

# NATIVE PLANTS

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*includes* ANNUAL NATIVE FORBS AND SEED ISLANDS





*An eclectic forum for dispersing practical information about planting and growing native plants.*

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We are each a part of a small, close-knit group of people whose professions allow us to concentrate our work on issues that advance the conservation and use of native plants. As such, I see special comradery among our reading audience. We tend to support one another in our work and to take great joy in the successes of our colleagues. In that light, I would like to encourage each of us to extend that collaboration to something you may not have previously thought of as critical support—assistance with reviewing the scholarly work of our co-professionals.

The associate editors for the *Native Plants Journal* volunteer their time to manage the peer review of manuscript submissions. Over the past year, I have observed a monumental increase in the percentage of review requests issued by the associate editors that have been declined. In fact, as I wrote this letter, two messages copied to me have come across my screen as review assignment refusals. The problem is reaching a critical juncture. The first impact on the journal is that we are seeing longer time periods between manuscript submission and publication of a finished paper. I expect the next impact will be a slow decline in individuals willing to volunteer their time in associate editor roles as the level of frustration rises among these volunteers. Ultimately, our ability as NPJ staff to publish your work will be in jeopardy. Given the unique mission of this journal to support on-the-ground researchers with their publication needs, that result will represent a critical loss in practical published information.

If my recent experiences involving reviews and review requests are typical, I can fully understand the recent reticence to accept review assignments. One is the impact of COVID-19 on our professional lives. Logically, a reduction in our ability to travel, complete elements of our duties, and work-at-home policies would create more time for scholarly tasks; however, in my own life, I have seen the opposite condition. The process of completing my job has become very complicated and time-consuming as I have been required to learn and apply new processes and methods to complete tasks that were once simple and taken for granted. Time has become a valuable commodity. The second reason is a shift in the worldwide scholarly review and publication landscape. Historically, we each responded to requests for review services from a few journals relevant to our discipline. Now, we are each flooded with review requests from pertinent and impertinent journals based who knows where in the world. Personally, if I accepted all requests that appeared on my computer, I would easily accrue 2 or 3 assignments each week. It's too much, I can't do it. So, what do we do?

First, I encourage each of us to make time to provide the critical service of manuscript review for colleagues attempting to share their work in *Native Plants Journal*. (If you are reading this letter, this is your journal.) If, like me, you struggle for time to complete review assignments, I suggest we be more selective in providing such services. Maybe we take a pass on foreign requests and reserve time for the domestic and subject-relevant journals within which we personally publish. Maybe that will help us all.

Good luck and may COVID-19 soon fade into memory.

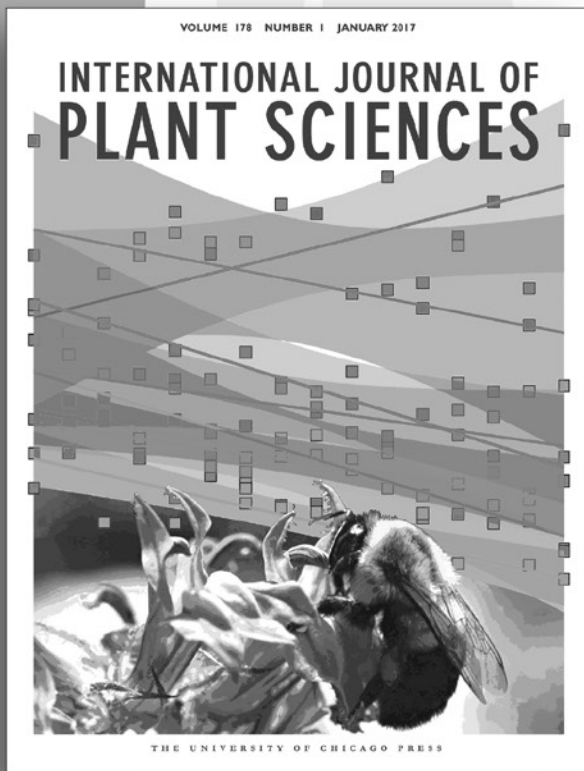


**Stephen L Love**  
Editor-in-Chief

**On the cover:** Restored wetlands and spring creek ponds created for waterfowl habitat in southwestern Montana. See the associated article by Tara Luna on page 81. Photo courtesy of River Design Group, Whitefish, Montana



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