



## **BOTANY 2024, BSA Board and Council Report June 2024**

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The publications of the Botanical Society of America support the mission of the Society: to inspire and promote an inclusive global community committed to advancing fundamental knowledge and innovation in the botanical sciences for the benefit of people and the environment. The *American Journal of Botany (AJB)* is in its 111<sup>th</sup> volume and *Applications in Plant Sciences (APPS)* is in its 12<sup>th</sup> volume. Both are Society-owned journals, which partner with the commercial publisher Wiley; our sister publication, the *Plant Science Bulletin (PSB)*, now in its 70<sup>th</sup> volume, is published and owned by the Society.

It has been a busy year! We've held open calls and actively recruited editors for all our publications—and we 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, and Inclusion.

The new Impact Factors (IF) and Journal Citation Reports will be released by Clarivate in late June 2024. The current **(2022) IF for AJB is 3.0; for APPS it is 3.6.**

A separate report on the *Plant Science Bulletin* was prepared by the Editor-in-Chief, Dr. Mackenzie Taylor.

### **General Highlights from the Past Year:**

- **Search for new EiCs for AJB and PSB**
  - The BSA has been very fortunate to have Dr. Pamela Diggle as the Editor-in-Chief of the *American Journal of Botany* and Dr. Mackenzie Taylor as the Editor-in-Chief of the *Plant Science Bulletin* for almost 10 years! [The EiC term for both publications is 5 years, with the option to renew once.] Both Pam and Mackenzie will complete their second 5-year terms in December

2024.

- A search committee for Pam and Mackenzie's successors was formed early in 2024, and a call went out for nominations and applications in late February. Under the leadership of Dr. Emily Sessa, Director-at-Large for Publications, interviews were held in mid-May, and the committee made recommendations to the BSA President and Board in late May. The Board will vote on the recommendations and extend an offer to the successful candidates. The term for the new EIC will officially begin in January 2025.
- **APPS Recruiting Editor**
  - *Applications in Plant Sciences* held an open call for a new Recruiting Editor in October-November 2023 and received applications from a geographically diverse pool. After interviews and careful consideration, Tilotama (Tilo) Roy, of Missouri Western State University, was offered the position and began working with the journal in early February 2024.
- **Open Calls for Associate Editors**
  - In fall 2023, we held 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.
    - We aimed to add depth of expertise and improve diversity on our editorial boards and strongly encouraged applicants from underrepresented groups and regions to apply; by the end of September, we received 83 applications from over 20 countries.
    - *AJB* invited 13 and *APPS* invited 9 applicants to join our editorial boards as Associate Editors; other applicants were encouraged to become or remain engaged with the journals as authors and reviewers (and ECAB or committee members).
    - Most terms began in November, and the new AEs will be assessed after 1 year to determine whether the arrangement is working well for both parties.
- **Open Call for APPS Reviewing Editors**
  - *APPS* is actively recruiting postdocs and senior grad students to serve a two-year term as Reviewing Editors (REs); the term for the new board begins September 1, 2024: see <https://botany.org/open-call-for-apps-reviewing-editor-board.html>.
  - The Reviewing Editor Board provides a singular experience that helps developing scientists gain a behind-the-scenes understanding of the editorial and publication processes. During their term, REs are mentored by *APPS* Editorial Board members and receive hands-on experience in the editorial and peer-review processes.
- **Open Call for the Early Career Advisory Board**
  - An open call for the next round of the Early Career Advisory Board (ECAB) will be launched in fall of 2024: <https://botany.org/home/publications/ecab.html>.
  - The ECAB is a group of graduate students and postdocs who engage with the

editors of *AJB*, *APPS*, and the *PSB* in several ways, including recommending timely topics for review papers, attending editorial board meetings, and advising on issues of importance to the publications team.

- **[AJB Synthesis Papers and Prize:](#)**

- The Synthesis competition showcases early-career scientists and highlights their unique perspectives on a research area or question, summarizing recent work and providing new insights that advance the field. The Prize comes with a \$2000 award and recognition at the BSA Awards Ceremony at the Botany Conference.
- **Dr. Meghan Blumstein**, of Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is the winner of the **2024 [AJB Synthesis Prize](#)** for her article “[The drivers of intraspecific trait variation and their implications for future tree productivity and survival](#),” 2024, vol. 111: e16312.
- Dr. Blumstein was one of three early-career scientists whose [Synthesis papers](#) were published in *AJB* in this second round of the competition. Congratulations to all the authors!

- **Open Access**

- Open Access (OA) in scholarly publishing continues to expand, and Wiley has continued to negotiate Transitional/Transformational deals (TAs) with institutions, consortia, and countries around the world. These allow authors to publish their work in Wiley journals with their Article Publication Charges (APCs) covered by their institutions. We routinely direct our authors to take advantage of these deals when possible. See: <https://authorservices.wiley.com/author-resources/Journal-Authors/open-access/affiliation-policies-payments/institutional-funder-payments.html>
- In spring 2024, we asked Wiley to evaluate the APCs for our journals in the context of what similar journals are charging and to make recommendations to keep us competitive. The Board is considering adjustments to our APCs in light of this evaluation and financial projections for the Society.
- *AJB* is a hybrid journal (it receives funding from subscriptions, licensing, and Open Access APCs); *APPS* is fully Open Access. To ensure equitable access to publication, *APPS* has a limited number of waivers available; see the [APPS website](#).

- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Publications: Guidelines**

- AI and the release of ChatGPT, and other Large Language Models, have caused a lot of excitement and concern in the scientific community.
- An ad hoc committee, chaired by Dr. Theresa Culley, was formed in September 2023 to discuss the issues of how generative AI is changing the process of “doing science” and publishing—and what publication guidelines we should be providing for our community. The committee had three working groups, which came together to draft guidelines for authors and reviewers (their recommendations are included in the author instructions and reviewer acceptance letters for both journals); they are working jointly on an article for the *Plant Science Bulletin*.

- **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

- The journals, like the BSA, have a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. In Q3 of 2024, we will begin collecting self-reported demographic information on authors, reviewers, and editors following the recommendations of the [Joint Commitment for action on inclusion and diversity in publishing](#). This will allow us to measure our progress in DEI over time.
- We are also issuing more *open calls* for editors and special issues to expand our editor, author, and reviewer bases.

## 1) Metrics and other information for *AJB* and *APPS*

### a. *AJB*:

- In 2023, *AJB* handled 405 new submissions for peer review and published 151 articles. Manuscript submissions in 2023 were down 10% over 2022. As of the end of April 2024, manuscript submissions are up about 43% over last year at this time. In 2023, submissions were received from 50 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (147), China (58), Brazil (19), India (18), Mexico (16), and Japan (13).
- ***AJB* Reviews**: We launched our Reviews series in *AJB* in 2019. To date, we have published 21 Reviews. Proposals are welcome! Send to [reviews@botany.org](mailto:reviews@botany.org).
- We have 64 Associate Editors from around the world: 47% 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 overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 40.2% in 2023 and 39.5% in 2022.
- Pam Diggle is in the 5th year of her second 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.

### b. *APPS*:

- In 2023, *APPS* handled 115 new submissions and published 54 articles. Manuscript submissions in 2023 were up 37.5% over 2022. As of the end of April 2024, submissions are down 23.81% over this time last year due to manuscript deadlines for special issues. In 2023, submissions were received from 31 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (54), India (10), and China (8).
- *APPS* has recently expanded its editorial board to include 7 Senior Associate Editors, 27 Associate Editors, a Recruiting Editor, and 12 Reviewing Editors. For the current editorial board, see <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/21680450/homepage/editorialboard>.
- The overall acceptance rate for articles in *APPS* was 48.1% in 2023 (51.8% in 2022).
- Briana Gross is in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of her first 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.

c. **Special Issues for *AJB* and *APPS*:**

- Special issues raise the visibility of a journal and demonstrate the breadth of content, 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.
  - **2024:**
    - ***APPS* March-April:** “Resilient botany: Innovation in the face of limited mobility and resources”—led by Greg Pec, N. Ivalú Cacho, Gillian Dean, and Alejandro Zuluaga Trochez
    - ***APPS* May-June:** “From theory to practice: New innovations and their application in conservation biology”—led by Chris Krieg, Randall Long, and Carrie Tribble
    - ***AJB* and *APPS* July-August:** “Twice as nice: New techniques and discoveries in polyploid biology”—joint special issue. The *AJB* issue is led by Mike Barker, Kelsey Glennon, and Yuannian Jiao; the *APPS* issue is led by Michael McKain, Ya Yang, and Agnieszka Golicz
    - ***AJB* (in the works):** “Plant-microbe interactions in tropical and subtropical ecosystems: The role of plant-microbe interactions in plant community dynamics of tropical and subtropical ecosystems”—led by Meghna Krishnadas, Gaurav Kandlikar, and Adriana Corrales
  - **2025/2026:**
    - ***AJB*:** “Understanding novel fire regimes using plant trait-based approaches”—led by Kasey Barton, Stephanie Yelenik, Dylan Schwilk, Imma Oliveras, Tim Curran, Pedro Jaureguiberry, and Alessandra Fidelis
    - ***APPS*:** “Advances in analyzing and engineering plant metabolic diversity”—led by Stacey DeWitt Smith, Gaurav Moghe, Federico Roda Fornaguera, Kira Tiedge
    - ***AJB*:** “Plant Resilience and Conservation in a Changing Climate” [tentative title]—led by Jeremy Rentsch, Elizabeth Stacy, Caitlin MacKenzie, and Jennifer Boyd
    - ***APPS*:** “Quantifying plant and fungal dispersal: New methods from multiple disciplines”—led by Sally Chamber, Irene Cobo, Simon Noelle Beckman, and Lauren Sullivan
    - ***APPS*:** “Branching out: Resolving plant evolution through phylogenetic networks”—led by Claudia Solis Lemus and George Tiley

**2) Outreach for Publications**

- a. With almost 63,500 total followers on our social media platforms—36K Facebook fans, 22.3K Twitter/X followers, 5.3K Instagram followers, and 425

BlueSky 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. We also participate in numerous marketing campaigns through BSA and Wiley.

### **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 (Managing Editor for *PSB* 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