

**BOTANY 2019, BSA Board and Council Report**  
**Tucson, Arizona, July 2019**  
**Confidential**

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Last year, we were in the midst of our transition from self-publishing the *American Journal of Botany* and *Applications in Plant Sciences* to partnering with the commercial publisher Wiley & Sons. We are pleased to report that we have made a lot of progress over the past year, and our partnership continues to evolve.

- **Partnership with Wiley, significant achievements over the past year**
  - **Strategy Day for *AJB* and *APPS*, January 2019, Chicago:** goal of raising the profiles of the journals while supporting our mission and our members. Attendees included 4 representatives from Wiley and 13 from BSA (editors and publication-affiliated members).
    - **Key Takeaways and focus for the next 1-2 years: Impact Factors** need to increase to help attract new MSS and to raise stature of the journals; our international **Reach** needs to expand, through discoverability and outreach; and we need to **Adapt to Changing Markets**, which are moving toward more *open*.
      - ***AJB*: IF:** Launching *AJB* Reviews in 2019, with first papers to publish in 2020. [Effort led by Jannice Friedman, with help from Bill Hoffmann, Paul Kenrick, Cate Macinnis-Ng, Emily Sessa, and Nina Sletvold.] **Reach:** Author campaigns and Virtual Issues; **Adapting to Changing Markets:** working with Wiley's team by reaching out to Europe, Asia, and Latin America.
      - ***APPS*: IF:** Publishing special issues and decreasing the number of Primer Notes; **Reach:** expanding international authors, reviewers, and members of the editorial board; **Adapt to Changing Markets:** taking advantage of Wiley's read-and-publish and publish-and-read deals (i.e., [Projekt Deal](#)).
  - **Hub for BSA Publications (*AJB*, *APPS*, and *PSB*)** launched late November: <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/>. This offers promotional possibilities for the journals, and other activities of the BSA, including Botany Conference, BSA Awards, and PlantingScience.
  - **Outreach to Chinese Researchers:** Through Wiley, we can now translate abstracts into Simplified Chinese and promote content on WeChat (Chinese

messaging/social media), Weibo (similar to Twitter), and the Wiley blog on ScienceNet. Several authors in *AJB* have participated in this new opportunity, and we will implement this option for APPS authors as well.

- **Marketing**—We have a marketing plan for 2019 that builds on the ideas from Strategy Day and other Wiley initiatives.
  - Targeting authors through email campaigns (those publishing in competitor journals, in areas we'd like to expand or are already publishing; publish with us again).
  - eTOC alerts sent to all BSA members, and regular Wiley alerts working the way they are supposed to (people can sign up from Wiley Online Library).
  - Inclusion in World Environment Day, Biodiversity Day, and conference outreach at Wiley booths (Evolution, ASPB, ESA, British Ecological Society), including "Virtual Issues."
  - Improved Search Engine Optimization.
- **Plant Ontology**: We are in the process of implementing taxonomies for improved searching/discoverability on both *AJB*'s and APPS's journal sites. The primary taxonomy this is being based on is the Plant Ontology (<http://browser.planteome.org/amigo>), which is used by *New Phytologist*; here's a sample search filtered using the Plant Ontology: <https://nph.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/action/doSearch?AllField=organelle>.
- Wiley Executive Seminar in DC, attended by Amy McPherson and Beth Parada, discussing "**Society Publishing in an 'Open' World: What does success look like?**"; bringing together their Society partners to discuss how we can respond to the call from funders, researchers, librarians, and authors to be more open, for peer review to be more transparent, and for data to be more available. The challenge is not only to make information freely available, but to *translate* it to serve a broader public audience. The questions are what does it mean to be open, and how do we measure success?

See also the reports from Wiley, prepared by Gillian Greenough, Executive Editor, Life and Physical Sciences, Research & Society Services (our main contact at Wiley). Note that one report covers 2018, the other covers 2019 to-date (through the end of May for most items): [https://cms.botany.org/publications\\_2019.html](https://cms.botany.org/publications_2019.html)

### **JCR, Impact Factor, and Journal Information**

The Journal Citation Report was released by Clarivate on June 20, 2019. The 2018 IF = the number of citations received by the journal in 2018 to articles published in 2016 and 2017/number of citable items published in 2016-2017.

The Impact Factor for *AJB* is **2.841**, up from 2.788 last year.

The Impact Factor for APPS is **1.232**, up from 1.187 last year.

See the Wiley Report for more detailed information about the JCR.

#### **AJB:**

- In 2018, *AJB* handled 478 new submissions plus 402 revised manuscripts, and published 184 articles. The total number of pages published in 2018 was 2080. Submissions were received from 46 countries, with the highest number from the United States (172), China (75), Brazil (36), Spain (21), Japan (20), and Mexico (19).
- Twenty-eight percent (28%) of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 47% are women.
- The average time to first decision in 2018 was 35.2 days; 2017 was 34.8 days; and 2016 was 37.6 days. So far in 2019, this number is 27.3 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for *AJB* was 41% in 2018 (36% in 2017, 39% in 2016, and 39% in 2015).
- Pam Diggle is in the 4th year of her 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief, although we are eagerly anticipating a second 5-year term!
- In 2018/early 2019 we welcomed new Associate Editors Craig Brodersen (Yale University), Daisy Dent (University of Stirling, UK), Cate Macinnis-Ng (University of Auckland, New Zealand), and Simon Poppinga (University of Freiburg, Germany). For the current editorial board, see <https://bit.ly/2JeFkic>.
- Retirements from the Board include Jen Lau and David Spooner.

