

**BOTANY 2024, *AJB* Reports for Associate Editors
Background Information for the
Annual Meeting on Zoom
Tuesday, 14 May 2024
Confidential for the Editorial Board**

The *American Journal of Botany* is in its 111th volume and is still proudly a Society-owned journal. We partner with the commercial publisher, Wiley, and our current contract runs through 2027.

The BSA journals 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, Inclusion, and Accessibility. There have also been several years of consolidation in the industry, resulting in fewer self-published Society journals.

The latest Impact Factor numbers will be released in June 2024. Our Impact Factor is currently at 3, and the Impact Factor for our sister journal, *Applications in Plant Sciences*, is 3.6.

Some Highlights:

- **Search for new EiC for *AJB***
 - From Amy: It has been the journal's great fortune to have Pam Diggle as the Editor-in-Chief of the *American Journal of Botany* for almost 10 years! [The EiC term is 5 years, with the option to renew once.] Pam will complete her second 5-year term in December 2024.
 - A search committee was formed, and a call went out for nominations and applications in late February. Interviews will be held in mid-May, and the committee will make a recommendation to the Board in late May or early June. The term for the new EiC will officially begin in January 2025.
- **Open Access**
 - As detailed in Wiley's Publisher Report, OA continues to expand, and Wiley continues to negotiate Transitional/Transformational deals (TAs) with institutions, consortia, and countries around the world. This allows 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 late August 2022, the US Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) announced a new policy directing all federal agencies to mandate “free immediate and equitable access to research articles funded by a federal agency and immediate free access to the underlying data.” This has, so far, resulted in additional emphasis on making sure our articles, metadata, and supporting information are machine readable. No additional funding from government agencies has been specifically allocated to cover APCs.
- This policy shift brings the US closer in line with open access movements such as [Plan S](#) (developed by a group of funders in Europe) and is expected to go into effect by 2026.
- In spring 2024, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced a “policy refresh” to their stance on funding Open Access publications. Beginning in 2025, they will not cover payment of any APCs; rather, any research they fund must be made openly available as a preprint, with no embargo, under a CC BY license. The authors may choose to publish their work in a journal. See <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2024/04/11/bmgf-gates-policy-refresh-what-would-success-look-like/> (and other posts).
- If you haven’t seen this already, here is another interesting discussion of where we stand with OA, and scholarly publishing in general, from a researcher’s perspective: <https://dynamicecology.wordpress.com/2024/04/29/the-state-of-academic-publishing-in-3-graphs-5-trends-and-4-thoughts/>.
- **Artificial Intelligence in Publishing:** AI and the release of ChatGPT, and other Large Language Models, has generated a lot of excitement and concern.
 - The excitement is around how we can make our work more impactful and efficient.
 - The concern is around research integrity.
 - An ad hoc committee, chaired by 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 included 3 working groups, who all came together to complete drafts of guidelines for authors and reviewers: see <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/15372197/homepage/forauthors>.
 - Reviewer guidelines emphasize that we highly value the professional expertise of peer reviewers and do not allow AI, including large language models or generative AI such as ChatGPT, in the reviewing process. Uploading any author-submitted text, including the manuscript, abstract, or title, into an AI platform is considered a violation of confidentiality.
 - The committee is working jointly on an article for the *Plant Science Bulletin*.

- **The Journal Citation Report (JCR)** will be released by Clarivate in June 2024.
- **AJB Reviews and the AJB Synthesis Series and Prize**
 - We've published 21 Reviews so far:
[https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1537-2197.Reviews](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)1537-2197.Reviews)
 - We published 9 Synthesis papers so far; Liming Cai's paper was selected to receive the first Synthesis Prize:
[https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1537-2197.synthesis](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)1537-2197.synthesis)
 - The second round of judging is underway, and the winner will be announced in the coming weeks.
- **BSA Journals and our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility**
 - Early Career Advisory Board (ECAB)
 - Abstracts in languages in addition to English (could be encouraged more)
 - Resources for finding reviewers
 - Open Call for Associate Editors
 - More to come; see <https://c4disc.pubpub.org/toolkit-editors-and-publishers>
- **Journal-specific Highlights and Stats:** see the Appendix and Wiley's Publisher Report.

