

**BOTANY 2023, *AJB* Reports for Associate Editors
Background Information for the
Annual Meeting on Zoom
Tuesday, 11 July 2023
Confidential for the Editorial Board**

The *American Journal of Botany* is in its 110th volume and is still proudly a Society-owned journal. We have been able to make great progress with our publishing partner, Wiley, even though a tension exists between the goals of a nonprofit scientific organization and a commercial publisher.

The BSA journals are competing for authors with traditional outlets such as *New Phytologist* and *Annals of Botany*, but also with more recently launched for-profit, born-digital Open Access journals, including Frontiers and MDPI, which offer fast turnarounds and amazing economies of scale. They publish a LOT of material.

Our Impact Factor is holding at 3, and the Impact Factor for our sister journal, *Applications in Plant Sciences*, has reached 3.6!

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.

Highlights (details below):

- After months of negotiations, a new 5-year contract with Wiley was signed on 21 December 2022
 - Wiley's business model is moving away from subscriptions and licensing to more fully Open Access—but we are not ready to “flip” to fully OA.
 - The move to more OA has ramifications for the journals and for the Society—both for our mission and financially.
- The OSTP/Nelson Memo
 - 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 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.
- AI and the release of ChatGPT, and other Large Language Models, has caused a lot of excitement and concern about research integrity going forward!
 - Data accessibility is more important than ever.
 - For a summary of Journal Policies, Considerations, and Literature on Use of LLMs (Large Language Models) and AI-tools in Peer Review see https://docs.google.com/document/d/11QChXXL5o-08IOPcPKW3B0Xz_HcK_MpBz-YnJOOqh_4/edit
- Journal Citation Report (JCR), released by Clarivate on June 28, 2023
 - The **2022 Impact Factor for *AJB* is 3.0**; in **2021** it was **3.325**.
 - The **5-year Impact Factor** is **3.4**, down from 4.014 in 2021.
 - Our **Immediacy Index** is **0.9**; last year it was 1.195.
 - The 2022 IF for *Applications in Plant Sciences* is **3.6**; in **2021** it was **2.577**.

We sincerely thank the authors, editors, reviewers, and readers who support the BSA journals, *AJB* and *Applications in Plant Sciences*.
- *AJB* Reviews and launch of the *AJB* Synthesis Series and Prize
 - We’ve published 17 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 6 Synthesis papers, out of 8 submitted, and 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)
- BSA Journals and our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility
 - Early Career Advisory Board (ECAB)
 - Abstracts in languages in addition to English
 - Resources for finding reviewers
 - Open Call for Associate Editors
 - Publications Workshop in Mexico, presented in English and Spanish, and OA and DEI Workshop in DC.
- Journal-specific Highlights and Stats: see the Appendix

Wiley Contract Negotiations

After months of negotiations led by BSA Executive Director Heather Cacanindin and Amy McPherson, and countless discussions, with Wiley, the consultants Clarke & Esposito, and the lawyer Susan Carlson, a new 5-year contract with Wiley was signed on 21 December 2022.

The new contract anticipates that most of the income in the next several years will come from funding for Open Access rather than through subscriptions and licensing.

What this also means in practical terms is that most of the income from the journals, which supports our activities as well as those of the BSA at large, will be more reliant on the fees that cover the articles published in the journals (*AJB* and *APPS*). The business model for Open Access, at its core, relies on *decreasing the costs* of publishing and *increasing the volume* of output.

AJB is currently a hybrid journal, meaning we are a subscription journal with a Gold Open Access option, funded through Article Publication Charges (APCs), some of which may be covered through Wiley's Transitional Deals (see <https://authorservices.wiley.com/author-resources/Journal-Authors/open-access/affiliation-policies-payments/institutional-funder-payments.html>).

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). Current APCs for *AJB* are \$1400 for members; \$2000 for non-members.

We are among “the vast majority of hybrid journals [that] are looking to manage the transition to OA in a steady and sustainable way. Despite [cOAlition S](#)'s best efforts, demand from authors for OA is not growing fast enough to justify a ‘flip’ to fully open, at least in hybrid journals. In addition to the math not working, many publishers are concerned about equity and the impact on authors without sufficient funding for APCs. The OA transition is a marathon, not a sprint.” From Clarke & Esposito's *The Brief* (June 2023, <https://www.ce-strategy.com/the-brief/untransformed/>).

