Editorial

Plants Molecular Biology: A Commitment to Excellence in Plant Sciences

After almost two years as Editor-in-Chief for Plants Molecular Biology, I am pleased to report about progress the journal has made in gaining impact among the international journals and improving its editorial review process. And we have more changes planned for the near future to serve the research community as a leading journal in the burgeoning field of plant sciences.

Since it was founded in 1981 by Robert A. Schilperoort, Plants Molecular Biology continues to rank among the leading journals. In a recent survey of the top 25 journals for plant papers published during the years 1992–2002, PMB ranks number 6 for total citations and number 16 for citations per paper (http://www.esitopics.com/arab/journals/e1a.html). These strong rankings are especially notable considering the breadth of papers on many different plant systems published in Plants Molecular Biology. While the Editorial Board recognizes this important scope of the journal, we also feel that current trends in plant research offer unique opportunities to publish more high-impact papers in development, intracellular compartmentalization and traffic, signal transduction, functional genomics, proteomics, and bioinformatics. The next few years will see a rapid increase in information from expression analysis of fully sequenced plant genomes, from elucidation of organelle and cellular proteomes, and from the changes of metabolite patterns in response to environmental stimuli. This information requires new computational approaches and bioinformatics tools to understand the biological networks that control plant form and function. Plants Molecular Biology stands ready to consider manuscripts that use functional genomics and computational biology tools to address important biological questions. Results from such experiments must advance our understanding of key plant developmental, molecular and biochemical processes. To demonstrate its dedication to the publication of high-impact papers, several new internationally leading scientists have been appointed to the Editorial Board.

The introduction of the electronic manuscript management system, Editorial Manager™ in 2001, has greatly improved the editorial review process. The average time from manuscript submission to an editorial decision is now six weeks or less, and the Editorial Board is committed to further improvements. The Author Instructions have been revised to provide guidance on the type and impact of manuscripts that will be considered for publication in Plants Molecular Biology (http://www.kluweronline.com/issn/0167-4412). As a service to the authors, the Editorial Board has decided to return manuscripts without review in the future if they do not comply with journal policies or if they are unlikely to pass the editorial review process. Authors are encouraged to submit supplementary material, especially for papers that report results from large datasets of profiling experiments. It is important to note, however, that the format of such data sets must follow internationally accepted standards and must be fully accessible to the scientific community. For details, authors may contact the publishing manager of the journal, Jacco Flipsen (jacco.flipsen@wkap.nl). Manuscripts that have been accepted for publication in Plants Molecular Biology will be posted immediately on the Kluwer website and can be accessed free of charge until publication volume and page numbers have been issued. Kluwer editorial and production staff is also committed to print Plants Molecular Biology papers as soon as possible after they have been accepted.

Plants Molecular Biology will continue to provide up-to-date reviews and publish special issues on selected topics. Several special issues have already been commissioned, including the rice genome, plant meristems, the evolution of plant disease resistance loci, and on important, but neglected crops such as cassava. Authors are encouraged to contact the Editor-in-Chief with suggestions for special issues, or if they feel that their original research article may be particularly well suited for a special issue. The Editorial Board is also developing new features for Plants Molecular Biology, including regular information on plant databases and development of functional genomics tools, as well as providing free web access to the top article selected from each issue.
The Editorial Board and I realize, however, that the impact of *Plant Molecular Biology* can only be sustained with the help and support from the plant science community. Tradition alone is no assurance for excellence—exciting discoveries, insightful results and new models of plant biological processes are key to the quality and impact of our journal. We are therefore committed to work with the authors and the scientific community to attract the best science and most innovative work in plant biology. And we would like to thank our colleagues in the plant science community who have supported the journal with their research in the past and who will continue to choose *Plant Molecular Biology* for publication of their work in the future. Our appreciation also goes to the many colleagues who have provided their precious time for critical, but supportive reviews that have maintained the high standard of research published in the journal. Together, we can look forward to a bright future for *Plant Molecular Biology* during an exciting era of discoveries in plant biology.

Wilhelm Gruissem
Editor-in-Chief