



**BOTANY 2023, BSA Board and Council Report
July 2023**

The *American Journal of Botany* is in its 110th volume and *Applications in Plant Sciences* is in its 11th volume. Both are still proudly Society-owned journals, along with our sister publication, the *Plant Science Bulletin*, now in its 69th volume.

We are celebrating the 10-year anniversary of *APPS*. *APPS* was established as a stand-alone publication in 2013. To mark the occasion, Associate Editor Chris Krieg is hosting a symposium at Botany 2023: “From theory to practice: New innovations and their application in conservation biology,” and is organizing an associated special issue co-edited by Dr. Randall Long and Dr. Lauren Trotta for publication in 2024. There will also be a Virtual Issue and related publicity campaign featuring some of our most highly cited papers from the past 10 years.

Both *AJB* and *APPS* have been able to make great progress with our publishing partner, Wiley, even though a tension exists between the goals of a nonprofit scientific organization and a commercial publisher.

The BSA journals are competing for authors with traditional outlets such as *New Phytologist*, *Annals of Botany*, *Molecular Ecology Resources*, and *Plant Methods*, but also with more recently launched for-profit, born-digital Open Access journals, including those from *Frontiers* and *MDPI*, which offer fast turnarounds and amazing economies of scale. They publish a LOT of material and are assertive in attracting authors and special issues.

The Impact Factor for *AJB* is holding at 3.0, and the Impact Factor for *APPS* has reached 3.6!

The BSA journals are part of the larger scholarly publishing ecosystem, which is highly focused on an accelerating push toward Open Access; the challenges and opportunities of AI (artificial intelligence and large language models, or LLMs); and a commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility.

General Highlights:

- After months of negotiations, a new 5-year contract with Wiley was signed on 21 December 2022.
 - Wiley's business model is moving away from subscriptions and licensing to more fully Open Access; *AJB* is not ready to "flip" to fully OA.
 - The move to more OA has ramifications for the journals and for the Society—both for our mission (positive) and financially (tricky—the keys are to reduce costs and increase volume).
- The OSTP/Nelson Memo
 - In late August 2022, the US Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) announced a new policy directing all federal agencies to mandate "free immediate and equitable access to research articles funded by a federal agency and immediate free access to the underlying data."
 - This policy shift brings the US closer in line with open access movements such as [Plan S](#) (developed by a group of funders in Europe) and is expected to go into effect by 2026.
- AI and the release of ChatGPT, and other Large Language Models, has caused a lot of excitement and concern about research integrity going forward!
 - Data accessibility and metadata are more important than ever.
 - For a summary of Journal Policies, Considerations, and Literature on Use of LLMs (Large Language Models) and AI-tools in Peer Review see https://docs.google.com/document/d/11QChXXL5o-08I0PcPKW3B0Xz_HcK_MpBz-YnJOOqh_4/edit
 - A working group to discuss and develop policies for addressing AI in our publications will be developed this fall.
- Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
 - Open Calls for Associate Editors
 - To further the goals of DEI, we are holding an open call for botanists actively engaged in research to join the Editorial Boards of the [American Journal of Botany](#) and [Applications in Plant Sciences](#) as Associate Editors. Our aim is to increase the diversity of our editorial boards, and we strongly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups and regions to apply.
 - We are also issuing more *open calls* for special issues to expand our author and reviewer bases.
 - New decision workflow for APC waivers in *APPS*
 - Briana Gross, the Editor-in-Chief of *APPS*, and Amy McPherson used the [Root & Shoot](#) training as a mechanism to develop a standardized method for prioritizing and awarding APC waivers.
 - They incorporated feedback from the BSA Publications Committee, the Reviewing Editor Board, and the Early Career Advisory Board in the process of developing these guidelines.
 - A summary, slides, and full report can be found on the [Root & Shoot project page](#). This waiver system is also posted on the [APPS website](#).

- Publications Workshop in Mexico, potential collaborations in the future
 - In September 2022, BSA Past-President Michael Donoghue and Amy McPherson traveled to Puebla, Mexico, for the [XXII Congreso Mexicano de Botanica](#).
 - Michael gave a keynote scientific presentation on his research on *Viburnum* and introduced and participated in the BSA-sponsored Publications workshop offered for free to congresso participants.
 - BSA member Mark Olson and *AJB* Associate Editor **Julieta Rosell** presented on a winning formula for writing a scientific paper that will be reviewed and what an editor looks for in submissions to a journal. Amy McPherson presented on getting published and how to make sure your work is discoverable.
 - We are discussing whether to develop the workshop into an offering for Botany360, and Michael is working with the Mexican Botanical Society to develop a joint symposium for a future Botany meeting. A possible joint botany meeting for the two societies was also suggested for the future.
 - Participation in the “DEI and Open Access Workshop” in Washington, DC
 - In early February 2023, Amy McPherson attended the NSF-funded “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Open Access Publishing: A Workshop to Explore Barriers and Solutions,” organized by the Ecological Society of America and attended by a broad cross section of the scientific publishing community.
 - Attendees included Society publishers/authors/editors, commercial publishers, librarians, and consultants, and all were interested in how to make publishing Open, Equitable, and Sustainable; Society publishers were especially keen to explore the last point. A report will be written, and the conversations begun during the workshop will continue.
- 1) More Specific Publishing Highlights over the past year:
- a. **Journal Impact Factor for both journals:**
 - The Impact Factors were released by Clarivate on June 28, 2023. The **2022 IF for *AJB* is 3.0** (down slightly from **3.325** last year); **for *APPS* it is 3.6** (up from **2.577** last year).
 - 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](#) began September 1, 2022.
 - c. ***AJB* Reviews:** We launched our Reviews series in *AJB* in 2019. To date, we have published **16** Reviews. Proposals are welcome! Please send to reviews@botany.org.
 - d. ***AJB* Synthesis Papers and Prize:** We published 6 Synthesis papers, and Liming Cai’s paper was selected to receive the first \$2K Synthesis Prize:

