

Editorial

Botanica. Where are we, and where are we going?

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Botanica (formerly *Botanica Lithuanica*) is an open-access international scientific journal published by the Nature Research Centre (Vilnius, Lithuania). The journal was established in 1995 by the Institute of Botany in cooperation with Vilnius University and Vilnius Pedagogical University. In the following period, due to various administrative changes, the number of founding members of the journal decreased. Currently, the journal is published by the Nature Research Centre (<https://botanicalithuanica.gamtc.lt/lt>).

The first Editor-in-Chief of the journal, Dr Romas Pakalnis (1941–2020), wrote in an editorial published in the first issue of the journal: *As we commence the publication of this journal, we hope that it will contribute to a versatile analysis of the botanical diversity of Lithuania, description of the natural conditions in our country and presentation of the obtained data to the whole scientific society* (Pakalnis, 1995). The journal soon became known outside Lithuania, and over 27 years, it has published papers by authors from all continents.

Botanica will continue to maintain its current scope accepting papers in botany in the broadest sense. Researchers are invited to submit scientific publications dealing with the diversity, taxonomy, ecology, physiology, morphology and anatomy of plants, algae, fungi, bacteria and plant viruses. Researchers are also encouraged to submit papers that analyse the interrelationships between various groups of these organisms and their relationships with animals, the environment and human activities. Nevertheless, we believe that the journal should focus more on the dif-

ferent levels of biodiversity to discuss the theoretical and practical aspects of conserving ecosystems, habitats, individual species or their populations.

The results of numerous studies show that in the recent decades, the world has been losing biodiversity at a rate that has never been seen before (Turney et al., 2020; Palombo, 2021), making biodiversity research and conservation among the most important current challenges (Nesshöver et al., 2016; Cohen-Shacham et al., 2019; Prober et al., 2019). It is crucial to make the results of biodiversity research available as widely and effectively as possible to the scientific community and decision-makers. It is also essential to share good practices in implementing various biodiversity conservation measures and approaches. We invite scientists and conservation practitioners to prepare and submit for publication in *Botanica* both the results of in-depth research and case studies based on the practice and experience of implementing conservation measures.

Another essential contemporary phenomenon of biodiversity change, caused by human activity and driven by climate change, is the spread of alien species (Bradley et al., 2010; Downey & Richardson, 2016). Invasive species alter the native plant communities and ecosystems, thereby changing the functioning of native biodiversity; also causing economic damage (Linders et al., 2019; Novoa et al., 2021). The results of research on alien and, especially, invasive species are becoming crucial to understanding the processes in ecosystems and developing a practical framework for mitigating the negative impacts of alien species. Early detection of new alien species in

an area before they have spread and caused irreversible damage to local biodiversity is critical. Therefore, we invite researchers working on complex interactions between species or invasion processes and practitioners involved in eradicating and controlling invasive species to publish their papers in *Botanica*. We also encourage researchers to disseminate information on newly discovered alien species of plants, fungi, algae or other organisms. Such data can help identify emerging invasion risks and draw the attention of researchers in neighbouring regions to the possible introduction of new species in other areas.

Many scientific journals have recently started charging for publishing papers of open access. *Botanica* has been and will continue to be free of charge, at least for the foreseeable future. We believe that this publication policy enables all researchers, regardless of their economic situation and financial resources, to publish their research results freely accessible to the scientific community. In addition, this journal is an excellent platform for young researchers and freelancers to publish their research results. The quality and relevance of the scientific ideas will be the essential criterion we have used when accepting research papers for publication. We encourage all authors to deposit electronic versions of their papers in publicly accessible paper repositories or websites.

We cannot yet compete on an equal footing with the large publishers of scientific journals and achieve high citation rates quickly. Nevertheless, we hope that with the help of the highly qualified and world-renowned scientists who make up the editorial board of *Botanica*, we will soon be able to achieve even greater visibility and recognition for the journal. Furthermore, we hope that previous contributors and new authors will join us in improving and promoting *Botanica*.

We continue to invite scientists and researchers from different regions to collaborate with *Botanica* and submit original research papers, reviews, case studies and communications. We look forward to receiving your manuscripts and invite you to continue your fruitful collaboration!

The current editorial board members, the subject editors and the entire journal staff express their sincere gratitude to the former Editor-in-Chief of the Journal, Dr Jolita Radušienė, who diligently and sincerely worked for the journal from 2012 to 2021. We

also express our thanks to Prof. Dr Ernestas Kutorga (Vilnius University, Vilnius) for his work in the editorial office since the establishment of the journal and the publication of the first volume in 1995. Our sincere thanks to the members of the Editorial Board, Dr Yoshinori Asakawa (Tokushima Bunri University, Japan), Dr Tia-Lynn Ashman (Pittsburgh University, USA), Prof. Dr Lyle Craker (Massachusetts University, USA), Dr Berndt Gerhardson (Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, Sweden), Dr Chandra Prakash Kala (Forest Research Institute of India, India), Dr Maria Ławrynowicz (University of Łódź, Poland), Dr Izolda Pašakinskienė (Vilnius University, Lithuania), Dr Karen Rengefors (Lund University, Sweden), Dr Halvor Solheim (Norwegian Forest and Landscape Institute, Norway) and Dr Pertti Uotila (University of Helsinki, Finland) for their dedicated work and their contribution to the improvement of the quality of the journal until the end of 2021.

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