

**BOTANY 2021, *AJB* Reports for Associate Editors
Background Information for the Annual Meeting
on Zoom
Wednesday, 14 July 2021
Confidential for the Editorial Board**

It's been a challenging year!

If there are themes, they are:

- We are committed to supporting our members and to publishing good and important science! We want to be our community's go-to journal for their research—and **we need our community to help us grow.**
- Publishing at large is moving toward a more “**open**” model—both in Open Access articles and Open Science. This is in line with our mission to support botany and the communication of science, but the business model may have serious financial consequences for our Society's activities and for the journals themselves. We need our community to understand this and support us.
- Because of the changes in publishing, our arrangement with Wiley is also likely to change significantly under a new agreement. We are currently in the fourth year of our original five-year contract—and we have until the end of this calendar year to notify them if we plan to seek bids from other publishing partners. At this point, we don't plan to change publishers.
- We are, and must be, committed to **diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

Publishing Highlights over the past year:

- **Increased Journal Impact Factor for both journals:**
 - The Impact Factors were released by Clarivate on June 30, 2021. The **2020 IF for *AJB* is 3.844** (up from **3.038** last year, and our highest Impact Factor ever); **for *APPS* it is 1.936** (up from **1.591** last year).
 - We sincerely thank the editors, reviewers, and authors who support *AJB*!
- **Progress from the Early-Career Advisory Board:**
 - The Early-Career Advisory Board (ECAB) is active, with terrific leadership from our Director-at-Large for Publications, Emily Sessa. Achievements over the past year include: 3 “Twitter Takeovers” (focused on Fruits, Plant biodiversity in tropical mountain ecosystems, *Vitis*); participation in editorial board meetings

- and discussions; ECAB-er Brittany Sutherland’s participation on a panel for the Council of Science Editors’ meeting in 2020 on “Climate change in publishing” from an early-career researcher’s perspective; and ECAB-er Eugenio Larios’s help in organizing a special issue for *AJB*, “Approaches to the Study of Quantitative Fitness-Related Traits,” with Susan Mazer, Steve Weller, and Ann Sakai.
- A new call for ECAB members will be sent out shortly. Current members of the ECAB are listed here: <https://cms.botany.org/home/publications/ecab.html>.
 - **AJB Reviews**
(<https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/15372197/homepage/forauthors#mcr>)
 - We launched a new Reviews series for *AJB* in late 2019 and published our first Review in October 2020. The Reviews team, led by Jannice Friedman, with support from Emily Sessa, Pam Diggie, and Amy McPherson, is actively recruiting contributions. To date, we have received 13 submissions (with several others in the works—we welcome proposals) and published 5 Reviews.
 - We are in the process of recruiting a new Reviews editor to take over from Jannice. See <https://botany.org/home/publications/call-for-applications-2021.html> and apply, if you’re interested! Or encourage someone else to do so.
 - **Outreach and Collaboration:**
 - In support of the BSA’s commitment to outreach and collaboration, the Editors-in-Chief of *AJB* and *APPS* hosted free author webinars and discussions in October 2020: <https://botany.org/home/resources/virtual-professional-development-resources.html>.
 - Amy McPherson presented at the Council of Science Editors: a short course on publication management (“Engaging early-career researchers”) and a panel discussion on “Fostering diversity and inclusion for editorial boards and publishing leadership.”

Increasing shifts to Open Access, for articles and research

We support the principles of Open Access: It’s in our mission to support *botany*, and we acknowledge that communicating and sharing discoveries is essential to the research process. All authors want their research to be read, and the fewer restrictions placed on access to their papers mean that more people may benefit from the research.

One issue, however, is that income from our publications, primarily licenses and subscription revenues from *AJB*, have directly supported the important work of the BSA for most of the life of the Society. We are not unique—many societies fund their operations through their publishing programs. However, as we know, subscription revenues have been in decline for decades, and that has only accelerated as library budgets have been cut and there’s been a shift to accommodate Open Access initiatives in some sectors (especially Europe). The business model for Open Access, at its heart, relies on decreasing the costs of publishing and increasing the *volume* of output.

Wiley has negotiated a number of “transitional deals” that provide groups of institutions access to read Wiley’s portfolio of academic journals and offer waived publication charges for researchers at those institutions publishing articles Open Access in

Wiley's journals (<https://www.wiley.com/network/archive/wiley-s-transitional-agreements-a-summary>). These include Projekt Deal (which includes nearly 700 German academic institutions) and Jisc (covering 138 UK institutions).