AJB Reviews and launch of the AJB Synthesis Series and Prize

Reviews:

Reviews are critical for bringing new readers and authors to *AJB*. The current Reviews team, led by Kasey Barton, with support from Emily Sessa, Pam Diggle, and Amy McPherson, is **actively recruiting contributions**. Please reach out with suggestions of topics and potential authors to the team at reviews@botany.org.

AJB Synthesis Papers and Prize

The winner of the first Synthesis Prize was awarded to Liming Cai in 2023 for her paper, "[Rethinking convergence in plant parasitism through the lens of molecular and population genetic processes](#)." She received \$2000 and was formally recognized at the BSA Awards Ceremony at the Botany meeting in Boise, Idaho.

The second round of the competition resulted in 3 published Synthesis Papers, and 1 submission that was published as a Review. A panel of judges is evaluating them now. The call for the third round went out in December 2023, and four applicants have been invited to submit papers.

Please spread the word! The call for applications will go out in November/December: <https://botany.org/home/awards/awards-for-early-career-scientists/ajb-synthesis-papers-and-prize.html>

The ad hoc committee organizing the effort included Sean Graham (chair), Carol Goodwillie, Pam Diggle, [Lucia Lohman—stepping down], and Amy McPherson. If you are interested in joining the committee, please let Amy or Sean know.

Commitment to DEIA

In the spirit of *diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility* we work with an Early-Career Advisory Board (ECAB), with the leadership of Director-at-Large for Publications Emily Sessa. The ECAB is a group of early-career botanists who engage with and advise the editors of the *American Journal of Botany*, *Applications in Plant Sciences*, and the *Plant Science Bulletin* in several ways, including recommending timely topics for review papers, participating in editorial discussions, organizing [special collections](#) and “Twitter takeovers” to highlight papers in our journals, and advising on issues of importance to the publications team. See <https://botany.org/home/publications/ecab.html>. A new call for participants will be launched this fall.

Also in the spirit of *DEIA*: as of June 2022, although articles are published in English, authors have the option to include a translation of the abstract in other languages to be published with the article. This is a small step in an effort towards broadening accessibility to the content of our articles.

To help our editors *expand diversity, equity, and inclusion* when extending invitations to reviewers, please consider such community-created resources as

[Diversify EEB \(https://diversifyeeb.com\)](https://diversifyeeb.com)

Diversify PlantSci: <https://tinyurl.com/DiversifyPlantSci>

Plant postdoc reviewer list: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1Kp_4urlw-KeVCQ4RwKKrMFHZD3uANVdCq2AFEmj_TQQ/edit?usp=sharing

If you have additional resources to share, please let us know.

Open Calls for Associate Editors

Also to further the goals of DEI, 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. Our aim was to add depth of expertise and improve diversity on our editorial boards. We 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 14 and *APPS* invited 10 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.

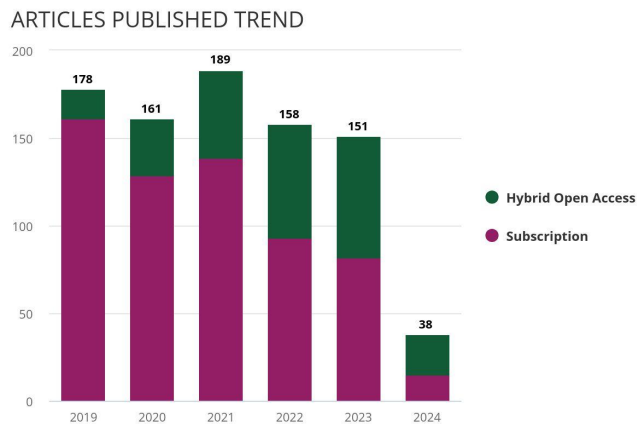
We are also issuing more *open calls* for special issues to expand our author base, and *open calls* for people to join our editorial teams as Review and Recruiting editors for *AJB* and *APPS*.