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; a system for offering [waivers in a transparent way](#) was developed earlier this year. The full APC is \$1882; BSA members receive a 30% discount.

The 2022 OSTP Memo—a significant step toward more open access in publishing

- The policy, issued in what is often referred to as the “Nelson Memo” (after the head, at the time, of the OSTP Alondra Nelson), requires making the US federally funded research publicly available, as well as the underlying metadata (using persistent identifiers) associated with scholarly research and publication such as author names and affiliations (for all authors), dates of publication, and sources of funding (including grant awards).
- An excellent explanation of the new policy and its potential ramifications for society publishers can be found here: <https://www.ce-strategy.com/the-brief/zero-embargo/>.
- What this means for us is that the trend toward open access is accelerating, and we

are in for an interesting, and challenging, road ahead. The memo is not mandating Open Access, but public access, so there is some parsing of the language and what it all actually means (see <https://scholarlykitchen.sspnet.org/2022/10/27/speculations-on-the-most-likely-ostp-nelson-memo-implementation-scenario-and-the-resulting-publisher-strategies/>).

- Wiley did an analysis of the research published in *AJB* and *APPS* last fall and found that 41% of papers published in *AJB* have some US federal funding; 35% of articles published in *APPS* have some US federal funding.

Journal Citation Report:

For more detailed information, see the Appendix and Journal Citation Reports – *AJB2.pdf*.

***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 first call for applications of our newly established Synthesis Papers and Prize was a success. In the first round, launched in 2022, we asked 8 applicants (out of the original 20) to submit papers; 6 were accepted and published.

Liming Cai's paper, "[Rethinking convergence in plant parasitism through the lens of molecular and population genetic processes](#)," 2023, vol. 110: e16174, was selected to receive the \$2000 Synthesis Prize. The members of the ad hoc committee evaluating the Synthesis papers were Richard (Dick) Olmstead, Cate Macinnis-Ng, and Nora Mitchell. Dr. Cai will be formally recognized at the BSA Awards Ceremony at the Botany meeting in Boise, Idaho.

The call for applications for the second round of the *AJB* Synthesis Papers and Prize went out in December 2022. In this second round, we received 11 applications and invited 5 researchers to submit a 3000-word, single-authored synthesis on their chosen topic.

The ad hoc committee organizing the effort includes Sean Graham (chair), Kasey Barton, Pam Diggle, Lucia Lohman, and Amy McPherson. If you are interested in joining the committee, please let Amy 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>.

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/),
[EEB early career reviewer list \(https://sites.google.com/view/ecrdatabase/home\)](https://sites.google.com/view/ecrdatabase/home),
and [Women in Plant Biology \(https://plantaec.org/community/groups/women-in-plant-biology/\)](https://plantaec.org/community/groups/women-in-plant-biology/).

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

Open Calls for Associate Editors

Also to further the goals of DEI, we are holding 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 is to increase the diversity of our editorial boards and we strongly encourage applicants from underrepresented groups and regions to apply.

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*.

Publications Workshop in Mexico, potential collaborations in the future

In September 2022, BSA Past-President Michael Donoghue and Amy McPherson traveled to Puebla, Mexico, for the [XXII Congreso Mexicano de Botánica](#). Michael gave a keynote scientific presentation on his research on *Viburnum* and introduced and participated in the BSA-sponsored Publications workshop offered for free to congreso participants. BSA member Mark Olson and Associate Editor **Julieta Rosell** presented on a winning formula for writing a scientific paper that will be reviewed and what an editor looks for in submissions to a journal. Amy McPherson presented on getting published and how to make sure your work is discoverable. We are discussing whether to develop the workshop into an offering for Botany360, and Michael is working with the Mexican Botanical Society to develop a joint symposium for a future Botany meeting. A possible joint botany meeting for the two societies was also suggested for the future.