AJB is currently a hybrid journal, meaning we are a subscription journal with a Gold Open Access option, funded through Article Publication Charges (APCs) or now through Wiley's Transitional Deals. All papers (OA or not) are freely accessible without a subscription after one year (going back to 1997, when the first issues of the journal were published online as well as in print). Moving forward, we are challenged with considering a move to fully Open Access.

APPS is a fully Gold Open Access journal, which launched in 2013. It is a home for methods, protocols, and other genomic resources papers. All authors cover APCs either through individual funders or Wiley's transitional deals.

Competition for Authors: A challenge for all scientific journals is how to attract high-quality papers and—in an Open Access environment—ones that also have the possibility of generating income, whether through funding APCs, participating in institutions from Transitional Deals, or are from institutions that still subscribe to the journal. 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**—*not* chasing Impact Factor or ability to pay exclusively. We consider this a strength, even though it presents obvious challenges. *This is why 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. Beginning 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. [*APPS* already had this as a requirement.]

Open Research Badges: In November 2020, both *AJB* and *APPS*, in partnership with the nonprofit Center for Open Science (COS), began offering authors the option of choosing “badges” to clearly signal they've made their data publicly available. See <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2020/09/03/articles-are-the-fundamental-unit-of-datasharing/>.

A new 5-year proposal from Wiley

The world is a much different place than it was when we sought out a publishing partner in 2016-2017. We went from self-publishing in an era of the Publisher Big Deals and licensing (though we entered this in its “golden years”) to the era of Open Access and Open Data. The Big Publishers are and always have been major players, and there's been tremendous consolidation in recent years.

It would be nearly impossible for us to self-publish in today's environment. We get many benefits by partnering with a large publisher, such as a global sales team to handle licensing and subscriptions, increased worldwide exposure and downloads of our content, savings on

new technology, layout and production of articles, the online journal platform, and tools/resources for authors (see the publisher's reports). With Wiley, we are in the company of other excellent life science/plant journals.

Wiley's proposal for contract renewal focuses largely on transitioning from a hybrid model for *AJB* to one that is fully Open Access (assuming certain criteria are met) by 2027. It also counts on raising APCs (our rates are low compared to other similar journals) and significantly increasing the number of articles published by both *AJB* and *APPS*. We want to serve our mission and do not want to alienate our people: how can we move toward an entirely OA publication model while maintaining low publication fees for members and maintain a healthy revenue stream for the Society?

Wiley's financial offer is a 22% reduction on the current contract deal we have with them, but it is unlikely that we would do better financially with another publisher (in this era of so much consolidation). This is a significant reduction to BSA revenue and has repercussions for future budgeting and finances of the Society. What can the Society do to diversify its income sources? Is it willing to use some of its investment funds (currently near \$8 million) to support publications and its other goals and activities?

Is the Board/Society willing to subsidize member APCs? Is the Board/Society willing to financially support publications in new, possibly creative ways?

Increased focus on issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion:

During the past year, social justice issues came to the forefront. The BSA's strategic plan has "diversity, equity, and inclusion" as one of its pillars. The *PSB* recently included several articles highlighting the importance of DEI efforts and the incredible success of [Black Botanists Week](https://blackbotanistsweek.weebly.com/) (<https://blackbotanistsweek.weebly.com/>). In our research publications, we are looking to community-created resources for helping our editors expand diversity, equity, and inclusion when extending invitations to reviewers, such as [Diversify EEB](https://diversifyeeb.com) (<https://diversifyeeb.com>), [EEB early career reviewer list](https://sites.google.com/view/ecrdatabase/home) (<https://sites.google.com/view/ecrdatabase/home>), and [Women in Plant Biology](https://plantae.org/community/groups/women-in-plant-biology/) (<https://plantae.org/community/groups/women-in-plant-biology/>). We are tapping into resources such as the Coalition for Diversity & Inclusion in Scholarly Communications (C4DISC): <https://c4disc.org/toolkits-for-equity/>, and taking advantage of Wiley's updated name change policy: <https://www.wiley.com/network/the-wiley-network/new-author-name-change-policy-supports-a-more-inclusive-publishing-environment>. 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*.

