

RT-Plant Physiology: Full Open Access Publishing at No Charge to ASPB Members

Beginning with the January 2007 issue,¹ all papers in *Plant Physiology* corresponded by ASPB members will be published with full Open Access. This means that anyone with an Internet connection anywhere in the world will have instant full access to your paper as soon as it is published, i.e. *Real-Time Plant Physiology*. This includes full access to the publish-ahead-of-print version (*Plant Physiology Preview*) as well as to the final, fully edited version, full access to supplemental data, and full access to all the advanced linking and tracking tools. Since more than 50% of the papers currently published in *Plant Physiology* are corresponded by ASPB members, more than half of the papers in the January 2007 issue will be fully Open Access. We anticipate that the proportion of Open Access papers will increase as submitting authors join ASPB to become eligible for this new member benefit.

Last month I announced that also beginning with the January 2007 issue, charges for the first printed color image in *Plant Physiology* articles will be waived for those corresponding authors who are ASPB members (Ort, 2006). This is in addition to the already offered discount on page charges for ASPB members, as well as discounted subscriptions to the print versions of both *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell*, free electronic access to *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell*, and a discount on registration fees for ASPB meetings. Annual membership in the American Society of Plant Biologists is \$115 for regular members (<http://www.aspb.org/membership/>) and considerably less for postdocs and students. Additionally, beginning with articles submitted October 1, 2006, free online color will be offered to all *Plant Physiology* authors. With the online use of *Plant Physiology* growing at a rapid rate, online color is becoming evermore important. This new feature will allow you to have color images in the online version of your article and black and white in the print version for no charge. Online-only color adds value when color is not critical for data interpretation but aids in presentation.

Why should you be concerned whether or not your article is published with Open Access? In addition to helping fulfill the altruistic academic aspiration of making new knowledge as widely available as possible, there are strong reasons to believe that Open Access drives higher impact and citation by accelerating recognition and dissemination of research findings. A recent longitudinal bibliometric analysis of Open Access vs. non-Open Access papers published over a

6-month period in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* supports this premise (Eysenbach, 2006). Even in a journal widely available in research libraries and one that publicly releases its full content after 6 months, Open Access articles were found to be twice as likely to be cited in the first 4 to 10 months compared to non-Open Access articles. While it is still too early to have a full picture, based on citation information out to 16 months postpublication, the study projected that the early recognition has been sustained and is resulting in more total citations and higher impact over time. *Plant Physiology* and *The Plant Cell* have for the past 10 months offered a similar author fee-based Open Access option. Since we introduced this option in *Plant Physiology* with the December 2005 issue, about 10% of the articles published in our journal have been Open Access. These articles, on average, have been accessed about 10% more often and downloaded approximately 20% more often than the non-Open Access articles published in the same volumes. It is somewhat puzzling why this so. While there is a cohort of readers that do not have subscription access and thus must wait until *Plant Physiology* releases content 12 months after publication, I believe a stronger factor is the ease with which Open Access papers can be directly viewed from various sorts of Web searches. Although it is too early for citation data on *Plant Physiology* Open Access papers to be meaningful, we believe that this early recognition will translate into an increase in article citations and impact as was seen for the 15% of articles in *PNAS* with that journal's author fee-based Open Access. Since more than 50% of the papers published in *Plant Physiology* during 2007 and beyond will be Open Access, I am a strong believer that the journal will grow in impact and stature as a result.

ASPB President Mike Thomashow, in a recent article in the *ASPB News* (<http://www.aspb.org/newsletter/>), laid out the financial risks for the Society that are associated with Open Access. While *Plant Physiology's* membership-based Open Access model mitigates those risks, I nevertheless believe that the plant biology community will be very grateful to ASPB for signing on to this bold experiment: *RT-Plant Physiology*.

LITERATURE CITED

- Eysenbach G (2006) Citation advantage for open access articles. *PLoS Biol* 4: e157
Ort DR (2006) ADD COLOR! *Plant Physiol* 141: 1163

¹ All papers submitted after October 1, 2006, will be eligible for this benefit.

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