

AJB Synthesis Prize Committee – November 16, 2022

Background: Synthesis papers and a Panel for Judging Them

At the 2018 BSA Board meeting, a motion put forward by Sean Graham (then Director-at-Large for Publications) was approved: that we initiate a monetary and prestigious prize for high-profile review papers that would be open to early-career scientists (within the first five years since receiving their PhD.). This is the [AJB Synthesis papers and Prize](#).

An ad hoc committee, chaired by Sean, developed criteria for the papers. EC researchers were invited to submit proposals; the organizing committee determined which applicants to invite to submit a manuscript based on the rubric below. All Synthesis papers accepted for publication within the first half of the following year will be considered for the \$2000 Prize.

We now have a maximum of 8 papers that need to be evaluated by a panel of researchers who have editorial experience and fair judgment. We ask for assistance in this selection.

Types of people who would be appropriate for the committee— How many/What type/ Who?

How many: The committee suggests **3** (a small, odd number so the decision does not end in a tie); maybe reach out to more people so we have a backup or two in case someone can't come through.

What type: Diverse set of people, re: demographics, range of career stages—1 early career (enthusiasm); 1 mid-career; and 1 late-career. Breadth of experience: More than just interest, but also broad botanical knowledge. Expertise—we're all most excited about papers in our own areas, but the panel needs to capture diversity of fields. Tap into people who have been editors of journals.

Who: Some suggestions of people involved in BSA publications are included, below.

Rubric for judging

Rubric: Potential areas for evaluation, based on rubric for the proposals: We suggest the panel start with this, but they have freedom to modify; just let the committee know how they changed the rubric so we can take this into account for future rounds.

1. The paper clearly provides a synthesis of a newly emerging area or a synthetic new perspective on an established area. The author provides clear justification on how this synthesis review will advance their field—and the proposed subject is of broad interest to readers of *AJB*.
2. The paper provides a personal perspective with a balanced overview of the field.
3. The paper is well written, clear, and engaging. The review struck me as novel and exciting and likely to attract attention.

Allow space for people on the panel to add comments/elaborations.

Timeline—name a panel and bring people up to speed within the next month or so—the prize will be announced/given out at next year's Botany meeting. We'd like to notify the awardee well ahead of the Botany meeting so they can attend the awards ceremony, either in person or virtually.

The Botanical Society of America and the *American Journal of Botany* are committed to inclusive science that reflects disciplinary, human, and geographic diversity. Submissions are welcomed from applicants of all ethnicities, races, colors, religions, sexes, sexual orientations, gender identities, socioeconomic status, national origins, disabilities, ages, or other individual status.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact ajb@botany.org.

Members of the *AJB* Synthesis Committee: Sean Graham (Chair), University of British Columbia; Pamela Diggle, University of Connecticut; Kasey Barton, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa; Lúcia Lohmann [replacing Emily Sessa], Universidade de São Paulo; and Amy McPherson, BSA

Potential Synthesis Prize Committee Members to approach

(let's discuss if the Board has issues with any of those on the list below or if there are additional suggestions)

Editors with experience and excellent reputations

Jarmila Pitterman, University of California Santa Cruz, US

Theresa Culley, University of Cincinnati, US

Lisa Pokorny, National Institute of Agricultural and Food Research and Technology, Spain

Dick Olmstead, University of Washington (ret.), US

Cate Macinnis-Ng, University of Auckland, New Zealand

Adrienne Nicotra, Australian National University, Australia

Nora Mitchell, University of Wisconsin - Eau Claire, US

BSA Strategic Planning Committee (Publications Group)

Joyce Onyenedum (nee Chery), Cornell University, US

Ignacio Escapa, Museo Paleontológico Egidio Feruglio, Argentina

Norm Wickett, Clemson University, US

Andy Stephenson, Penn State University (ret.), US

Jochen Schenk, California State University Fullerton, US