

# Botany

American Journal of

## **BOTANY 2020, *AJB* Reports for Associate Editors Background Information for the Annual Meeting on Zoom Wednesday, 22 July 2020 Confidential for the Editorial Board**

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The past year has been interesting, to say the least. For publications, we experienced several highlights, as well as having to deal with the “lowlight” that is the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Highlights** over the past year:

- **Increased Journal Impact Factor for both journals:** Although the IF is not the only measure of quality for a journal, and everyone recognizes it is not a *perfect* metric, it is still a positive indicator for any journal when the IF increases. The **2019 IF for *AJB* is 3.038** (up from 2.841 last year) **and for *APPS* it is 1.591** (up from 1.232 last year).
- **Establishing an Early-Career Advisory Board and Modifying the *APPS* Reviewing Board:**
  - The Early-Career Advisory Board (ECAB) is up and running, thanks to the leadership of our Director-at-Large for Publications, Emily Sessa. The ECAB members help with social media; recommend papers from preprint servers for *AJB* and *APPS*; suggest topics and authors for Reviews and special issues; and potentially edit Wikipedia articles to cite *AJB/APPS* articles as appropriate. [Check out one of the cool “Twitter Takeovers” in late March by Rocío Deanna: # [Fruit](#) ; <https://bit.ly/3h9avNy>.] Current members of the ECAB are listed here: <https://cms.botany.org/home/publications/ecab.html>.
  - [APPS Reviewing Editor Board](#): In 2020, *APPS* expanded the remit for its Reviewing Editor Board to provide new opportunities for post-doc and senior grad student researchers who are interested in gaining a behind-the-scenes understanding of the editorial and publication processes.
- **[AJB Reviews](#):** We launched the new Reviews series for *AJB* in late 2019, anticipating that publishing good, timely Reviews will contribute to botanical scholarship and also help garner citations for the journal. The Reviews team, led by Jannice Friedman, with support from Emily Sessa, Pam Diggle, and Amy

McPherson, is actively recruiting contributors. To date, we have received six submissions, with several additional contributions expected.

- **Outreach and Collaboration:** In support of the BSA's commitment to greater international outreach and collaboration, the BSA publications group and Wiley hosted a free author workshop at the XXI Congreso Mexicano de Botánica on October 23, 2019, in Aguascalientes, Mexico. Amy McPherson (BSA/*AJB*), Gillian Greenough (Wiley), Heather Cacanindin (BSA), and Marcelo Pace (UNAM) represented the society and our publications.

**Lowlight:** The COVID-19 Pandemic (but even that resulted in a few positives)

- Contingency Plans
  - Staff at the BSA headquarters in St. Louis, including the publications team, have been working from home since mid-March. This is working well, and we will continue to WFH for the foreseeable future.
  - In late March, Wiley contacted its publishing partners with their plans for adapting to the pandemic and stay-at-home orders worldwide: flexible work schedules and locations in their US and non-US locations; temporary halt to printing (for a brief period); recommendation to us to publish smaller issues (just in case) and to consider simplified page layout templates; and to anticipate potential delays in production because we just "didn't know" what was going to happen.
  - In fact, while there were a few slowdowns initially, it has mostly been business-as-usual with little disruption.
  - Wiley recommended that we also develop a written contingency plan for the editorial office and our editors. They provided a template for accomplishing this, which we will embark on this fall.
- Postponed Strategy Day:
  - Originally, our Wiley-BSA publications strategy day was scheduled for April 25, 2020. This in-person meeting was canceled because of the pandemic but will be reconsidered for later this year, potentially in virtual format.

### **Open Access and Plan S**

The plans for more "open" science continue, but the pace of [Plan S](#) has slowed down a little, and some of the deadlines for compliance have been extended. *APPS* is an OA journal, and *AJB* is covered because we are partnering with Wiley, which is engaging in several transformative deals.

See also the reports 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 29, 2020.

The 2019 Impact Factor for *AJB* is **3.038**, up from **2.841** last year.

[\*The 2019 IF = the number of citations received by the journal in 2019 to articles

published in 2017 and 2018/number of citable items published in 2017-2018.]  
See the Wiley Report for more detailed information about the JCR.

