

New Faces behind the Scenes

Download any article from *Plant Physiology*, whether recent or from past decades, and chances are you will instantly recognize it to be from the journal. Most readers associate the layout, typeface, and presentation of our articles with the high standards of *Plant Physiology* and the innovative science we publish. Authors, too, know *Plant Physiology* for its commitment to them. My coeditors and I remain dedicated to supporting the scientific community and give each submission the very best of care and personal attention. As authors ourselves, we are well aware that much is often at stake in a submission, and we take these concerns seriously. Our commitment is unwavering. Thus, over the coming months readers and authors will notice a few changes in how we publish and the way that we work behind the scenes. I am confident that these changes will benefit the journal and the scientific community going forward.

This month sees the first *Plant Physiology* articles published to undergo editing by professional science editors following editorial acceptance. Those of you who have published in our sister journal, *The Plant Cell*, will be familiar with the postacceptance scientific editing service that the science editors provide, led by *The Plant Cell* Senior Features Editor Nan Eckardt. They have done much over the past decade to enhance the quality, accessibility, and professional look of that journal. The science editing at *Plant Physiology* will be conducted by the team at Plant Editors (planteditors.com), an independent plant science editing service started by three of the science editors working for *The Plant Cell*: Jen Mach, Nancy Hofmann, and Kathy Farquharson. I am especially grateful to Jen, Nancy, Kathy, and their team for undertaking this new challenge, and to Nan Eckardt, who has been a great help in planning this endeavor for *Plant Physiology*. Unquestionably, introducing science editing is the most significant change to manuscript handling by *Plant Physiology* since I started as Editor-in-Chief in 2013.

I welcome the efforts of the Plant Editors and trust that authors will appreciate their input aimed at enhancing the online visibility of each article and its accessibility to readers from the widest of backgrounds. The Plant Editors will be looking to improve readability (with particular focus on the title and Abstract), formatting, and consistency with journal standards. They will communicate with authors, raising queries and suggestions, including edits for journal style. Of course, as an author, you will have the

opportunity to review and amend any revisions, and I hope you will work constructively with the Plant Editors to get the most from your publication with the journal. Inevitably, this new workflow will add one or two weeks to postacceptance handling before articles first appear online, but the delay is a small price to pay for the long-term benefits.

I will also be working with the Plant Editors to check each article for image handling and presentation. Readers may be familiar with my disquiet over the rise of PubPeer and anonymous vigilantism in scientific publishing (Blatt, 2015, 2016; Teixeira da Silva and Blatt, 2016), but these views do not mean that *Plant Physiology* is complacent or that I am unaware of the concerns within the community about data mishandling. The Plant Editors will be looking to ensure consistency in formatting and compliance with journal standards in image presentation. Authors may be asked by the Plant Editors to supply the original images for one or more figures before their article is approved and can advance to final publication. I direct authors and readers in doubt to my editorial with Cathie Martin (Blatt and Martin, 2013) and for guidance to the Information for Authors on figure preparation online.

Plant Physiology has a responsibility to ensure that what we publish meets the highest scientific and ethical standards. I am certain that our efforts will help authors to improve the presentation of their work and to further raise the high standards I and my coeditors set for the journal. I expect, too, that the changes to the way we handle manuscripts will raise awareness on acceptable practice in image preparation. Evidence indicates that the majority of cases of image mishandling arise out of ethical ignorance, and such cases are always best dealt with before an article is published. I am confident that our efforts will help to educate while reducing the incidence of inappropriate image manipulation and strengthening the content we publish for the community.

Michael R. Blatt
Editor-in-Chief, *Plant Physiology*

LITERATURE CITED

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- Blatt MR (2016) When is science ‘ultimately unreliable’? *Plant Physiol* **170**: 1171–1173
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