Competition for Authors: A challenge for all scientific journals is how to attract high-quality papers. We compete with journals large and small, both commercial and society-owned. **We have a mission to promote good papers in botany that serve our community. We need your help!** Publish in your Society journals and encourage your students and colleagues to do the same! We cannot stress enough how important this is to the future of our journals and the health of our Society.

Open Data: We support Open Data through our data availability policies and support of Open Science badges. As of 1 February 2021, *AJB* requires authors to deposit data in publicly accessible repositories and to clearly state this in a “data availability” paragraph in their articles. Previously, this was strongly recommended.

Appendix:

Open Access:



In 2023, out of 151 papers published, 69 were OA; as of the end of March 2024, out of 38 papers published, 23 were OA.

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 March 2024, manuscript submissions are up about 17.5% 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).
- 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>.
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 40.2% in 2023 and 39.5% in 2022.
- In 2023/early 2024, we welcomed new Associate Editors **Liming Cai** (UT Austin), **Myong Gi Chung** (Gyeongsang National University, South Korea), **Andrés J. Cortés** (Colombian Agricultural Research Corporation), **Johan P. Dahlgren** (University of Southern Denmark), **Aaron David** (Archbold Biological Station), **Lucía DeSoto** (Complutense University of Madrid), **Carole Gee** (University of Bonn), **Brenda Grewell** (USDA ARS and UC Davis), **Eugenio Larios** (Universidad Estatal de Sonora), **Amy Litt** (UC Riverside), **Elena Lopez Peredo** (Rochester Institute of Technology), **Giacomo Puglielli** (University of Seville), **Susan Rutherford** (Wenzhou-Kean University), **Yuval Sapir** (Tel Aviv University), **Elizabeth Stacy** (University of Nevada Las Vegas), **Julissa Roncal** (Memorial University of Newfoundland), **Jeanne Tonnabel** (University of Montpellier), **Thais Vasconcelos** (University of Michigan), **Juan Carlos Villarreal A.** (Université Laval, Québec), and **Peter Wilf** (Pennsylvania State University).
- Retirements from the editorial board include **Steve Keller**, **Robert Schaeffer**, **Steve**

Weller, and Beata Zagorska-Marek.

Special Issues

Special issues raise the visibility of a 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 the Special Issue/Section editors and contributing authors for their hard work in making their Society journal as strong as possible.

2023:

- June 2023: [Pollen as the Link Between Phenotype and Fitness](#)—led by Øystein H. Opedal, Rocío Pérez-Barrales, Vinícius L. G. Brito, Nathan Muchhala, and Agnes Dellinger [with Miquel Capó handling a companion paper in *APPS*]

2024 (in process):