**AJB:**

- In 2019, *AJB* handled 451 new submissions for peer review plus 375 revised manuscripts, and published 151 articles. The total number of pages published in 2019 was 1637. Submissions were received from 40 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (170), China (85), Brazil (33), Mexico (21), Canada (20), Japan (17), Spain (12), and the Czech Republic (10).
- We have 56 Associate Editors from around the world: 34% of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 46% are women.
- The average time to first decision in 2019 was 34.6 days; 2018 was 35.2 days; and 2017 was 34.8 days. So far in 2020, this number is 33 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 38% in 2019 (41.5% in 2018, and 38% in 2017).
- Pam Diggle is in the first year of her second 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.
- In late 2019/early 2020 we welcomed new Associate Editors Mike Barker (The University of Arizona), Anna Bucharová (University of Münster, Germany), Anne-Laure Decombiex (UMR Botanique et Bioinformatique de l'Architecture des Plantes [AMAP], Montpellier, France), Ignacio Escapa (CONICET, Museo Paleontológico Egidio Feruglio [MEF], Argentina), and Juan Fornoni (Instituto de Ecología, UNAM, Mexico). For the current editorial board, see <https://bit.ly/3j8oBAp>.
- Retirements from the Board include Oliver Bossdorf, Rubén Cúneo, Erika Edwards, Chris Ivey, and Don Les.

**Special Issues**

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

**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*). The February issues of *AJB* and *APPS* (partial issue) were devoted to this topic, and a Virtual Issue pulling together contributions from *AJB* and *APPS* was published on our hub page. Cross-publication promotion on social media included all three journals.

**2021:**

- [Life Without Water](#)—led by Karolina Heyduk, Michael McKain, and Olwen Grace.
- [Exploring the Potential of Angiosperms353, a Universal Toolkit for Flowering Plant Phylogenomics](#)—a joint special issue with *APPS*; the *AJB* effort is led by Bill Baker,

Felix Forest, Lisa Pokorny, Steven Dodsworth, Jennifer Tate, and Sean Graham.

### **OTNOTs**

A feature that we started in 2015 and that continues to draw attention is the essay series “On the Nature of Things” (or OTNOT). These brief essays succinctly summarize a current issue by providing background and seminal references, and insight into the current state of thought, technology, or understanding. They discuss what might be on the horizon for this issue, question, or area of research.

### **Open Access**

The trend, we are told, is for science to be more Open. In *AJB*, all articles are set as free to view one year after publication. In addition, as a marketing tool, Wiley frees up all the articles in the January issues of their journals. OTNOTs are immediately freely available.

Out of 151 articles published in 2019, 28 articles (19%) were set as free on publication and 15 (10%) were paid Open Access by authors. This compares with 184 articles in 2018, in which 31 articles (17%) were set as free and 40 (22%) were paid OA. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of the papers from the **Tree of Life special issue** were author-paid OA.

So far through June 2020, we have published 81 articles: 15 of these were paid Open Access (18.5% of the total); 11 were freed up by us.

Current OA charges are \$750 for BSA members, or \$1500 for non-members. This is unchanged over the previous year.

### **Outreach for Publications**

With 33,995 Facebook fans (up from 30,000), 9430 Twitter followers (up from 7000), and 1351 Instagram followers (up from a handful), we work hard to promote our authors’ research beyond publication and beyond the immediate BSA audience. 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.

As approved by the Board in July 2019, the BSA recruited two **Student Social Media Liaisons**—Taran Lichtenberger (Northwestern University/Chicago Botanic Garden) and Jared Meek (Columbia University)—to enhance the BSA’s social media reach, to help promote authors and their work published in BSA journals, and to promote the work and initiatives of BSA members.