Participation in the “DEI and Open Access Workshop” in Washington, DC

In early February 2023, Amy McPherson attended the NSF-funded “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Open Access Publishing: A Workshop to Explore Barriers and Solutions,” organized by the Ecological Society of America and attended by a broad cross section of the scientific publishing community. Attendees included Society publishers/authors/editors, commercial

publishers, librarians, and consultants, and all were interested in how to make publishing Open, Equitable, and Sustainable; Society publishers were especially keen to explore the last point. A report will be written, and the conversations begun during the workshop will continue.

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:

JCR, Impact Factor, and Journal Information

The Journal Citation Report* was released by Clarivate on June 28, 2023.

The **2023 IF for *AJB* is 3.0**, from **3.325** last year.

Journal Impact Factor is calculated using the following metrics

$$\frac{\text{Citations in 2022 to items published in 2020 (486) - 2021 (497)}}{\text{Number of citable items in 2020 (149) + 2021 (174)}} = \frac{983}{323} = 3.0$$

The 5-year Impact Factor for *AJB* is 3.4, from 4.014 last year.

5 year Impact Factor calculation

$$\frac{\text{Citations in 2022 to items published in [2017-2021] (2,610)}}{\text{Number of citable items in [2017-2021] (764)}} = \frac{2,610}{764} = 3.4$$

The Immediacy Index is 0.9, from **1.195** last year.

Immediacy Index calculation

$$\frac{\text{Cites in 2022 to items published in 2022} \quad 132}{\text{Number of items published in 2022} \quad 153} = 132 / 153 = 0.9$$

Note: New this year, Clarivate now displays the JIF to one decimal place.

Gillian Greenough, our contact at Wiley offered some context for the dip in Impact Factor for *AJB*: A lot of journals have seen a decrease in IF this year. While it's disappointing, this does seem to be happening across several subject areas, due to widescale factors greater than any one journal:

- *EarlyView. Clarivate officially started indexing EarlyView papers in 2020. This was done in a rather staggered manner, with some publishers having their EV content indexed in mid-2019 and some not until 2021. The indexing of EV content means that there are more papers in Web of Science contributing to the citation pool – meaning a general increase in citation levels. This has also led to the inflation of citation metrics such as the Impact Factor, since EV citations were included in the 2020 and 2021 JIF, but since they were only indexed officially from 2020, EV papers would not have been included in the 2020 JIF denominator, and would only have been included in 1 of the 2 denominator years for the 2021 JIF. As such, we expected a bit of a drop in JIF scores this year, since it will be the first year where EV articles are included equally in the numerator and denominator parts of the calculation.*
- *COVID. The impact here will depend to an extent (but not exclusively) on discipline. While we would expect that COVID would have driven up research output in medicine and virology fields (with typically very high citations for those papers), we also saw a more generalized inflation of research output over the past few years, likely driven by changes in working models for academics where labs were closed and teaching activities were on hold. Inflation of research output means an increase in the citation pool, and, as research levels return to normal (as we are now seeing), a later decrease in the citation pool.*

The Impact Factor for *APPS* has increased to 3.6. This is due to the smaller number of citable items (the denominator) that were published in 2020 and 2021. As the journal increases publication output, we will probably see the IF drop a bit, but not to the original (pre-2022) levels, as we have removed the main type of article that generally went uncited (primer notes). This is a period of transition for *APPS*!

AJB:

- In 2022, *AJB* handled 451 new submissions for peer review, and published 149 articles. Manuscript submissions in 2022 were up 11% over 2021. So far in 2023, manuscript submissions are down about 20% over last year at this time. Submissions were received from 43 countries, with the highest numbers from the United States (164), China (57), Canada (25), India (25), Brazil (21), Mexico (14), Spain (13), Japan (11), and France (10).
- We have 53 Associate Editors from around the world: 45% of our Associate Editors are from countries other than the U.S., and 43% are women. See <https://bsapubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/hub/journal/15372197/homepage/editorial-board>.
- The average time to first decision in 2022 was 46.5 days; in 2021 it was 47.4 days. So far in 2023, this number is 34.9 days, but we're all aware that it can take longer. It's hard to get reviews!
- Our overall acceptance rate for articles in *AJB* was 39.5% in 2022 and 40% in 2021.
- Pam Diggle is in the fourth year of her second 5-year term as Editor-in-Chief.