Appendix:

JCR, Impact Factor, and Journal Information

The Journal Citation Report* was released by Clarivate on June 30, 2021.

The 2019 Impact Factor for *AJB* is **3.844**, up from **3.038** last year.

The 2019 Impact Factor for *APPS* is **1.936**, up from **1.591** last year.

[*The 2020 IF = the number of citations received by the journal in 2020 to articles published in 2018 and 2019/number of citable items published in 2018-2019.]

The 5-year Impact Factor for *AJB* is 3.657, up from 3.245 in 2019.

The 5-year Impact Factor for *APPS* is 1.929, on par with 1.914 in 2019.

***AJB*:**

- In 2020, *AJB* handled 478 new submissions for peer review, and published 171 articles (this includes Highlights, and special issue introductions that were not sent out for review). Manuscript submissions in 2020 were up 6% over 2019. The total number of pages published in 2020 was 1838. Submissions were received from 43 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (192), China (70), Brazil (26), United Kingdom (20), Mexico (18), India (16), Canada (15), Japan (15), and Spain (13).
- We have 59 Associate Editors from around the world: 37% of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 46% are women. See <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/15372197/homepage/editorial-board>.
- The average time to first decision in 2020 was 44.4 days (longer than we'd like and somewhat attributable to the pandemic); 2019 was 34.6 days; 2018 was 35.2 days; and 2017 was 34.8 days. So far in 2021, this number is 36.7 days.
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 37% in 2020 (38% in 2019, 41.5% in 2018, and 38% in 2017).
- Pam Diggle is in the second year of her second 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.
- In late 2020/early 2021 we welcomed new Associate Editors Barnabas Daru (Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi), Kathleen Kay (University of California – Santa Cruz), Julieta Rosell (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), Jürg Schönenberger (University of Vienna, Austria), Toby Spribille (University of Alberta, Canada), and Sandy-Lynn Steenhuisen (University of the Free State, Republic of South Africa).
- Retirements from the Board include Gregory Anderson, Kay Hodgins, Cynthia Jones, Bruce McCune, and Jarmila Pittermann.

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 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** ([https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)1537-2197.plant-environment-interactions](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)1537-2197.plant-environment-interactions))—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**—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 2021 in *AJB* (<https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15372197/2021/108/2>); a companion special collection of previously published *APPS* articles was posted as a [virtual issue](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)2168-0450.LifeWOWater) ([https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/\(ISSN\)2168-0450.LifeWOWater](https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/toc/10.1002/(ISSN)2168-0450.LifeWOWater)) and promoted on social media. See <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/toc/15372197/2021/108/2>
- **Exploring the Potential of Angiosperms353, a Universal Toolkit for Flowering Plant Phylogenomics** (<https://cms.botany.org/news/display/2020/3/4/special-issue-call-for-papers-exploring-the-potential-of-angiosperms353/>), a joint special issue with *APPS*; led by Bill Baker, Felix Forest, Lisa Pokorny, Steven Dodsworth, Jennifer Tate, and Sean Graham, this group of papers is being published in the July issues of both journals.

Production Changes

In August 2021, both *AJB* and *APPS* will be published using a “New Journal Design” (NJD) that simplifies and standardizes the PDF page layout for more efficient and quicker production. NOTE: We were encouraged to adopt NJD when we began working with Wiley in 2017-2018, but we resisted. Recently, the design was made a little more flexible and allows us to move among vendors more easily when necessary. This became important during pandemic-related difficulties.

It is now possible to publish embedded video in the html article through the Wiley Online Library. The first article with embedded video published in the May issue of *APPS* (<https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/aps3.11421>).

Outreach for Publications

With more than 50,000 total followers on our social media platforms—34.9K Facebook fans (up from 33.99K), 13.1K Twitter followers (up from 9.4K), and 2.4K Instagram followers (up from

1.3K)—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**—in 2020, Sonal Gupta (University of Michigan) joined Jared Meek (Columbia University) in efforts to enhance the BSA’s social media reach—and help promote authors and their work published in BSA journals, and to promote the work and initiatives of BSA members.