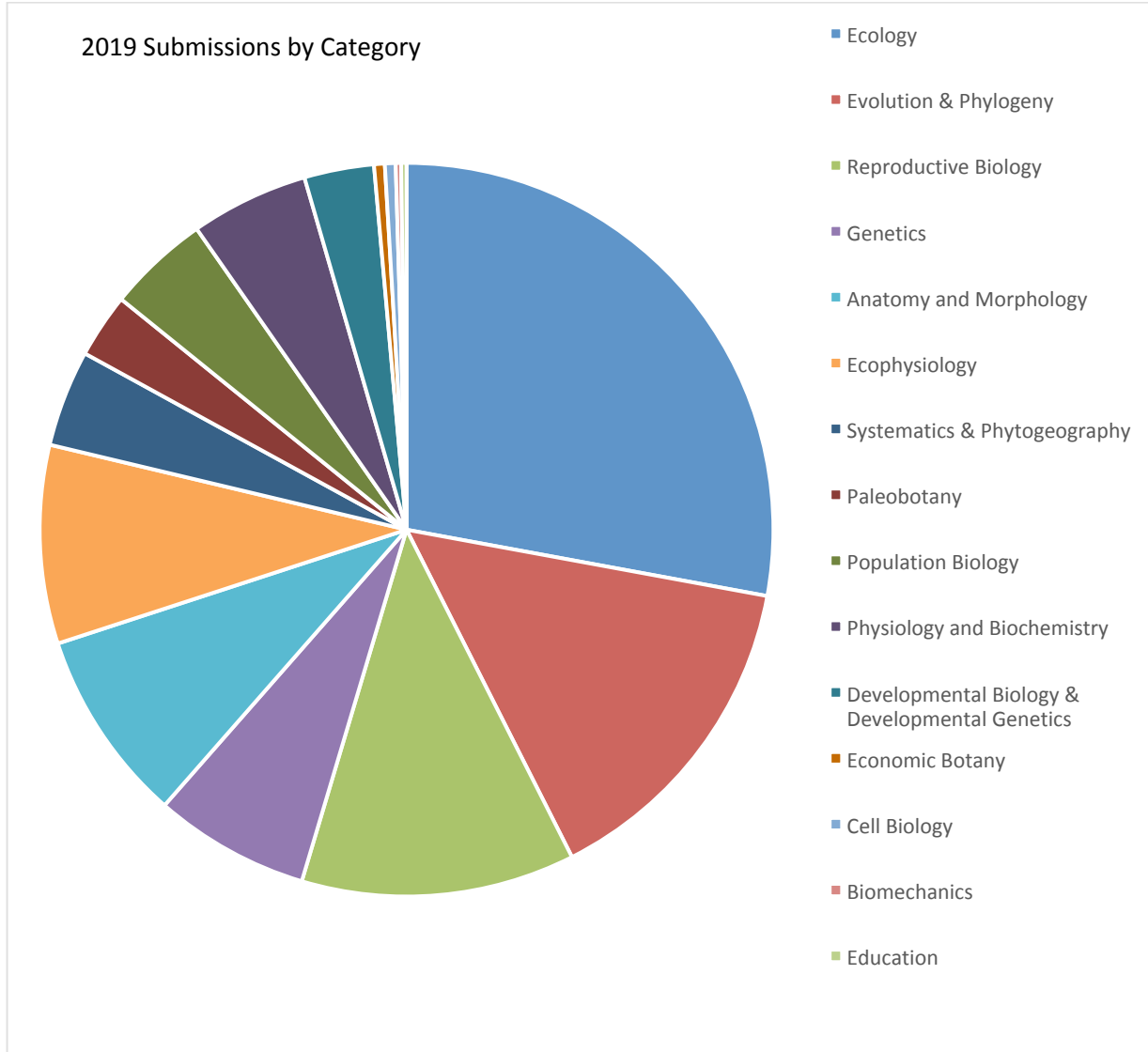
## Journal Metrics

Year	No. of Subs.	Sub. to Ed. (days)	EIC to AE	Sub. to Rev. Inv.	Rev. resp. to inv.	Rev. complete after agreeing to review	Avg. time to 1st dec. (based on all dec. made in period)
2017	520	0.7	4.6	9	2.2	16.7	34.8
2018	478	0.8	5.6	10.3	2.3	17.1	35.2
2019	451	1	1.9	10.6	2.1	16.1	34.6

1st Decision	RWR	RWR	Full Review	Full Review
	% of Decisions	Average days	% of Decisions	Average Days
2017	33.2	4.9	66.7	48.2
2018	34.6	5.5	65.4	49.9
2019	35.4	5.5	64.6	34.1

Author Revision	Days for Rev 1	Days for Rev 2
2017	24.8	7.1
2018	25.3	8.9
2019	26.1	6.8

We no longer publish Categories in the Table of Contents. Authors are given the opportunity to select a category during the submission process, however, and this does provide a snapshot of the types of papers we're receiving. The chart legend corresponds to the wedges in a clockwise manner.



