



## **Publications Report for the BSA Spring Board Meeting, March 2021**

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This report updates progress for BSA publications since the BSA Board meeting on November 23, 2020.

As we will discuss, we are in the fourth year of our 5-year contract with our publisher, Wiley. This is our “notice” year in which we have to let Wiley know if we are thinking of going out for tender/issuing a Request for Proposals (RFP).

Our relationship with Wiley has overall been good, with certain notable challenges.

- Both *AJB* and *APPS* have **broader reach and visibility** than we ever had, and the **Impact Factors** for both journals have increased (*AJB*: 3.038; *APPS*: 1.591).
- We are able to offer **services to our authors and readers** that we could not afford on our own, including enhanced metadata tagging (to make articles more discoverable), Altmetrics, enhanced options in the manuscript tracking system, opportunities to partner with other plant journals published by Wiley, access to publishing expertise, advice, and advocacy from the Wiley Team writ large, and more; see the Wiley publisher report.
- Some of the challenges, such as those with **production**, have been frustrating from the start: they’re a publisher, and publishing journals should be the most basic and straightforward service they provide. But we are still struggling to make the process efficient and consistent.
- We would like more **marketing** support: maybe because we have terrific people at BSA who know the community and communicate well through e-newsletters, email blasts, social media, and press releases, we feel like we are doing the heavy lifting. Wiley has a marketing department that runs data-driven campaigns (see the reports), but we’re not seeing the kinds of results (e.g., marked increase in MS submissions for both journals, stronger demand for content reflected in financials, etc.) that we would hope to see.
- The **finances** of publishing are going through tremendous upheaval. Gone are the days of the Big Deals—we are definitely moving into a more “open” world, with emphasis on articles over whole journals, but the business model is still in flux. How do hybrid journals progress? How do young Open Access journals grow? How do we enhance our journals and increase revenues for the benefit of our Society?

## Publication Highlights

### Strategy Sessions for *Applications in Plant Sciences*

On January 14, *APPS* held a strategy session with selected editors and Wiley staff to discuss increasing submissions and better communicating the “brand” of *APPS*.

[Submissions are down due to discontinuing Primer Notes in November 2019 and fallout from the pandemic.] This was followed up by an *APPS* editorial board meeting on February 17 to engage all editors in helping to recruit papers for the journal. Main takeaways: all editors should serve as ambassadors for the journal; a new “Recruiting Editor” role should be developed to help the EiC solicit papers from potential authors; a new essay article type could be added to encourage new readers (similar to *AJB*’s OTNOT series, but methods-related); a new Teaching Methods article type could be added to serve the botanical community (methods with a pedagogy component). *APPS* is also actively developing special issues for publication in 2022 and beyond, including:

- “Methodologies in Gametophyte Biology,” led by guest editors Sally Chambers, Jerald Pinson, and Susann Wicke
- “Methods in Aquatic Botany,” led by guest editors Greg Pec and Julia Cherry
- “Meeting the Challenge of Exceptional Plant Conservation: Technologies and Approaches” (tentative title), led by guest editors Valerie Pence and Emily Coffey (Call for Papers in development)
- “Low-Cost Methods in the Plant Sciences II” (working title), led by guest editors Gillian Dean and Greg Pec, for publication in 2023.

### Strategy Session for the *American Journal of Botany*

On January 19, *AJB* held a strategy session with non-US AEs and a member of the Early Career Advisory Board (ECAB) to focus on international outreach, with an overall goal to increase the “visibility” (readership and authorship) of the *American Journal of Botany* outside the US. Main takeaways: *botany* is more of a challenge for attracting manuscript submissions than *American* is in the journal’s title; we could work on a social media campaign to educate the broader community about what it means to be a Society journal/how does publishing work/what is botany? *AJB* is also actively developing special issues and topics for Reviews, including:

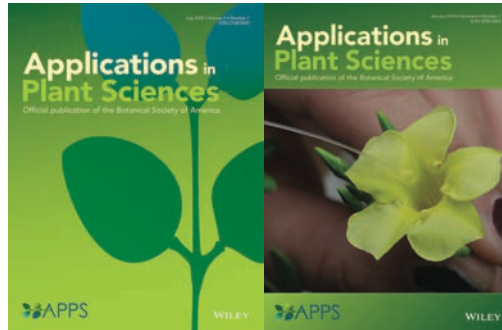
- “Approaches to the Study of Quantitative Fitness-Related Traits,” led by guest editors Susan Mazer, Eugenio Larios, Ann Sakai, and Stephen Weller, with a potential companion issue in *APPS*

## 2021 Special Issues:

- [Life Without Water](#)— a special issue on plant life in water-limited habitats and the diversity of ongoing research in arid-adapted plant groups, led by Karolina Heyduk, Michael McKain, and Olwen Grace, was published in February in *AJB*; a companion special collection of previously published *APPS* articles was posted as a [virtual issue](#) and is being promoted on social media.
- [Exploring the Potential of Angiosperms353, a Universal Toolkit for Flowering Plant Phylogenomics](#)—a joint special issue between *AJB* and *APPS*; the papers are being reviewed, revised, and edited now, in anticipation of publication mid-year 2021. The effort is led by Bill Baker, Felix Forest, Lisa Pokorny, Steven Dodsworth,

Jennifer Tate, Sean Graham, Susann Wicke, Angela McDonnell, Norm Wickett, and Matt Johnson.

Redesigned cover for *APPS*: In 2021, *APPS* will get a makeover featuring an image each month (current cover on the left; sample cover with image on right):



2021 Marketing plan for *AJB* and *APPS*: See Wiley's plan, plus:

**Social Media presence:**

- We use Facebook, Twitter, and now Instagram (thanks to our Social Media liaisons) to promote papers in the journals, our authors and other BSA members, and items we think will be of interest to our followers. We reach >48K followers across these three platforms.
- Facebook: 34.7K followers
- Twitter: 12.1K followers
- Instagram: 2.1K followers

***Plant Science Bulletin***

The *PSB*, now in its 67<sup>th</sup> volume, is an important outlet for member news and plant-related articles and book reviews and is not part of the publishing arrangement with Wiley.

The *Plant Science Bulletin* published its largest, and arguably most relevant, issues to date this past year (2020). Under Editor-in-Chief Mackenzie Taylor's leadership, and assisted by BSA staff Richard Hund and Johanne Stogran, the *PSB* has covered how COVID-19

affected BSA members personally and professionally, Black Botanists Week, and diversity and inclusion initiatives. The *PSB* home page was also updated recently to yield better search results. The latest issue can be found at

<https://cms.botany.org/home/publications/plant-science-bulletin.html>.



Respectfully submitted,

Amy McPherson

11 March 2021