- In 2023, we welcomed new Associate Editors **Johan P. Dahlgren** (University of Southern Denmark), **Aaron David** (Archbold Biological Station), **Julissa Roncal** (Memorial University of Newfoundland), and **Jeanne Tonnabel** (University of Montpellier).
- Retirements from the editorial board include **Jannice Friedman**, **Bill Hoffmann**, **Deb Kohn**, **Cate Macinnis-Ng**, **Georgiana May**, **Scott Russell**, **Mark Simmons**, **Kristina Stinson**, and **Andi Wolfe**.

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.

2022-2023:

- November 2022: [Approaches to the Study of Quantitative Fitness-Related Traits](#)—led by Susan Mazer, Eugenio Larios (former ECAB-er), Ann Sakai, and Stephen Weller
- 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

- 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

Outreach for Publications

With almost 60,000 total followers on our social media platforms—35K Facebook fans, 20.6K Twitter followers, and 4.3K Instagram 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.

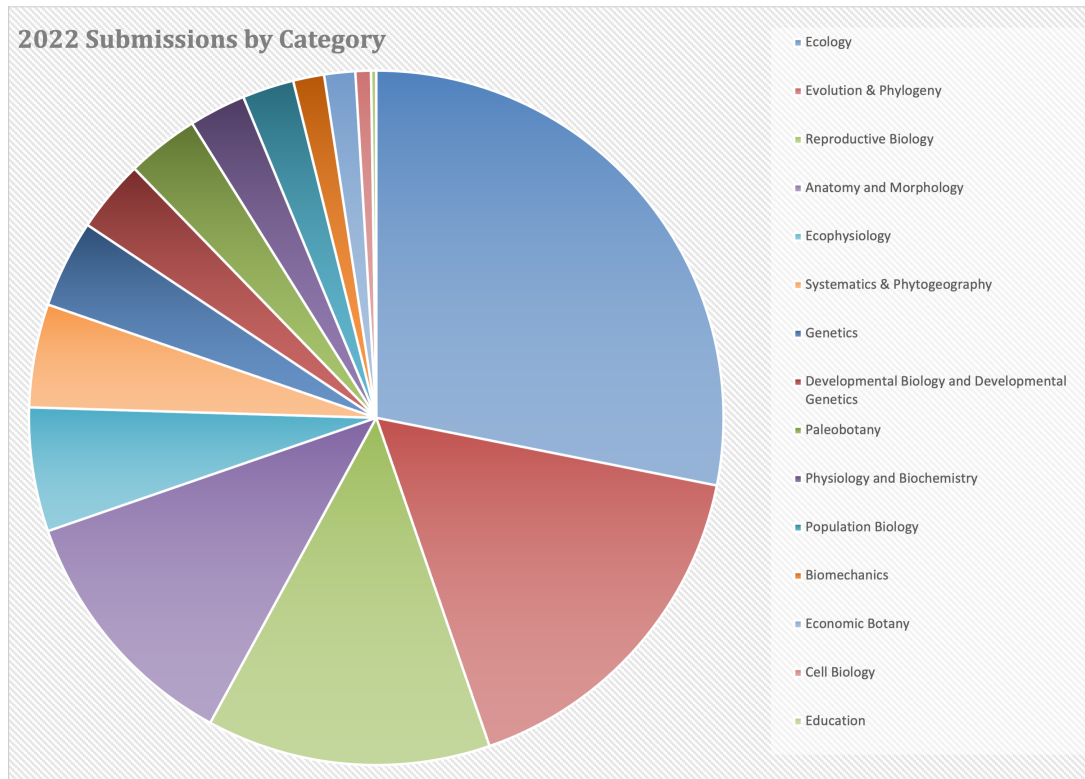
Journal Metrics

Year	No. of MSS. Submitted.	Sub. to Ed. (days)	Sub. to Review 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	9	2.2	16.7	34.8
2018	478	0.8	10.3	2.3	17.1	35.2

