

## *Plant Physiology*. The Next 5 Years

With this issue of *Plant Physiology*, I am honored and a bit daunted to take on the editorship responsibilities for the journal. My vision for *Plant Physiology* is simply stated: To be the premiere comprehensive plant biology journal in the world. The transformation of *Plant Physiology* over the past decade has been stunning, and I have a great deal of admiration for what has been accomplished under Maarten Chrispeels' and Natasha Raikhel's leadership. The process has been both bold—continuously pushing us beyond our comfort zone—and progressive—building on new ideas and past successes to change and advance the journal. The financial strength of ASPB has been an absolutely vital enabling factor in the reinvention and dramatic advancement of *Plant Physiology*. The plant biology research community has clearly endorsed the new directions taken by the journal, accounting for the consistent ability of *Plant Physiology* to attract the elite scientists in plant biology as associate and monitoring editors and for the steep ascent in number of submissions. In order to sustain and further advance *Plant Physiology*, I am committed to continue the innovation and the introduction of fresh ideas, ensure that the journal welcomes the best science done across the full breadth of modern plant biology, insist on advancing the quality of what is published, place high value on the quality of production, and be highly attentive and responsive to the rapidly changing face of academic publishing.

The new initiatives that I have in mind to further advance *Plant Physiology* emerge from my belief that the journal would substantially benefit by becoming more proactive about illustrating the importance of the science that we publish. Toward this end, beginning next month, *Plant Physiology* will begin featuring a highly influential paper selected from research articles published in the journal during the previous two years. This new feature will be called **High Impact** and is designed to track the impact that the published research had on subsequent research by other groups. In addition, we will generate news releases for the most significant research published each month with the goal of enhancing the coverage of *Plant Physiology* articles in scientific magazines and other media. Because the editorial board and I believe that concisely written papers improve the impact of what we publish, there will be a limit of 10 journal pages for submissions after January 1, 2006. While longer papers will be permitted at a higher page charge, we believe that the 10-page target will be a positive incentive for tight composition, reduced repetition, and appropriate use of supplemental data files.

One metric of the expanding influence of the research published in *Plant Physiology* is a doubling of the journal's impact factor. Indeed, by virtue of its impressive impact factor and broad disciplinary appeal, *Plant Physiology* is the world's most highly cited plant journal. The high visibility and influence of research published in *Plant Physiology* offer the opportunity to further broaden the disciplinary arena in which the journal receives high-caliber submissions. For example, *Plant Physiology* offers the opportunity for high-caliber papers in environmental, evolutionary, and agricultural plant biology to be published in a journal with higher impact and greater penetration than would otherwise be possible in more specialized disciplinary publications. The composition of the new editorial board reflects my invitation to the broad research community of plant biologists to submit their best work to *Plant Physiology*. It is important to recognize that each of the 75 editors listed on the masthead has equal authority in deciding what gets published in *Plant Physiology* so that all can be assured that their submissions will be decided on by an individual knowledgeable and sympathetic to their area of inquiry.

An important reason that I became interested in the position of editor-in-chief is because of special challenges that will face our Society's journals due to the rapid and dramatic changes that the future portends for academic publishing. Open Access, the "free availability and unrestricted use" of published research, is the preeminent force driving change in academic publishing. Recent proposed legislation illustrates that publishers will not necessarily be in control of the transition, and Open Access could be thrust upon us with little warning. The ASPB journals have been in the forefront among plant journals, both commercial and not for profit, in leading the way in all aspects of electronic publishing. This was bold, it showed foresight, it was made possible by ASPB's strong financial standing, and our journals and, thus, ASPB have benefited substantially from this leadership role. I believe strongly that we also need to be in the vanguard on Open Access. We need to step out beyond our comfort zone and deliberately move closer to Open Access while we still have the flexibility to experiment and adjust or, if necessary, reinvent our publication business plan. Indeed, important steps have already been taken, such as shifting a portion of the cost of publication from libraries to authors and releasing our journal content to public access after 12 months. I will advocate strongly for progressively reducing our proprietary hold on journal content below 12 months as well as further reducing our reliance on library subscriptions. I am convinced that full Open Access will happen and that it may well happen during the 5 years that I will be editor-in-chief.

[www.plantphysiol.org/cgi/doi/10.1104/pp.104.900169](http://www.plantphysiol.org/cgi/doi/10.1104/pp.104.900169).

I am also convinced it will be those journals/publishers that drive the transition internally that will emerge the strongest scientifically and with a functioning business plan.

I would like to close this inaugural editorial by sharing with you my charge to the editorial board. "Our objective is to publish innovative science of the highest quality across the broad disciplinary scope of the journal. Currently our acceptance rate is about 30% of submitted papers, and with continued growth in the number of submissions there will be an even greater focus in coming years on accepting only those manuscripts that are the very best in their field and enthusiastically supported by reviewers and editors.

You will encounter instances in which ad hoc reviewers recommend acceptance even though the paper falls below the high standard of *Plant Physiology*, and in these cases it is up to the monitoring editor to overrule the consensus. In our Instructions for Authors, we state that work reported in *Plant Physiology* should be vigorously executed, provide new information, and move the field to the next level. If you adhere to these editorial principles you need not be concerned about your acceptance percentage." Finally, I encourage you to share your suggestions and criticisms about what we are doing and how we are doing it with me; they may not always result in a change, but all serious suggestions will be given serious attention.

**Don Ort**  
**Editor-in-Chief**  
*Plant Physiology*