Section/Category	2020*	2019	2018	2017
Ecology	81	118	114	120
Evolution & Phylogeny	38	62	64	94
Reproductive Biology	21	51	41	44
Genetics	20	29	31	28
Anatomy and Morphology	19	36	43	49
Ecophysiology	19	37	21	27
Systematics & Phytogeography	17	18	23	52
Paleobotany	16	12	16	18
Population Biology	11	19	21	21
Physiology and Biochemistry	8	22	30	20
Developmental Biology & Developmental Genetics	4	13	13	7
Economic Botany	4	2	4	4
Cell Biology	3	2	8	1
Biomechanics	2	1	6	6
Education	0	1	1	1
	263	423	436	492

\*Submissions through 7/16/20

The table above includes numbers, not percentages. These are submitted manuscripts, not published papers, and not all submissions list a category.

No. of Submissions by Country, based on Corresponding Author	2019	2018	2017
UNITED STATES	170	172	207
CHINA	85	75	66
BRAZIL	33	36	26
MEXICO	21	19	16
CANADA	20	18	15
JAPAN	17	20	18
SPAIN	12	20	22
CZECH REPUBLIC	10	4	1
UNITED KINGDOM	9	2	8
FRANCE	8	10	6
PAKISTAN	8	2	3
INDIA	6	14	14
NIGERIA	6	1	3
GERMANY	5	9	11
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	5	4	3
CHILE	4	5	8
ARGENTINA	3	6	9
AUSTRALIA	3	5	5
ISRAEL	3	1	1
NEW ZEALAND	3	1	1
POLAND	3	4	1

SWEDEN	3	2	5
ITALY	2	2	4
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	2	2	3
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	2	1	2
SLOVAKIA	2	0	2
SWITZERLAND	2	4	0
AUSTRIA	1	0	2
AZERBAIJAN	1	0	0
CHRISTMAS ISLAND	1	0	0
COLOMBIA	1	4	0
DJIBOUTI	1	0	0
ECUADOR	1	1	0
LUXEMBOURG	1	0	0
MOROCCO	1	1	0
NORWAY	1	2	4
PORTUGAL	1	1	1
SOUTH AFRICA	1	5	1
TAIWAN	1	4	3
TURKEY	1	1	1
ALGERIA	0	1	0
BANGLADESH	0	1	0
BELGIUM	0	0	3
COSTA RICA	0	1	1
DENMARK	0	2	0
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	0	0	0
EGYPT	0	1	3
ETHIOPIA	0	1	4
FRENCH GUIANA	0	1	0
GABON	0	0	1
GREECE	0	0	1
KAZAKHSTAN	0	0	1
KOREA, DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF	0	1	1
LITHUANIA	0	0	0
NETHERLANDS	0	2	2
QATAR	0	0	0
SAUDI ARABIA	0	1	4
SERBIA	0	0	1
SINGAPORE	0	2	0
SRI LANKA	0	0	1
SUDAN	0	0	1
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	0	1	0
THAILAND	0	0	1
TUNISIA	0	1	2



UGANDA	0	0	0
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	0	0	2
UNKNOWN	0	0	18
	460	474	519

### Total number of pages published

January – June 2020	Total: 950
2019	Total: 1637
2018	Total: 2080
2017	Total: 1929

See the Wiley report for current production numbers.

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. Marian Chau (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).

**Appendix 1. *AJB* Impact Factor and ranking among Plant Science Journals, 2006–2018.**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Impact Factor</b>	<b>Rank</b>
2019	3.038	48/234
2018	2.841	53/228
2017	2.788	49/222
2016	3.050	39/211
2015	2.811	43/209
2014	2.603	50/200
2013	2.463	52/196
2012	2.586	47/194
2011	2.664	47/190
2010	3.052	27/187
2009	2.684	29/172
2008	2.642	27/155
2007	2.512	26
2006	2.969	16