Special issues often raise the visibility of the journal and demonstrate the breadth of our content, as well as 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.

#### **AJB Special Issues**

- **“Wood: Biology of a Living Tissue,”** special section led by Jochen Schenk, February 2018
- **“Using and Navigating the Plant Tree of Life,”** led by Doug Soltis, Pam Soltis, Michael Moore, Emily Sessa, and Stephen Smith, March 2018: Also rolled into our Joint Virtual Issue, see below.
- **“The Tree of Death: The Role of Fossils in Resolving the Overall Pattern of Plant Phylogeny,”** led by Gar Rothwell, Ignacio Escapa, and Mihai Tomescu, August 2018

#### **2018: Joint Virtual Issue**

The first-ever publication of companion special issues in *AJB* and *Applications in Plant Sciences (APPS)*, focusing on the Tree of Life. Both issues were published in early 2018 and are combined in a special “Virtual Issue.” See <https://bit.ly/2M3Fxxn>.

#### **2020: Joint Cross-Publication Special issue—AJB, APPS, IJPS**

- Plant-Environment Interactions: Integrating across levels and scales—led by Gina Baucom, Sharon Kessler, Katy Heath (AJB); Sally Chambers (APPS); and Dan Chitwood and Selena Smith (IJPS).

#### **APPS:**

- In 2018, *APPS* handled 191 new submissions plus 161 revised manuscripts, and published 92 articles (47 of them non-Primer Notes). Submissions were received from 28 countries, with the highest number from China (79), the United States (39), Canada (9), Korea (6), and Brazil (5).
- Two (13%) of our Associate Editors are from a country other than the U.S., and 40% are women.
- The average time to first decision in 2018 was 30.7 days; 2017 was 29 days; 2016 was 34.4 days; 2015 was 38 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for *APPS* was 50% in 2018 (55% in 2017, 55% in 2016, 72% in 2015, and 68% in 2014).
- Theresa Culley is in year 1 of her third (3-year) term as Editor-in-Chief, and has agreed to continue into a third term.
- In 2018/early 2019 we welcomed new Associate Editors Ya Yang (University of Minnesota, Twin Cities); two former members of our Reviewing Editor board, Sally Chambers (Marie Selby Botanical Gardens) and Gregory Pec (University of Nebraska at Kearney); and Senthil-Kumar Muthappa (National Institute of Plant Genome Research, New Delhi). For the current editorial board, see <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/21680450/homepage/editorialboard>.
- One of our founding editors, Mitch Cruzan, stepped down from the editorial board in December 2018.
- There are eight editors on the 2018–2020 Reviewing Editor Board. These are all Ph.D. candidates, post-docs, and research associates.

### **APPS Special Issues:**

One of the key ways that we are working to increase visibility of *APPS* is with special issues. Two special issues were published in 2019, and three are scheduled for 2020.

#### **2019:**

- *Emerging Frontiers in Phenological Research*—led by Elizabeth Ellwood, Gil Nelson, and Katelin Pearson; published March 2019.
- *Methods in Belowground Botany*, led by Greg Pec and James Cahill: published April 2019.

#### **2020:**

- *Advances in Plant Phenomics: From Data and Algorithms to Biological Insights*—led by Sunil Kenchanmane Raju, James Schnable, and Addie Thompson.
- *Conducting Botanical Research with Limited Resources: Low-Cost Methods in the Plant Sciences*—led by Gillian Dean, Jasmyn Lynch, Elikana Kalumanga, Alice Nakhumicha Muriithi.
- *Machine Learning in Plant Biology*—led by Pam Soltis and Gil Nelson (based on proceedings of the symposium at Botany 2019, plus additional invited articles).

### **Outreach for Publications**

With nearly 30,000 Facebook fans (up from 25,150) and over 7000 Twitter followers (up from 5900), we work hard to promote our authors' research beyond publication and beyond the immediate BSA audience. When possible, we work with authors' institutional press offices and other outlets, including EurekAlert, to promote articles through press releases or other outlets. We promote each article via Twitter, but we also encourage authors to use the tools at the article site to promote their research via social media or direct e-mail. This combination of broad-based marketing and personal contact helps to enhance BSA membership and *AJB* author engagement. See also Wiley's marketing efforts in their report.

### **Your Research Publications Team**

Our BSA At-Large Director for Publications over the past 6 years has been Dr. Sean Graham (University of British Columbia). Thanks for all your support, Sean!! We are pleased to report that Dr. Emily Sessa (University of Florida) is the incoming BSA At-Large Director for Publications.

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. Sophia Balcomb (Assistant 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 screening incoming submissions from Editorial Assistant Mr. Ben Merritt, a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cincinnati. She receives support with outreach from Dr. Alex Taylor, who contributes press releases for EurekAlert.