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

- e. **Plant Science Bulletin:** The *PSB*, now in its 69th 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.

2) Metrics and other information for *AJB* and *APPS*

a. *AJB*:

- In 2022, *AJB* handled 451 new submissions for peer review, and published 149 articles. Manuscript submissions in 2022 were up 11% over 2021. Submissions were received from 43 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (164), China (57), Canada (25), India (25), Brazil (21), Mexico (14), Spain (13), Japan (11), and France (10).
- We have 53 Associate Editors from around the world: 45% of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 43% are women. See <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/15372197/homepage/editorialboard>.
- The average time to first decision in 2022 was 46.5 days; in 2021 it was 47.4 days. So far in 2023, this number is 34.9 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 39.5% in 2022 and 40% in 2021.
- Pam Diggle is in the fourth year of her second 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.
- In 2023, we welcomed new Associate Editors Johan P. Dahlgren (University of Southern Denmark), Aaron David (Archbold Biological Station), Julissa Roncal (Memorial University of Newfoundland), and Jeanne Tonnabel (University of Montpellier).
- Retirements from the Board include Jannice Friedman, Bill Hoffmann, Deb Kohn, Cate Macinnis-Ng, Georgiana May, Scott Russell, Mark Simmons, Kristina Stinson, and Andi Wolfe.
- **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 the Special Issue/Section editors and contributing authors for their hard work in making their Society journals as strong as possible.
 - 2022-2023:
 - November 2022: [Approaches to the Study of Quantitative Fitness-Related Traits](#)—led by Susan Mazer, Eugenio Larios (former ECAB-er), Ann Sakai, and Stephen Weller
 - June 2023: [Pollen as the Link Between Phenotype and Fitness](#)—led by Øystein H. Opedal, Rocío Pérez-Barrales,

Vinícius L. G. Brito, Nathan Muchhala, and Agnes Dellinger
[with Miquel Capó handling a companion paper in *APPS*]

b. **APPS:**

- In 2022, *APPS* handled 87 new submissions and published 45 articles. So far in 2023 volume 11 (through the May-June issue), *APPS* published 25 articles.
- Submissions were received from 25 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (40), China (7), and India (5).
- *APPS* has recently expanded its editorial board to include 8 Senior Associate Editors, 16 Associate Editors, a Recruiting Editor, and 13 Reviewing Editors. For the current editorial board, see <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/21680450/homepage/editorialboard>.
- In 2023, we welcomed new Associate Editors Katie Emelianova (University of Vienna, Austria), Maria Fernanda Torrez Jimenez (Vilnius University, Lithuania), Carole Gee (University of Bonn, Germany), Richie Hodel (Smithsonian Institution), Chris Krieg (University of Wisconsin-Madison), Ed McAssey (University of Connecticut), Nora Mitchell (University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire), and Luiza Teixeira-Costa (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium).
- Lisa Wallace retired from the Board.
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *APPS* was 51.8% in 2022 (49% in 2021).
- **APPS Special Issues:** One of the key ways we are working to increase visibility of *APPS* is with special issues. We published three special issues in 2022 and have four in the works 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; published May-June
 - “Bioinformatics for Plant Biology”—led by guest editors Katherine Emelianova, María Fernanda Torres Jiménez, and Diego Mauricio Riaño-Pachón; publishing July-August
 - “Advances in Plant Imaging across Scales”—led by AEs Gil Nelson and Pam Soltis and guest editors Pierre Bonnet and

- Luiza Teixeira-Costa; scheduled to publish September-October
- “Resilient botany: Innovation in the face of limited mobility and resources”—led by AE Greg Pec, and guest editors N. Ivalú Cacho, Gillian Dean, and Alejandro Zuluaga Trochez; expected to publish November-December 2023 or January-February 2024

3) Outreach for Publications

- a. With almost 60,000 total followers on our social media platforms—35K Facebook fans, 20.6K Twitter followers, and 4.3K Instagram followers (and dipping our toes into “Threads”)—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.

Your Publications Team

Our BSA Director-At-Large for Publications is Dr. Emily Sessa (New York Botanical Garden).

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,
Amy McPherson and Emily Sessa
Director of Publications; Director-at-Large for Publications