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Full Journal Title</b>	<b>Total Cites</b>	<b>Journal Impact Factor</b>	<b>Eigenfactor Score</b>
1	Annual Review of Plant Biology	20,410	19.540	0.015090
2	TRENDS IN PLANT SCIENCE	23,935	14.416	0.025050
3	Nature Plants	5,923	13.256	0.027680
4	Annual Review of Phytopathology	8,104	12.623	0.007610
5	Molecular Plant	11,432	12.084	0.028530
6	PLANT CELL	54,927	9.618	0.048640
7	NEW PHYTOLOGIST	57,929	8.512	0.081910
8	CURRENT OPINION IN PLANT BIOLOGY	14,836	8.356	0.022670
9	PLANT BIOTECHNOLOGY JOURNAL	9,587	8.154	0.018450
10	PLANT PHYSIOLOGY	87,261	6.902	0.071680
11	PLANT CELL AND ENVIRONMENT	25,833	6.362	0.025590
12	CRITICAL REVIEWS IN PLANT SCIENCES	3,797	6.235	0.002200
13	PLANT JOURNAL	46,465	6.141	0.042290
14	JOURNAL OF EXPERIMENTAL BOTANY	50,988	5.908	0.056220
15	JOURNAL OF ECOLOGY	20,912	5.762	0.021330
16	Horticulture Research	1,360	5.404	0.003360
17	Journal of Integrative Plant Biology	5,005	4.885	0.006830
18	THEORETICAL AND APPLIED GENETICS	21,335	4.439	0.014120
19	Frontiers in Plant Science	47,627	4.402	0.118290
20	PRESLIA	1,113	4.357	0.001220
21	MOLECULAR PLANT PATHOLOGY	6,800	4.326	0.009250

22	PHYTOCHEMISTRY REVIEWS	3,156	4.298	0.003120
23	PHYTOMEDICINE	11,272	4.268	0.008460
24	PHYSIOLOGIA PLANTARUM	15,874	4.148	0.007200
25	PLANT AND CELL PHYSIOLOGY	17,763	4.062	0.018640
26	ENVIRONMENTAL AND EXPERIMENTAL BOTANY	11,971	4.027	0.010400
27	ANNALS OF BOTANY	23,099	4.005	0.016520
28	Plant Reproduction	549	3.957	0.001490
29	Plant Genome	1,787	3.847	0.003920
30	PLANT CELL REPORTS	9,252	3.825	0.008510
31	PLANT DISEASE	16,909	3.809	0.012000
32	JOURNAL OF NATURAL PRODUCTS	27,285	3.779	0.019050
33	PLANT PHYSIOLOGY AND BIOCHEMISTRY	14,505	3.720	0.015890
34	MOLECULAR PLANT- MICROBE INTERACTIONS	11,599	3.696	0.008300
35	JOURNAL OF ETHNOPHARMACOLOGY	37,198	3.690	0.023420
36	Plant Methods	3,120	3.610	0.005270
37	PLANT SCIENCE	16,280	3.591	0.014260
38	BMC PLANT BIOLOGY	13,905	3.497	0.021750
39	GM Crops & Food- Biotechnology in Agriculture and the Food Chain	369	3.444	0.000780
40	Crop Journal	1,255	3.395	0.003170
41	PLANTA	20,329	3.390	0.010980
42	PLANT MOLECULAR BIOLOGY	15,159	3.302	0.008710

43	PLANT AND SOIL	36,369	3.299	0.020730
44	PHYTOPATHOLOGY	15,809	3.234	0.008820
45	PHOTOSYNTHESIS RESEARCH	7,354	3.216	0.006960
46	Rice Science	966	3.162	0.001130
47	PHYTOCHEMISTRY	31,929	3.044	0.010380
48	AMERICAN JOURNAL OF BOTANY	17,165	3.038	0.012150
49	JOURNAL OF PLANT PHYSIOLOGY	13,673	3.013	0.010410
50	Journal of Plant Interactions	1,350	2.992	0.001910

**Notes:**

*Plant Cell* increased to 9.618, up from 8.631 (surpassing its previous high of 9.575 in 2013).

*New Phytologist* increased to 8.512, up from 7.299.

*Annals of Botany* increased to 4.005, up from 3.454. Its sister journal, *AoB Plants*, went to 2.182, down from 2.270.

*International Journal of Plant Sciences* went to 1.174, down from 1.425.