Journal Metrics

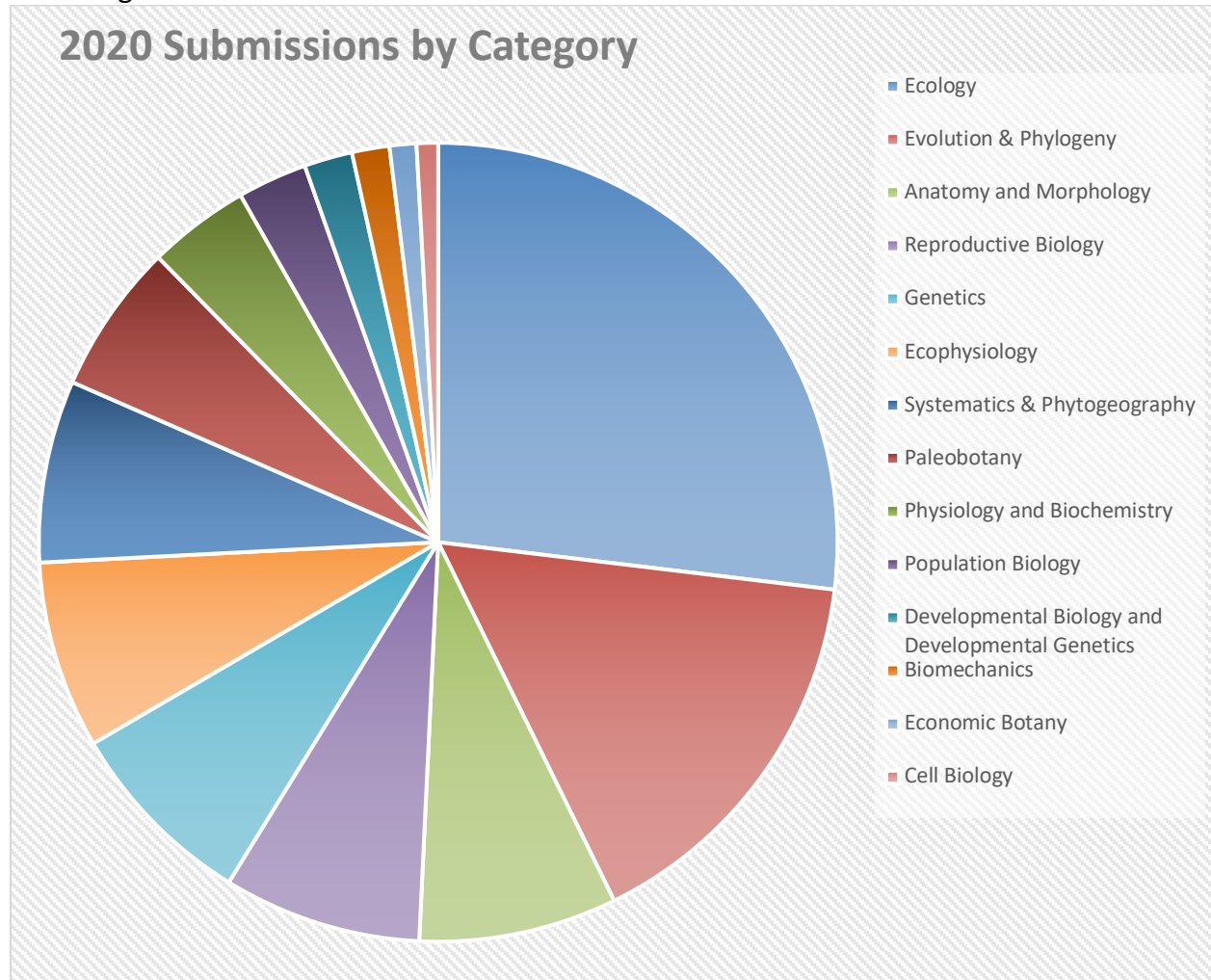
Year	No. of Subs.	Sub. to Ed. (days)	EIC to AE	Sub. to Rev. Inv.	Rev. resp. to inv.	Rev. complete after agreeing to review	Avg. time to 1st dec. (based on all dec. made in period)
2017	520	0.7	4.6	9	2.2	16.7	34.8
2018	478	0.8	5.6	10.3	2.3	17.1	35.2
2019	451	1	1.9	10.6	2.1	16.1	34.6
2020	491	0.7	10.4*	11.9	2.2	20.7	44.4

*No. of days for AE to agree to handle (average).

