

*Plant Health Progress* is an official publication of The American Phytopathological Society (APS). The mission of *Plant Health Progress* is to promote the exchange and dissemination of new information to enhance the health, management, and production of agricultural and horticultural crops. The deliberate goal of *Plant Health Progress* is to publish scientifically acceptable manuscripts, relevant to plant pathology and plant health, in the shortest time possible. The papers and opinions published in the journal reflect the views of the authors and are not necessarily the views of PMN, APS, the *Plant Health Progress* Board, or the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

Responsibility for editorial policy of *Plant Health Progress* is vested, according to the bylaws of the constitution of APS, in a *Plant Health Progress* Board consisting of the Editor-in-Chief, senior editors, advisors, associate editors, the APS Director of Publications, and the APS Treasurer. The Editor-in-Chief, senior editors, and feature editor coordinate editorial policy. The Editor-in-Chief and treasurer, as members of the APS Council, are responsible to that body in all matters relating to publication of the journal. The Editor-in-Chief and APS Director of Publications, as members of the APS Publications Board, report to APS Council through the Publications Board, which serves to coordinate the policies and procedures of the editorial boards of all APS publications.

Associate editors, senior editors, and the feature editor are nominated by the Editor-in-Chief and appointed by the Council, usually for terms of 3 calendar years. Associate editors serve as reviewers. Senior editors and the feature editor assist the Editor-in-Chief and are delegated full responsibility for the disposition of peer-reviewed manuscripts. Senior editors, the feature editor, and associate editors are selected on the basis of subject matter competence from lists obtained by the Editor-in-Chief from members of the Board, the APS Council, and on occasion, APS subject matter committees. Geographic location and institutional affiliation are also considered in selecting a board to represent the entire society. The numbers of associate editors and senior editors are set by the Editor-in-Chief. One-third of the associate editors are appointed each year. The terms served by senior editors and the feature editor are normally concurrent with that of the Editor-in-Chief. The Editor-in-Chief serves as assigning editor, referring manuscripts to appropriate senior editors.

Contributed articles appropriate for publication in *Plant Health Progress* contain subject matter in one of the following categories: (i) Original research on some aspect of the occurrence, management, or applied epidemiology of plant diseases, including new techniques in plant pathology. Subject matter is a criterion for determining suitability of an article for publication, and the author must establish relevance and application to plant health and the mission of *Plant Health Progress*. (ii) Reports of new diseases and epidemics. Such reports may be published as regular articles in *Plant Health Briefs*. (iii) Review and Mini-Review articles. These are semi-technical illustrated articles. (iv) Diagnostic Guides, *Plant Health Management*, Survey articles, and NPDRS Recovery Plans. Articles in these sections deal with subjects such as crop or commodity losses or computer programs for instructional or diagnostic information that are inappropriate for the research format. (v) Editorials present opinion and philosophy of scientists and science administrators, regulatory

agency personnel, and political leaders that are relevant to plant pathology. (vi) Letters to the editor deal with research published in *Plant Health Progress* or elsewhere or with other matters of concern to plant pathologists. The editors may reject or require revision of letters or publish letters of rebuttal.

## MANUSCRIPT PROCESSING

Authors of non-peer-reviewed manuscripts (Perspectives and Letters) should follow a separate procedure. Submissions should be e-mailed as text, image file, and/or spreadsheet attachments to [cduling@scisoc.org](mailto:cduling@scisoc.org).

Peer-reviewed manuscripts must be submitted electronically through the *Plant Health Progress* system at Manuscript Central, <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/PlantHealthProgress>. Upon submission, the author will be given a tracking number. The submission will be approved by administration and forwarded to the Editor-in-Chief, who will assign it to the appropriate senior editor. The senior editor finds two qualified reviewers—either associate editors or ad hoc reviewers—and obtains their commitments to complete timely reviews. Reviewers are asked to complete their reviews within 3 weeks.

The senior editor evaluates the manuscript for scientific merit and technical execution, considers the reviews, decides on the acceptability of the manuscript for publication, formulates recommendations for revision (which is nearly always necessary), and informs the author.

