

Dear reader

welcome to the first issue of the fifty-sixth volume of *Maydica*. Starting with this issue, *Maydica* will be published using an open access publication model, meaning that all interested readers will be able to freely access the journal on line, without the need of subscription. With this modification, the Editors intend to better adapt to the current style of the scientific community addressing the research topics covered by *Maydica*. The key request of researchers across the world is unrestricted access to research publications. Open access gives a worldwide audience larger than that of any subscription-based journal and this will increase the visibility of published works.

During the past years, *Maydica* has been noteworthy in publishing papers, all of good quality, as demonstrated by the wide interest received. In particular, this journal has honored noted maize breeders and geneticists in several commemorative issues: beginning in 1977 with that of William A. Russell, **A major contributor to maize breeding**, with several issues passing in 1985 to the Nobel Prize Barbara McClintock, with an issue entitled the **Beginning of maize genetics to the explosion of molecular activity**, to Ronald L. Phillips' issue in 2009, entitled **Cytogenetics to Genomics**. We understand that these commemorative issues were highly popular among the maize scientific community and, thereby, in the near future we intend to publish several more special issues dedicated to other scientists

It is the intent of the Editors of *Maydica* to reach greater insights in the next years that will see plants genomic findings enriching the plant breeding activity. In recent years, an impressive number of advances in genetics and genomics have increased our understanding of structural and functional aspects of plant genomes and have integrated basic knowledge in ways that can enhance our ability to improve crop plants to our benefits. For instance, the complete sequence of maize and sorghum, two crops that are target of *Maydica*, as well an enormous number of plant expressed sequence tags (ESTs), along with comprehensive transcriptome, proteome, metabolome and other 'omics', have become available producing massive datasets, as relevant resources for advancing fundamental knowledge of the biology of plants to be applied in molecular breeding and biotechnology. Therefore, we felt that it was time to reorganize our Editorial Board structure to include considerable more experts and, hence, provide additional cover for new and exciting areas of plant sciences dedicated to maize and related species improvement. These scientists, who are all volunteers, will be continuously involved in guiding the journal, future development, and ensuring its interactions with the entire maize and

related species communities.

All articles published in *Maydica* will continue to be peer-reviewed. The journal will publish solicited and unsolicited articles of original research, reviews or mini-review articles (technical and non-technical), short communications, commentaries, surveys, opinions, bioinformatics tools, and case studies in the field of genetics, genomics, molecular biology, biochemistry, physiology, breeding, and agronomy of maize and related species. These species are mainly members of the *Andropogoneae*, such as *Sorghum*, *Panicum*, *Penisetum*, and other relevant genera. Articles treating similar species (*Brachypodium distachyon*) or as an energy and biomass crops (e.g. *Saccharum* spp, *Jatropha curcas*) are also being welcomed by *Maydica*.

The Editorial Team is also interested in hearing from you, our readers, about other titles for possible special issues. Great unresolved biological themes still wait for a solution that include: yield potential, heterosis, dehydration tolerance, plant immunity to diseases, photosynthetic environmental fitness, germplasm conservation, technological qualification, biochemical and metabolic networks and their regulation, and the list can be significantly increased almost at will. Although, worthwhile publishing, special issues are time-consuming; hence the Editorial Team would be interested in receiving feedback from appropriately experienced researchers interested in co-editing scientific special issues.

Maydica welcomes the submission of manuscripts meeting the general criteria of significance and scientific excellence and will publish original articles in basic and applied research. We invite our readers and the Editorial Team members to submit manuscripts for publication in the next issues. There is not a more effective way to improve the scientific standard of this journal that submitting good quality articles.

Our objective is to inform authors of the decision on their manuscript(s) within four weeks of submission. Following acceptance, a paper will normally be published on-line within the next week and, subsequently, in the next printed issue. Instructions for authors, and further details are available on the *Maydica* website: <http://www.maydica.org>.

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