

**BOTANY 2018, BSA Publications (AJB and APPS) Report  
Rochester, Minnesota, July 2018  
Confidential**

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One year ago, the research publications of the Botanical Society of America were self-published: the *American Journal of Botany*, through HighWire Press's online platform, and *Applications in Plant Sciences* through BioOne's online platform. As of January 2018, *AJB* and *APPS* are published in partnership with Wiley & Sons.

- **Partnership with Wiley, significant achievements over the past year**
  - Contract negotiation and transition from self-publishing to partnering with Wiley: The contract was signed in July 2017, and the transition began in earnest in September. The contract terms are for 5 years.
  - Conversion of page design for *AJB* transferred to Wiley's production team; redesign of *APPS* pages and the design of a cover for the journal.
  - New home pages for both journals: *AJB* at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/15372197> (our original URL, [www.amjbot.org](http://www.amjbot.org), works, too); and *APPS* at <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/journal/21680450>. [Note: The journal home pages launched in January on Wiley's original platform, and then moved in mid March as the Wiley Online Library transitioned to the current Atypon platform. It was not exactly a *seamless* transition, and modifications and "fixes" continue apace.]
  - Entire back content of *AJB* was digitized and made available to members and subscribers; content prior to 1997 is still available through JSTOR or may be purchased by institutions through Wiley. Note: we sent hard copies of the journal to India for digitization, and the copies were returned to the BSA office.
  - All recent [from 1997 to the present] digital issues of *AJB* were brought over to Wiley from HighWire, all *APPS* issues from BioOne.
  - We are now able to participate in "Virtual Issues" through Wiley—across journals (our own and others) or collecting manuscripts on topics within individual journals. See, for example, the Tree of Life Joint Virtual Issue: <https://bit.ly/2M3Fxxn>.
  - New metrics are available to authors and the publications team (i.e., Altmetrics and Wiley Insights); these metrics include downloads, two-year

- citations, and income levels.
- Our outreach has greatly expanded through Wiley’s marketing efforts: e.g., targeted email campaigns, Biodiversity Day promotion, presence at other professional meetings, planned Virtual Issues with other journals, social media through Wiley’s Twitter accounts, etc.
  - A data-informed, deep dive analysis on ways to improve the Impact Factor for both journals will take place soon.
  - A full-day strategy meeting for BSA publications will be held within the next year.
  - A joint “hub” for *AJB* and APPS, with links to the *Plant Science Bulletin* and the BSA web pages, are in development for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of this year.
  - Content alerts from preprint servers, i.e., BioRxiv, to the Editors of *AJB* and *APPS* have been set to launch in August 2018.
  - Wiley Executive Seminar in DC, attended by Amy McPherson and Richard Hund, discussing “**What if? Imagining the Future of Research Communications**”; bringing together their Society partners to discuss the changing behavior of researchers, looking at how research will be funded in future, new technologies, creating more inclusive research communities, and discussing how we develop strategies for the long term.

There have been challenges along the way: the contract negotiations took longer than expected, and the transition has been difficult, especially with regards to production and the move from one online platform to not one, but two (!), new platforms in a short amount of time. Challenges arose largely due to the compressed amount of time to adapt to new systems, processes, and teams—both for us and at Wiley. Many of these difficulties have been resolved, but the publications team continues to work with our team at Wiley to make improvements.

See also the report from Wiley, prepared by Gillian Greenough, Executive Editor, Life and Physical Sciences, Research & Society Services (our main contact at Wiley).

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

The Journal Citation Report was released by Clarivate on June 26, 2018. The 2017 IF = the number of citations received by the journal in 2017 to articles published in 2015 and 2016/number of citable items published in 2015-2016, and does not reflect our transition to Wiley.

The Impact Factor for *AJB* is **2.788**, down from 3.050 last year.

The Impact Factor for APPS is **1.187**, down from 1.492 last year.