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
2020	34.2	6.3	64.8	60.7

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
2020	31.6	9.5

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	2021	2020	2019	2018	2017
Ecology	52	124	118	114	120
Evolution & Phylogeny	32	73	62	64	94
Anatomy and Morphology	21	37	36	43	49
Reproductive Biology	21	37	51	41	44
Ecophysiology	15	35	37	21	27
Genetics	14	36	29	31	28
Systematics & Phytogeography	11	34	18	23	52
Paleobotany	8	28	12	16	18
Economic Botany	6	5	2	4	4
Physiology and Biochemistry	5	19	22	30	20
Population Biology	5	13	19	21	21
Cell Biology	3	4	2	8	1
Biomechanics	2	7	1	6	6
Developmental Biology and Developmental Genetics	2	9	13	13	7
Education	0	0	1	1	1
	197	461	423	436	492

Submissions in 2021 through 28 June

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

Corresponding Author Country	2020	2019	2018	2017
UNITED STATES	192	170	172	207
CHINA	70	85	75	66
BRAZIL	26	33	36	26
UNITED KINGDOM	20	9	2	8
MEXICO	18	21	19	16
INDIA	16	6	14	14
CANADA	15	20	18	15
JAPAN	15	17	20	18
SPAIN	13	12	20	22
ARGENTINA	11	3	6	9
GERMANY	11	5	9	11
FRANCE	8	8	10	6
PAKISTAN	7	8	2	3
AUSTRALIA	6	3	5	5
CZECH REPUBLIC	5	10	4	1
SWITZERLAND	5	2	4	0
COLOMBIA	4	1	4	0
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	4	2	2	3
NETHERLANDS	4	0	2	2
CHILE	3	4	5	8
EGYPT	3	0	1	3

ETHIOPIA	3	0	1	4
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	3	5	4	3
ISRAEL	2	3	1	1
PORTUGAL	2	1	1	1
QATAR	2	0	0	0
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	2	2	1	2
SAUDI ARABIA	2	0	1	4
SLOVAKIA	2	2	0	2
SWEDEN	2	3	2	5
AUSTRIA	1	1	0	2
BELGIUM	1	0	0	3
DOMINICAN REPUBLIC	1	0	0	0
ECUADOR	1	1	1	0
ITALY	1	2	2	4
KAZAKHSTAN	1	0	0	1
LITHUANIA	1	0	0	0
NEW ZEALAND	1	3	1	1
PANAMA	1	0	0	0
PERU	1	0	0	0
SOUTH AFRICA	1	1	5	1
UGANDA	1	0	0	0
UZBEKISTAN	1	0	0	0
ALGERIA	0	0	1	0
AZERBAIJAN	0	1	0	0
BANGLADESH	0	0	1	0
CHRISTMAS ISLAND	0	1	0	0
COSTA RICA	0	0	1	1
DENMARK	0	0	2	0
DJIBOUTI	0	1	0	0
FRENCH GUIANA	0	0	1	0
GABON	0	0	0	1
GREECE	0	0	0	1
KOREA, DEM. PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF	0	0	1	1
LUXEMBOURG	0	1	0	0
MOROCCO	0	1	1	0
NIGERIA	0	6	1	3
NORWAY	0	1	2	4
POLAND	0	3	4	1
SERBIA	0	0	0	1
SINGAPORE	0	0	2	0
SRI LANKA	0	0	0	1
SUDAN	0	0	0	1
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC	0	0	1	0

TAIWAN	0	1	4	3
THAILAND	0	0	0	1
TUNISIA	0	0	1	2
TURKEY	0	1	1	1
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES	0	0	0	2
UNKNOWN	0	0	0	18
	489	460	474	519

Total number of pages published

January – June 2021	Total: 1057
2020	Total: 1838
2019	Total: 1637
2018	Total: 2080
2017	Total: 1929

See the Wiley report for current production numbers.

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

Year	Impact Factor	Rank
2020	3.844	50/235
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

We are pleased and proud of the increase in our IF this year—even though we know the IF is not a great indicator of a journal’s quality (and really, who thinks a two-year window of citations is long enough?).

