

***Plant Ecology and Evolution* becomes Open Access with reinforced team**

Natacha Beau¹ & Elmar Robbrecht²

¹Production editor

²Editor in chief

When the journal *Plant Ecology and Evolution* was launched in 2010 by merging two former titles (*Belgian Journal of Botany* and *Systematics and Geography of Plants*), the motivations of the co-publishers were to maintain and strengthen their editorial expertise, and to establish an international publication venue appreciated by plant biologists, with digital access and good visibility.

Keeping a long tradition of science accessibility, the co-publishers decided to offer their services at no charge: authors did not have to pay to submit their manuscript and publish in *Plant Ecology and Evolution*, and individual readers did not have to pay to access the online version of the papers. To this end, Meise Botanic Garden (at the time “National Botanic Garden of Belgium”) and the Royal Botanical Society of Belgium pooled their budgets and staff capacities to provide high standard of editorial follow-up and cover online and print production costs. However, the copyright and access policies of *Plant Ecology and Evolution* were still restrictive, so the journal could not qualify as “full Open Access”.

In the last decade, the landscape of academic publishing has changed drastically, and so did the costs to adapt and maintain high quality digital access. Besides, expectations of authors, readers and research funders have evolved in terms of access, dissemination of scientific results and re-use of research data. Facing these challenges, the journal can count on the reactivity of its editorial team and on the support of the co-publishers.

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share, copy, adapt, and re-use the journal content, provided the original work (author and source) is properly cited.

These new copyright and access terms are in line with most open access mandates defined by institutions (universities, public institutes...) or funding agencies. They also match the leading principles of the two non-profit organisations co-publishing the journal: encourage and stimulate scientific research on all plant groups, expand our knowledge on the plants of the world, and make this knowledge available to the scientific community and beyond, for the common good.

This shift in the journal’s policies is not established at the expense of authors: they do not have to pay any fee or charge to submit their manuscript and to publish in the journal. Meise Botanic Garden and the Royal Botanical Society of Belgium finance all costs. This model is sometimes referred to as “Diamond Open Access” or “Platinum Open Access”. To maintain this inclusive “no charges” policy, authors are asked to rigorously apply format and technical requirements mentioned in the Author Guidelines to prepare the manuscript files. The aim of this high expectation is to alleviate the work load of the associate editors and of the production editor.

Ever since its foundation, our journal was published by plant biologists for plant biologists. That way, the journal could keep its independence for more than 150 years now. We consider that going Open Access is another important measure to ensure our autonomy for the future.

The medal of sovereignty, however, has a reverse side. *Plant Ecology and Evolution* is published with limited financial means and depends on the pro bono effort of a team of associate editors. We are therefore happy to announce that Prof. Dr. Isabel Larridon accepted to join this team from 2019 onwards.

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Plant Ecology and Evolution is published by Meise Botanic Garden and the Royal Botanical Society of Belgium
ISSN: 2032-3913 (print) – 2032-3921 (online)



Isabel is B.A. Krukoff Curator of African Botany in the Identification and Naming department of Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (U.K.). She is visiting professor at Ghent University (Belgium). Her PhD research was on phylogeny and taxonomy of Cyperaceae. She continues to be involved in several research projects focusing on the sedge family. Being also engaged in Kew's Tropical Important Plant Areas (TIPAs) programme, she has much widened her expertise to African & Madagascan plants (Annonaceae, Eriocaulaceae, Ochnaceae, Rubiaceae), Neotropical plants (Cactaceae, Magnoliaceae), and interdisciplinary research to tackle global challenges concerning biodiversity conservation and sustainable development.

We believe that Isabel Larridon's expertise will be beneficial to support the editorial tasks and warmly welcome her in our team.