

Functional Plant Biology in 2015: new features and incentives for authors

Dear colleagues,

It is just over 8 months since I accepted the position of Editor-in-Chief for *Functional Plant Biology*, so it is time to reflect on the future of the journal and highlight a few new initiatives and incentives for authors.

The journal has a proud history (>40 years), and its standing in the scientific community is as solid as ever. Many thanks to Rana Munns who did a fantastic job running it for the last 5 years! We are currently sitting at an IF of 2.57 in Thompson Reuters Journal Citation Reports, and I am certain it is merely a matter of a year or two until we get above the 'psychological' 3.00 threshold. More importantly, high impact factors *per se* aren't the goal: it is the quality of science that matters. From my point of view, FPB has always been highly respected amongst its peers, and I will do my best to ensure that this tradition is maintained.

Yet, we are living in a rapidly changing world. Research funding is becoming more and more competitive, and the rules are constantly changing. So, we will ensure that FPB keeps abreast of these changes and will maximise benefits for authors. This is especially important now when the number of open access journals has skyrocketed, and each of us receives regular invitations to organise special issues for many journals, some of which we have never heard of. I'm not going to discuss the reasons for the 'predatory' behaviour of some publishers, but I do want to emphasise that, in such murky times, the quality and reputation of the journal, and its contributors, is arguably the only true guide for making a sound decision.

So, what lies ahead for *Functional Plant Biology*? Here are few recent updates and new features that will be available from 2015:

- New **Fast Track** publication option (otherwise called 'near misses'). This option is aimed at authors who have submitted their work to a high impact journal (IF 7 or higher), received positive comments from reviewers, but have failed to fully satisfy the reviewers' demands and thus just missed the opportunity to publish. When submitted to FPB, such papers will be fast-tracked and expedited to acceptance (within 7 days) *without undertaking a new review process*. Publication will not be automatically guaranteed; the quality of submission will be the main criterion for rendering a positive decision. The ultimate decision will be made by the EiC after consulting one of the Editorial Board members and will depend on the extent of reviewers' comments on original submission and how the authors have addressed their concerns. In light of the above, an essential condition for Fast Track submission will be supplying a full set of referee reports and the authors' rebuttal letter detailing the handling of all the reviewers' comments.
- **Functional Plant Biology Hall of Fame**. In recognition of the outstanding contribution to the journal from former authors we are going to create a list of most cited authors under the umbrella

of the 'FPB Hall of Fame'. The main criterion for inclusion will be the number of citations for a specific paper accumulated over 10 consecutive years. Once a paper hits 150 citations over a 10-year rolling period (from 2002), the senior (corresponding) author of the paper will be included in the list, which will be published on the journal's website. As a small token of appreciation, we will also give him/her free access to the journal for 1 year and the option to publish one open access paper free of charge.

- Forthcoming **Special Issues**. Very shortly, the call for two new special issues will be made. One special issue is entitled **Roots and Rhizosphere** and will be dedicated to various aspects of interaction root-soil interaction and root sensing and signalling of environment. Another special issue will be on **Extremophiles** and will cover various aspects of biology of plants living in extreme environments. So, please keep your eyes open on the new announcements and submit your next article to one of these Special Issues!
- **Farewells**. After 6 years of service, Prof Michael Udvardi has stepped down as an Associate Editor of FPB to focus on his role as a Director of Plant Biology at the Samuel Roberts Noble Foundation. We thank Michael for his terrific work on the journal and hope to dwell on his expertise as a reviewer in the future.
- New **recruitments** to the Editorial Board. Four new members were recruited to the journal's board, to reflect the current shift towards cell biology and mechanisms and signal transduction pathways by which plants adapt to extreme environmental conditions.
 - **Dr Peter Bozhkov**. Peter is a group leader and Associate Professor at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences in Uppsala. His laboratory is studying the mechanisms and function of catabolic processes during plant development, aging and stress response at the molecular, cellular and organismal levels. They have made a foundation contribution to mechanistic understanding of proteolysis and the role of autophagy in programmed cell death.
 - **Dr Vadim Demidchik**. Vadim is a Head of Department of Plant Cell Biology and Bioengineering at Belarusian State University (Minsk, Belarus). Previously, he worked as a postdoc at the University of Cambridge (2000–2005) and as a Lecturer at University of Essex (2005–2011). His research embraces topics in plant ion channels, receptors, signalling, oxidative stress, programmed cell death and nanotoxicology.
 - **Dr Ismail Turkan**. Ismail is a Full Professor in Department of Biology at Ege University (Turkey) since 1994. He is a Head of research group that specializes on reactive oxygen species biology, redox signalling and antioxidant defence in

plants under stressed conditions. He has over 50 publications in high impact plant biology ISI-listed journals, which received over 1700 citations.

- **Dr Ulrike Mathesius.** Ulrike is an ARC Future Fellow and Associate Professor at the Australian National University. She is particularly interested in nitrogen fixing symbioses in legumes and defining unique developmental steps in nodule development that could enable nodule formation in non-legumes. Her research has discovered parallels and unique

differences between developmental mechanisms for nodule development with that of parasitic nematode-induced galls and lateral roots.

We welcome the new Associate Editors and are certain they will be a great asset for the journal.

Sergey Shabala
Editor-in-Chief,
Functional Plant Biology