See the Wiley Report for more detailed information about the JCR. We will work with Wiley on a “deep dive” analysis to shed light on the results and develop a strategy for moving forward.

#### *AJB*:

- In 2017, *AJB* handled 520 new submissions plus 458 revised manuscripts, and published 174 articles. The total number of pages published in 2017 was 1929. Submissions were received from 49 countries, with the highest number from the United States (211), China (77), Brazil (27), Spain (23), Japan (19), and Mexico (16).
- Twenty-six percent (26%) of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 45% are women.
- The average time to first decision in 2017 was 34.8 days; 2016 was 37.6 days; 2015 was 38 days, and so far in 2018, this number is 26.5 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for *AJB* was 36% in 2017 (39% in 2016, 39% in 2015, and 30% in 2014).
- Pam Diggle is in the 4th year of her 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.
- In 2017/early 2018 we welcomed new Associate Editors Craig Brodersen (Yale University), Cate Macinnis-Ng (University of Auckland, New Zealand), Georgiana May (University of Minnesota-St. Paul), and Simon Poppinga (University of Freiburg, Germany). For the current editorial board, see <https://bit.ly/2JeFkic>.

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.

#### **Special Issues**

- **“Patterns and Processes of American Amphitropical Plant Disjunctions: New Insights,”** led by Michael Simpson, Matt Williams, and Leigh Johnson, November 2017
- **“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
- **“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**

We are excited to share 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>.

#### **APPS:**

- In 2017, *APPS* handled 192 new submissions plus 147 revised manuscripts, and published 84 articles (28 of them non-Primer Notes). Submissions were received from 27 countries, with the highest number from China (76), the United States (42), Brazil (8), Korea (7), Australia (5), and Germany (5).
- One (8%) of our Associate Editors is from a country other than the U.S., and 33% are

women.

- The average time to first decision in 2017 was 29 days; 2016 was 34.4 days; 2015 was 38 days, and so far in 2018, this number is 23.9 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for *APPS* was 55% in 2017 (55% in 2016, 72% in 2015, and 68% in 2014).
- Theresa Culley is in the 2nd year of her second (3-year) term as Editor-in-Chief.
- In 2017/early 2018 we welcomed new Associate Editors Seung-Chul Kim (Sungkyunkwan University, Korea), and Jill Wegrzyn (University of Connecticut). Ya Yang (University of Minnesota Twin Cities) will be joining the board in September 2018. For the current editorial board, see <https://bit.ly/2mbNMWo>.
- There are 11 editors on the 2016–2018 Reviewing Editor Board, and eight incoming editors on the 2018–2020 Reviewing Editor Board.

### Special Issues:

#### 2018:

- **Green Digitization: Online Botanical Collections Data Answering Real-World Questions**, led by Gil Nelson, Pam Soltis, and Shelley James, February 2018.
- **Methods for Exploring the Plant Tree of Life**, led by Jeremy Beaulieu, Matt Gitzendanner, Michael McKain, Norm Wickett, and Ya Yang, March 2018.

#### 2019:

- **Emerging Frontiers in Plant Phenology**, led by Gil Nelson, Katie Pearson, and Libby Ellwood: planned for January/February 2019.
- **Methods in Belowground Botany**, led by Greg Pec and James Cahill: planned for March/April 2019.

#### 2020:

- **Special issue focused on low-cost methods for researchers in developing countries and/or those with reduced access to equipment/funding (title TBD)**, led by Gillian Dean, Jasmyn Lynch [plus 1-2 TBD developing country editors]

### Outreach for Publications

With over 25,150 Facebook fans (up from 21,600) and over 5862 (up from 4700) Twitter followers, 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 EurekaAlert, 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. We feel this combination of broad-based marketing and personal contact enhances BSA membership and *AJB* author engagement. See also Wiley's marketing efforts in their report.

### Your Research Publications Team

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 graduate student at the University of Cincinnati. She receives support with outreach from Mr. Alex Taylor, who contributes press releases for EurekaAlert.