Several other botanical journals also experienced increases in their IF (thanks, Sean, for this information):

Annals of Botany 4.357 (from 4.005 last year)

New Phytologist 10.151 (from 8.512 last year)

Frontiers in Plant Science 5.753 (from 4.402 last year)

Journal of Systematics and Evolution 4.098 (from 2.779 last year)

IJPS 1.785 (from 1.174 last year)

Syst Bot 1.101 (also 1.101 last year)

Taxon 2.338 (from 2.817 last year)

Clarivate, the company that calculates the Impact Factor metrics, is changing how they figure in Early Access articles, particularly when the EA article appears in one calendar year, and the issue in which that article appears is in another. This may have contributed to some, but maybe not all, of the increases this year.

For those interested, here are some explainers from Lindsey Brounstein, of the American Gastroenterological Association (she works on data analytics and is not employed by Clarivate). If this falls into the tl;dr category for you, no worries.

What's changing?

Early Access dates

- Many publishers provide the online publication date along with the article information that is sent to Clarivate.
- Shows that the article is available online as the version of record but is not yet included in an issue.
- Often, Early Access date and final publication date = same calendar year... but not always.

Prospective changes beginning with 2020



Any papers published earlier than 2020 = no change to how they're counted



Any papers published early access in 2019 but has a final publication date of 2020 = no change to how they're counted



A paper that has an early access date of 2020 but is published in 2021 will count **in 2020 instead of 2021**

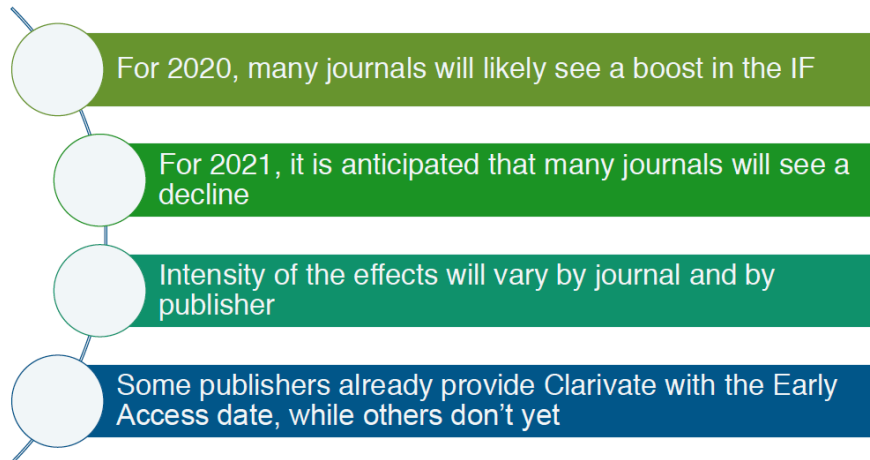
- The 2020 Impact Factor (due to be released June 2021) will include the citations from 2020 Early Access articles in the numerator but not the denominator
- The 2021 Impact Factor (due to be released June 2022) will use the Early Access date for 2020 articles in both the numerator and the denominator

$$2020 \text{ JIF} = \frac{\text{Citations in 2020 to items published in 2018 + 2019}}{\text{Number of articles \& reviews published in 2018 \& 2019}}$$

$$2021 \text{ JIF} = \frac{\text{Citations in 2021 to items published in 2019 + 2020}}{\text{Number of articles \& reviews published in 2019 \& 2020}}$$

$$2022 \text{ JIF} = \frac{\text{Citations in 2022 to items published in 2020 + 2021}}{\text{Number of articles \& reviews published in 2020 \& 2021}}$$

Anticipated effects



*To level the playing field across print and online journals, Clarivate announced changes to the Impact Factor calculations**

The 2020 Impact Factor (released in June 2021) will include citations from early access articles as part of the numerator, which will likely boost the Impact Factor of many journals.

The 2021 Impact Factor (released in June 2022) will be calculated using the early access dates in the numerator and for the 2020 articles in the denominator, which will likely cause a dip in the Impact Factor for many journals.

The 2022 Impact Factor (released in June 2023) will use only the early access dates and not the print publication dates.

*<https://clarivate.com/blog/the-jcr-reload-and-a-look-ahead-to-the-introduction-of-early-access-content-in-2021/>



And there's always the possibility that universities will pay less attention to the IF in the future. See the story in *Nature* regarding Utrecht University's decision to formally abandon the Impact Factor in all hiring and promotion decisions:
<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-021-01759-5>.

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).