are up 9% over last year. The total number of pages published in 2021 was 2463. Submissions were received from 51 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (126), China (73), Brazil (24), Japan (17), Mexico (17), Spain

- (16), India (12), and Canada (11).
- We have 58 Associate Editors from around the world: 41% of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 47% are women. See <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/15372197/homepage/editorialboard>.
 - The average time to first decision in 2021 was 47.4 days (longer than we'd like, though not surprising due to the continued fallout from the pandemic); 2020 was 44.4 days; 2019 was 34.6 days; and 2018 was 35.2 days. So far in 2022, this number is 35.6 days.
 - Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 40% in 2021 (37% in 2020, 38% in 2019, 41.5% in 2018, and 38% in 2017).
 - Pam Diggle is in the third year of her second 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.
 - In late 2021/early 2022 we welcomed new Associate Editors Kasey Barton (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa), Meghna Krishnadas (CSIR – Centre for Cellular & Molecular Biology, India), Kangshan Mao (Sichuan University, China), Hanno Schaefer (Technical University of Munich, Germany), Robert Schaeffer (Utah State University), and Jennifer Tate (Massey University, New Zealand).
 - Retirements from the Board include Russell Chapman, Barnabas Daru, R. Geeta, Louise Lewis, Aaron Liston, Mark Ooi, and Beata Zagorska-Marek.
 - **Special Issues:** Special issues raise the visibility of a journal and demonstrate the breadth of our content, as well as (often) help our Impact Factor, by attracting high-quality and potentially well-cited papers. We thank all of the Special Issue/Section editors and contributing authors for their hard work in making their Society journal as strong as possible.
 - 2021:
 - Life Without Water—a special issue on plant life in water-limited habitats and the diversity of ongoing research in arid-adapted plant groups, led by Karolina Heyduk, Michael McKain, and Olwen Grace, was published in February 2021 in *AJB* (<https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15372197/2021/108/2>); a companion special collection of previously published *APPS* articles was posted as a [virtual issue](#) and promoted on social media. See <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15372197/2021/108/2>
 - [Exploring the Potential of Angiosperms353](#), a Universal Toolkit for Flowering Plant Phylogenomics a joint special issue with *APPS*; led by Bill Baker, Felix Forest, Lisa Pokorny, Steven Dodsworth, Jennifer Tate, and Sean Graham, this group of papers was published in the July issues of both journals.

See also the joint “virtual issue”:

[https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1537-2197.angiosperms353](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)1537-2197.angiosperms353)

- 2022-2023:
 - *Approaches to the Study of Quantitative Fitness-Related Traits*—led by Susan Mazer, Eugenio Larios (former ECAB-er), Ann Sakai, and Stephen Weller
 - *Pollen as the Link Between Phenotype and Fitness*—led by Agnes Dellinger, Vini de Brito, Nathan Muchhala, Oystein Opedal, and Rocio Perez-Barrales

b. APPS:

- After a call for applications and nominations, Dr. Briana Gross, of the University of Minnesota-Duluth, was selected by a search committee to serve as the new Editor-in-Chief for *APPS*. Briana has been working closely with the Editorial Board and the new Recruiting Editor towards two goals: (1) increasing submissions and (2) increasing the diversity of authors and readers. In spring 2022, Briana held one-on-one meetings with Editorial Board members and synthesized their input on these two goals. She and the *APPS* team are working through the suggestions, and have already implemented several, such as second-language abstracts and more frequent virtual issues.
- In 2021, *APPS* handled 92 new submissions (27 of which were Special Issue Articles) and published 33 articles. So far in 2022 volume 10 (through the May-June issue), *APPS* published 24 articles.
- Submissions were received from 25 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (39), China (13), and Taiwan (5).
- *APPS* has 10 Senior Associate Editors, 7 Associate Editors, a Recruiting Editor, and 15 Reviewing Editors. Our current AE editorial board represents (in terms of current geographic location) the US, India, Korea, China, and Germany. For the current editorial board, see <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/21680450/homepage/editorialboard>.
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *APPS* was 49% in 2021 (61% in 2020, 52% in 2019, and 50% in 2018).
- *APPS* moved from a monthly to a bimonthly publication schedule in September 2021.
- In May 2022, we published the first bimonthly Virtual Issue (alternating months with regular journal issues), with the aim of drawing attention to previously published *APPS* articles. The first of these—“Methods for Plant Leaf Measurements” —published in May and was publicized on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook.
- Outreach in China:
 - *APPS* is now active on WeChat in China (through Wiley)
 - In late July, *APPS* AE Guanjing Hu will be participating in a panel

presentation for Chinese audiences organized by Wiley.

- **APPS Special Issues:** One of the key ways that we are working to increase visibility of *APPS* is with special issues. We are publishing three special issues in 2022 and have four planned for 2023.
 - 2022:
 - “Methodologies in Gametophyte Biology”—led by guest editors Sally Chambers, Jerald Pinson, and Susann Wicke; published March-April 2022
 - “Methods in Aquatic Botany”—led by guest editors Greg Pec and Julia Cherry; publishing July-August 2022
 - "Meeting the Challenge of Exceptional Plant Conservation: Technologies and Approaches"—led by guest editors Valerie Pence, Emily Coffey, and Megan Philpott; publishing September-October 2022
 - 2023:
 - “Emerging methods in botanical DNA/RNA extraction”—led by guest editors Richard Hodel, Ed McAssey, and Nora Mitchell
 - “Bioinformatics for Plant Biology”—led by guest editors María Fernanda Torres Jiménez and Diego Mauricio Riaño-Pachón
 - "Advances in Plant Imaging across Scales”—led by guest editors Gil Nelson and Pam Soltis
 - “Resilient botany: Innovation in the face of limited mobility and resources”—led by guest editors N. Ivalú Cacho, Gillian Dean, Greg Pec, and Alejandro Zuluaga Trochez

6) Outreach for Publications

- a. With more than 55,000 total followers on our social media platforms—35K Facebook fans, 17.1K Twitter followers, and 3K Instagram followers—we work hard to promote our authors’ research beyond publication and beyond the immediate BSA audience. We also encourage authors to use the tools at the Wiley site to promote their research via social media or direct e-mail.
- b. The BSA also recruited a **Student Social Media Liaison**—in 2021, **Teressa Alexander** (University of the West Indies, Trinidad) helped enhance the BSA’s social media reach by promoting the work and initiatives of BSA members.

Your Research Publications Team

Our BSA Director-At-Large for Publications is Dr. Emily Sessa (University of Florida), who has recently been re-elected for a second 3-year term.

The current *AJB* editorial staff and freelance editors include Ms. Amy McPherson (Director of Publications and Managing Editor for *AJB*) and Mr. Richard Hund (Project Manager for BSA and Production Editor for *AJB*); and Dr. Staci Nole-Wilson (Assistant Content Editor/Highlights Editor), Dr. Beth Hazen (Manuscript Editor), Mr. Richard Earles (Copy Editor), Dr. Larry Skog (Copy Editor), and Ms. Elaine Firestone (Copy Editor).

Ms. Beth Parada is the Managing Editor for *APPS*. She receives support with copyediting from Dr. Sarah Jose.

Dr. Mackenzie Taylor, Editor-in-Chief of the PSB, is assisted by Mr. Richard Hund and Ms. Johanne Stogran (Conference Director).

Respectfully submitted 11 July 2022

Amy McPherson and Emily Sessa

Director of Publications; Director-at-Large for Publications