

## Editorial

### 1902–2002 Promoting plant science

Superficially, almost everything about *New Phytologist* has changed in 100 years. In 1902, the scope of plant science (then botany) was narrow and largely descriptive – there were few papers that were quantitative or analytical, or which described any experimental work. In 2002, such papers are the norm, and the scope is vast, ranging from global ecology to the type of molecular studies featured in this issue. The readers of volume one would not even have had ‘genomics’ in their dictionaries. While for most of its history the journal could only be read on paper, this is rapidly changing as the online edition is increasingly the medium of choice. However, below the surface, less has changed. *New Phytologist* is still trying to deliver much the same things as was its founder, Arthur Tansley – ‘... a medium of easy communication and discussion between British botanists ...’ For ‘British botanists’ now read ‘plant scientists around the world’: the development of *New Phytologist* is featured on pp. 10–16.

As *New Phytologist* enters 2002, a number of exciting projects are under way. Most visibly, the *New Phytologist* Trust – the charitable organization that owns the journal – will be funding three major international meetings: Impacts of soil microbes on plant population dynamics and productivity (Helsinki, Finland 10–14 June – see <http://www.biocentre.helsinki.fi/nps2002/>); Heavy metals and plants (Philadelphia, USA, 8–10 September); and Genomics of plant–microbe interactions (Nancy, France, 23–25 October). As usual, the trust is pleased to be able to offer a number of bursaries for those research students and post-doctoral scientists who are presenting posters. This year, in honour of its founder and to help the teachers who have

found them such a valuable tool, the trust is also making free Tansley review material available on the website – see <http://www.newphytologist.com/>. The Tansley reviews were established in 1985, as part of the charitable programme, and have developed into a unique article type, with their in-depth analysis combined with very personal perspectives.

The good health of the journal today is borne out by the increased number of pages that we will be publishing in 2002, following on from the record number of papers in 2001. This issue continues our series of featured areas in plant science, with reviews on model legumes, and includes an incisive commentary on the renaissance of interest in biological nitrogen fixation (see pp. 2–6). The other papers highlighted in this issue bear testament to the high quality of submissions to *New Phytologist*, from diverse fields. We are also pleased to introduce a new category of article, Rapid reports, which build on the success we have achieved in recent years in bringing down submission-to-publication times. Early in 2002 we will be introducing ‘article-by-article publishing’, allowing online subscribers to read papers as soon as they have been prepared for publication rather than having to wait for the hardcopy of the journal.

A huge ‘thank you’ to all those who have contributed to the success of the journal over the years, but especially the authors, the life blood of scientific publications, and the referees who have given so much of their time in peer review. 2002 is a proud year for everyone associated with the journal, and we hope you will join us in the simple wish that *New Phytologist* continues to flourish.

Peter Ayres,  
Executive Editor

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Managing Editor