

Proposal for a BSA Publications Podcast

The BSA Publications Team has an opportunity to launch a podcast tied to articles in its research journals and the *Plant Science Bulletin*.

Shiran Ben-Zeev, who recently served as the social media coordinator for BSA's physiology/ecophysiology section, approached Jessica Savage with his idea of launching a podcast that would cover current botanical research; Jessica made introductions via email with the Publications Team.

Publications staff Amy McPherson and Richard Hund spoke with Shiran in late July and were impressed with his enthusiasm and commitment to the project. Shiran had a successful podcast at the Hebrew University in Israel, and he's keen to start one here in the States while he is a postdoc at Penn State (currently in the Lasky Lab but moving to a new lab this month [September]).

Podcast concept and theme

The BSA podcast will feature stand-alone episodes and topical multi-episode seasons consisting of interviews with researchers who present at BSA conferences or publish in the *American Journal of Botany*, *Applications in Plant Sciences*, and the *Plant Science Bulletin*. We anticipate six-episode "series/seasons" each year.

The interviews, conducted by Shiran, are meant to be conversational and accessible to a broad audience—those who are curious but not experts in the topics discussed; we're also recommending that the episodes focus on stories of the research and what happened behind the scenes (what motivated the question, what worked/didn't work/what they would do differently if they could). While the questions and style will evolve, most episodes will include a:

1. Researcher introduction.
2. Research general context.
3. Specific questions target and brief experimental setup.
4. Results and implications for future research and society betterment.

Purpose and audience

Make scientific research and findings more visible and understandable for the general public in bite-size segments of roughly 20 minutes, from actual researchers through guided conversation with another scientist. And make it fun to listen to!

The podcast would apply to several strategies in the BSA's Strategic Plan:

- 5.2 Attract more researchers from a wide range of plant-related areas (e.g., conservation, forestry, horticulture, plant-microbe interactions) to our publications and conferences.
- 6.1 Promote the science of botany as foundational to global restoration and actively promote interdisciplinary efforts related to repair earth systems.
- 6.2. Increase the promotion of botany and its importance as a professional scientific discipline to confront public and professional misperceptions.
- 7.1 Establish the BSA as a prominent leader on current issues related to our field and the mission of the society.
- 8.3 Create new mechanisms for the recognition of scholarly excellence that promote our members beyond the society.
- 10.3 Highlight BSA members' expertise and the centrality of plants in solving pressing environmental and societal problems (climate change, biodiversity loss, benefits of nature to mental and physical health, etc.)

10.4 Engage with the public to promote curiosity and appreciation for plants, nature, and science.

The Publications Committee (chair: Emily Sessa) discussed the idea during its meeting in August and expressed general support for the podcast and offered suggestions for making it attractive to a broad audience. They also raised questions about cost, discoverability, and workload for BSA staff. As part of the process, we will have an agreement with Shiran; we will also ask guests of the podcast to sign consent forms. Before episodes are posted, they will be reviewed by staff and potentially by volunteers from the Early Career Advisory Board and/or other committees (e.g., Publications, DEI).

Amy and Rich then pursued more information from others who are running similar podcasts (Amy posted in the Council of Science Editors listserv); they also met with Sarah E. Wright from the American Veterinary Medical Association, who has run their Veterinary Vertex podcast: <https://jav.ma/podcast> for 2 years. She offered advice on best practices, expectations, and provided a prep guide and sample interview questions. Amy and Rich will also plan to meet with several other podcasters for their suggestions.

Potential Costs

- Time—especially at the beginning (and ongoing for Shiran)
- A service like Buzzsprout would allow us to provide the podcast on multiple platforms (Apple Podcast, Google Podcast, Spotify, etc.) for \$20-\$25 per month.
- Although not critical, we may want to invest \$125 in a decent microphone / filter for the interviewer (Shiran) for better audio quality.