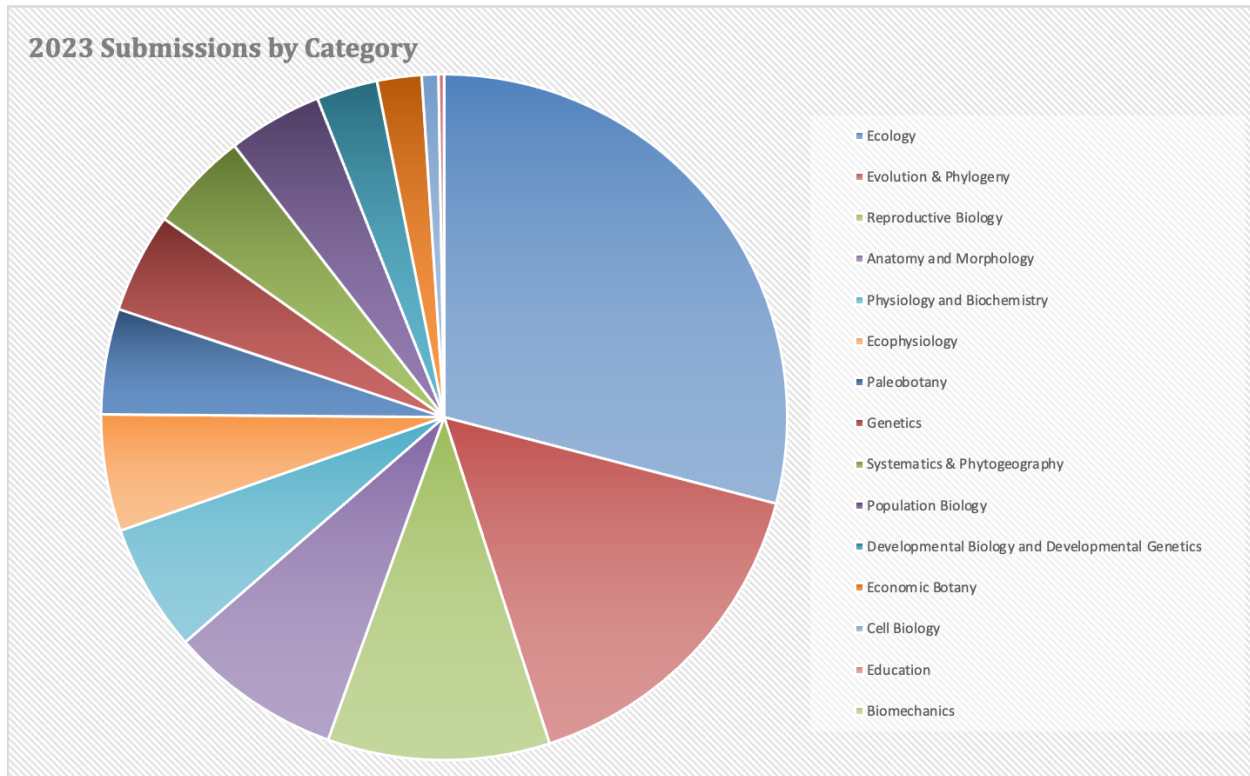
- Joint AJB/APPS special issues on *Polyploidy*, titled **“Twice as Nice: New Techniques and Discoveries in Polyploid Biology”**—led by Mike Barker, Kelsey Glennon, Yunnian Jiao (*AJB*), and Michael McKain, Ya Yang, and Agnieszka Golicz (*APPS*)
- **“Plant-microbe interactions in tropical and subtropical 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
- **“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
- **“Plant Resilience and Conservation in a Changing Climate”** [tentative title]—led by Jeremy Rentsch, Elizabeth Stacy, Caitlin MacKenzie, and Jennifer Boyd.

Outreach for Publications

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.

Journal Metrics

See pages 18-23 of the Publisher’s Report for turnaround times and other statistics.



Authors are given the opportunity to select a category during the submission process, though this is not required. The chart legend corresponds to the wedges in a clockwise manner.

Section/Category	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019
Ecology	47	111	117	112	124	118
Evolution & Phylogeny	26	61	69	57	73	62
Reproductive Biology	17	40	55	42	37	51
Anatomy and Morphology	6	31	49	33	37	36
Physiology and Biochemistry	8	23	11	17	19	22
Ecophysiology	10	21	24	27	35	37
Paleobotany	5	19	14	16	28	12
Genetics	9	18	17	25	36	29
Systematics & Phytogeography	15	18	20	21	34	18
Population Biology	4	17	10	14	13	19
Developmental Biology and Developmental Genetics	4	11	14	6	9	13
Economic Botany	4	8	6	8	5	2
Cell Biology	4	3	3	3	4	2
Education	0	1	1	0	0	1
Biomechanics	0	0	6	2	7	1
Total	159	382	416	383	461	423

The MSS numbers for 2024 are through 10 May 2024. The table above includes numbers, not percentages. These are submitted manuscripts, not published papers, and not all submissions list a category.

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. Staci Nole-Wilson (Assistant/Content Editor), Dr. Beth Hazen (Manuscript Editor), Mr. Richard Earles (Copy Editor), Dr. Larry Skog (Copy Editor), and Ms. Elaine Firestone (Copy Editor).