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EDITORIAL

V. Gianinazzi-Pearson · F. Andrew Smith

Mycorrhiza 2002 – a productive year

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The year 2002 was a highly productive one for researchers working with mycorrhizas ('mycorrhizasts') worldwide. This is obvious from the increased number and scope of papers submitted to Mycorrhiza from many countries. The impact factor of the journal has gone up to 1.467 (Journal Citation Reports 2001) in recognition of the quality of papers published therein and we will continue to strive towards this goal in the future.

Although a specialised journal, Mycorrhiza provides an interface with a broad range of topics and multidisciplinary approaches. Although physiology and ecology remain strong features of the journal, mycorrhizal research is (not surprisingly) seeing more and more emphasis placed on molecular approaches, in areas such as fungal systematics and evolution, recognition phenomena, cell fine structure and interface activities. In the end, all these facets impact on the ecology of mycorrhizal plants – in other words, on the ecology of the vast majority of vascular plants.

The young science of molecular mycorrhizal ecology is thriving and hot topics such as specificity or otherwise of mycorrhizal fungi with respect to colonisation of individual plant species and diversity in mycorrhizal function will doubtless receive increasing attention. More generally, the release of 'Mycorrhizal Ecology', edited by Marcel van der Heijden and Ian Sanders and published by Springer in the 'Ecological Studies' series, is a significant milestone that will help embed mycorrhizas in the mainstream of plant ecology.

The widespread relevance of mycorrhizal symbioses is also demonstrated by their inclusion in presentations at several international conferences in 2002 that were certainly not 'mycorrhiza-specific'. Without going into details, international conferences that attracted a prominent mycorrhizast participation included 'Impacts of Soil Microbes on Plant Population Dynamics and Productivity' (Helsinki), 'Rhizosphere, Preferential Flow and Bioavailability: a Holistic View of Soil-to-Plant Transfer' (Ancona), 'Plant-Soil Interactions' (Beijing), 'Functional Genomics of Plant-Microbe Interactions' (Nancy) and, at a more global level, the 7th International Mycology Congress (Oslo). The themes of these conferences speak for themselves. All of them were valuable in widening conceptual frameworks of delegates from a variety of disciplines within the soil-plant research continuum. In 2003, there will be more interdisciplinary conferences and, in addition, this is the year of ICOM4, the Fourth International Conference on Mycorrhizae/Quatrième Conférence Internationale sur les Mycorhizes, to be held in Montreal, Canada, from 10–15 August (see the Mycorrhiza Newscorner). We look forward to seeing there many Mycorrhiza authors, readers and reviewers, and hope that the much-awaited International Mycorrhiza Society will be launched along with this journal as its publication outlet.

We thank our Editorial Board and of course the Springer journals production team for their work on behalf of us all.

Reference

Van der Heijden MGA, Sanders I, eds (2002) Ecological Studies 157, Mycorrhizal ecology, Springer, Berlin Heidelberg New York

V. Gianinazzi-Pearson (✉) · F. A. Smith
Managing Editors