

Editorial: New Format, Sections, and Design for MPMI

Dear Readers of MPMI:

This issue marks the first anniversary of my tenure as Editor-in-Chief of MPMI, and I thought it was a propitious time to give you a progress report on the state of the journal and a preview of what lies in store for the future. This has been a year of learning for me, which has been greatly facilitated by the support that I have received from staff at the American Phytopathological Society in St. Paul, where MPMI is published. In particular, I would like to thank Miles Wimer, Director of Publications; Jean Rice, Editorial Supervisor; Steve Kronmiller, Production Manager; and Ina Pfefer, Editorial Records Coordinator, for the professional and timely manner in which they produce each issue of MPMI.

At the outset, I would like to restate emphatically that the goal of MPMI is to publish high-quality science that is related to the molecular biology of plant-microbe interactions. On the other hand, I also want to stress that MPMI is not limited to publishing papers involving recombinant DNA techniques. Rather, biochemical, cell biological, and genetic studies will be considered for publication in MPMI if they are an intrinsic part of or a prerequisite for an in-depth molecular characterization. If you are not sure whether a particular topic is appropriate for MPMI, I urge you to discuss it with me or one of the Senior Editors. Starting with this issue, I will be serving specifically as the editor for papers that deal with the host response to microorganisms.

MPMI now begins its sixth year of publication with a total circulation of 1,594 (425 library and 1,169 personal subscriptions). Importantly, MPMI now operates in the black, a very respectable accomplishment for a relatively new and specialized society-based journal. The number of submissions to MPMI has grown each year since its inception, reaching 113 submissions for the period July 1991–June 1992. It appears likely that the number of submissions will increase substantially during the next 12-month period as the molecular biology of plant-microbe interactions receives increasing attention. One of most attractive features of MPMI is the relatively fast review and publication schedule. Due to the international character of MPMI, some papers inevitably get stalled in the review process. Nevertheless, over the course of the past 12 months, the average time lapses between submission and acceptance of a final revised manuscript and between acceptance and publication, were 2.9 and 2.5 months, respectively. These are excellent statistics, considering the bimonthly publication schedule.

A number of significant changes occurred this past year. First, in addition to my appointment as Editor-in-Chief, three new Senior Editors were appointed. Stanton Gelvin succeeded Stephen Farrand as Editor for prokaryotic pathology, Adam Kondorosi succeeded Desh Pal Verma as Editor for prokaryotic symbiosis, and Richard Michelmore succeeded Forrest Chumley as Editor for fungus-plant interactions. Second, MPMI is now being printed in a perfect binding format

rather than being stapled, permitting the title of the journal, etc., to be printed on the spine. Third, an illustration is now being printed on the cover of each issue. Fourth, new reviewer forms have been designed that make it easier for referees to give feedback to the editors. Finally, Mike Sadowsky resigned as Editorial Advisor. His role had been to review figures to make sure that they met certain scientific as well as graphic criteria. Jean Rice at APS Press has now assumed these responsibilities.

This issue of MPMI introduces some major change in format. Most apparent are the reduction in size of the lettering of “Molecular Plant-Microbe Interactions” on the cover, to make more room for photographs; a reduction in the size of the typeface within the journal; a reduction of the column width from 9 cm to the industry standard of 8.3 cm; and placement of the “Materials and Methods” at the end of each article.

In addition to the changes, which affect the appearance of the journal, MPMI will offer a new section called “For the Record” which will be clearly indicated in the Table of Contents. Papers in this section will be refereed and will consist primarily of molecular data useful for typing pathogens or for constructing physical-genetic maps of pathogens or host plants. A DNA sequence of a gene of unknown function or the DNA sequence of gene that was previously sequenced in another species would also be suitable for this new section of MPMI. For the Record papers will generally be one to four printed pages long. The editorial board has established this new section of the journal because many laboratories are producing molecular data that are very useful to the plant-microbe interaction research community but that do not warrant a full paper or a research note.

The final new feature of MPMI that will be offered is a nonrefereed section called “Commentary,” which will also be identified clearly in the Table of Contents. The first contribution to the “Commentary” section appears in this issue—a proposal for the nomenclature of *Pseudomonas* avirulence genes by Alan Vivian and John Mansfield.

Finally, I would like to make some comments on the relationship between MPMI (the journal), the American Phytopathological Society (APS), and IS-MPMI (the International Society). MPMI is published by the APS, which owns the copyright. An Executive Committee on Publications has been established to oversee the publication of MPMI. This committee has six appointed members, three each from APS and IS-MPMI. In addition, a royalty agreement is being negotiated under which IS-MPMI will receive a modest share of the proceeds from the sale of MPMI.

Two major challenges face MPMI in the future. The first is to increase the number of submissions so that MPMI can move to a monthly publication schedule. This will require an approximate doubling of the current rate of submission. I encourage all of you to submit your papers to MPMI,

including manuscripts for the two new sections, "Commentary" and "For the Record." In addition, please contact me if you are interested in writing a "Current Review" for MPMI or have suggestions for topics that could be reviewed. Finally, I would like to encourage you to submit either black and white or color photographs (or diagrams) for the cover. It is not necessary for cover art to be identical to a figure in a submitted manuscript; a related photograph is also appropriate.

The second challenge that faces MPMI is to increase the number of institutional library subscriptions. These are tough financial times for libraries, as for all of us, and libraries

are looking for excuses to reduce the number of journals to which they subscribe. Clearly, if MPMI is not readily available in libraries, it is less attractive for authors to submit their work. You can play an important role in the future of MPMI, not only by submitting your papers, but also by encouraging your library to subscribe.

Thank you for reading, subscribing to, and contributing to MPMI.

Sincerely,
Frederick M. Ausubel
Editor-in-Chief