2019	451	1	10.6	2.1	16.1	34.6
2020	491	0.7	11.9	2.2	20.7	44.4
2021	407	0.8	12.3	2.2	23.3	47.4
2022	451	0.6	13	2.3	22.3	46.5

1st Decision	RWR	RWR	Transfer Candidate	Transfer	Full Review	Full Review
	% of Decisions	Average days	% 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
2021	32.7	7			67.3	56.8
2022	31.3	6.3	2.3	5	66.4	61.8

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
2021	33.2	9.6
2022	35.2	8.5



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	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
Ecology	52	117	112	124	118	114
Evolution & Phylogeny	28	69	57	73	62	64
Reproductive Biology	22	55	42	37	51	41
Anatomy and Morphology	13	49	33	37	36	43
Ecophysiology	8	24	27	35	37	21
Systematics & Phytogeography	7	20	21	34	18	23
Genetics	4	17	25	36	29	31
Developmental Biology and Developmental Genetics	4	14	6	9	13	13
Paleobotany	9	14	16	28	12	16
Physiology and Biochemistry	11	11	17	19	22	30
Population Biology	14	10	14	13	19	21
Biomechanics	0	6	2	7	1	6
Economic Botany	3	6	8	5	2	4
Cell Biology	0	3	3	4	2	8
Education	0	1	0	0	1	1
	175	416	383	461	423	436

The manuscript number for 2023 is through July 5.

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

Corresponding Author Country	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
UNITED STATES	164	126	192	170	172
CHINA	57	73	70	85	75
CANADA	25	11	15	20	18
INDIA	25	12	16	6	14
BRAZIL	21	24	26	33	36
MEXICO	14	17	18	21	19
SPAIN	13	16	13	12	20
JAPAN	11	17	15	17	20
FRANCE	10	2	8	8	10
GERMANY	9	9	11	5	9
PAKISTAN	9	9	7	8	2
SWEDEN	9	4	2	3	2
UNITED KINGDOM	7	6	20	9	2
CZECH REPUBLIC	6	7	5	10	4
ARGENTINA	5	3	11	3	6
AUSTRALIA	5	7	6	3	5
IRAN (ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF)	5	6	3	5	4
RUSSIAN FEDERATION	5	4	2	2	1
CHILE	4	1	3	4	5
ISRAEL	4	2	2	3	1
SOUTH AFRICA	4	1	1	1	5
EGYPT	3	2	3	0	1
ETHIOPIA	3	1	3	0	1
ITALY	3	1	1	2	2
POLAND	3	1	0	3	4
BELGIUM	2	2	1	0	0
KOREA, REPUBLIC OF	2	0	4	2	2
SWITZERLAND	2	5	5	2	4
TUNISIA	2	0	0	0	1
AUSTRIA	1	1	1	1	0
BANGLADESH	1	1	0	0	1
CAMEROON	1	0	0	0	0
COLOMBIA	1	3	4	1	4
COSTA RICA	1	0	0	0	1
DENMARK	1	2	0	0	2
FINLAND	1	1	0	0	0
HONG KONG	1	1	0	0	0
LATVIA	1	0	0	0	0
SAUDI ARABIA	1	1	2	0	1
SRI LANKA	1	1	0	0	0
THAILAND	1	2	0	0	0

TURKEY	1	1	0	1	1
URUGUAY	1	0	0	0	0

***AJB* Impact Factor and ranking among Plant Science Journals, 2006–2022.**

Year	Impact Factor	Rank
2022	3	72/262
2021	3.325	72/238
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

The Impact Factors for other botanical journals also experienced subtle, and not-so-subtle changes (thanks, Sean, for this information):

Annals of Botany 5.04 --> 4.2

New Phytologist 10.323 --> 9.4

Frontiers in Plant Science 6.627 --> 5.6

Journal of Systematics and Evolution 3.544 --> 3.7

IJPS 3.142 --> 2.3

Syst Bot 0.933 --> 1.0

Taxon 2.586 --> 3.4

Also: Annals Mo BG 1.927 --> 1.9

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).