The author revises the manuscript in accordance with recommendations and returns it to Manuscript Central. When the manuscript is returned, the senior editor will evaluate its acceptability and make an appropriate decision. If accepted, a copy of the acceptance letter to the author is sent to the PHP Editorial Office. The final accepted file returned to Manuscript Central by the author is used for technical editing.

Please note: After a manuscript has been accepted, no further changes can be made to the accepted manuscript by the author or the senior editor through Manuscript Central. The publications staff formats the manuscript, processes figures, and edits the manuscript for grammar, syntax, and style. A final opportunity for authors and senior editors to request changes to the manuscript can be made when galley proofs are emailed to the author.

PHP has made a commitment to authors that manuscripts will be rapidly published, within an interval of 8 weeks between acceptance and publication.

## REVIEW AND REVISION OF MANUSCRIPTS

Authors who wish to publish in *Plant Health Progress* must be willing to act on the recommendations of reviewers and editors, so that new and significant knowledge is clearly and concisely presented, and findings and interpretations are properly related to published work. The editors provide competent and fair review for every manuscript and aid authors in presenting information clearly and economically. Since manuscripts, reviewers, and editors vary, it is impossible to apply an identical review to every manuscript.

Reviews and editorial decisions are expedited when manuscripts represent thoughtfully conceived and well-executed research and have been carefully prepared and reviewed. Manuscripts deficient in organization, word economy, format of

the journal, or technical and scientific aspects may require extended time for review.

Each contributed manuscript normally receives two simultaneous reviews. Anonymous review is preferred, although reviewers may identify themselves. Whenever possible, reviews are obtained from individuals who have expertise in the subject area of the manuscript. Reviewers are contacted by senior editors in advance of review assignments and asked to commit to completing their evaluations within 3 weeks.

Reviewers recommend that the senior editor accept, accept with revision, or reject a manuscript. An analysis of the scientific and technical strengths and deficiencies of the manuscript accompanies the recommendation. Reviewers and editors also assist authors by noting grammatical and spelling corrections and suggesting improved or alternative wording and reorganization where this will help clarify and condense the message.

Acceptability of a manuscript depends on whether the research findings or observations are new and significant or whether the opinion (in a letter or editorial) or review of a topic (in a feature article) is sufficiently important to plant pathology. Appropriateness and adequacy of techniques and statistical analyses, recognition of previous work on the same or related subjects, and adequacy of preparation of the manuscript are secondary criteria; however, gross inadequacy in any of these categories may result in rejection of a manuscript. Although a decision about a paper's suitability can be reached with some degree of confidence in most cases, decisions are often difficult. The integrity of the journal in such cases rests on the experience and objectivity of the reviewers and editors and on the care they take in evaluating manuscripts.

Manuscripts that receive two favorable reviews nearly always require some revision before publication. The changes suggested may be only minor ones, but occasionally major reorganization, substantial deletion, rearrangement of illustrations, or condensation of tabular information may be required. Authors must complete their revisions within 3 months. Manuscripts resubmitted more than 3 months after the completion of review without prior permission from the senior editor are treated as new submissions subject to a new round of review. Before accepting a

manuscript, a senior editor must determine whether the author has satisfactorily complied with previous instructions. The editor may consult the original reviewers regarding the acceptability of revisions. If not satisfied with the revisions, the editor may require further revisions.

The senior editor assigns the acceptance date only after all revisions have been completed by the author and the manuscript is ready for publication.

If one reviewer recommends acceptance and the other rejection, the senior editor may decide, without further review, whether or not the paper should be published. Alternatively, the editor may send the manuscript to a third reviewer. The editor may ask for a full review if one of the original evaluations appears to have been superficial, but often the advice needed is on a specific question. Sometimes the third reviewer is provided with anonymous copies of the first two reviews and asked to assist in deciding which recommendation to follow. If a satisfactory revision of the manuscript seems feasible, the editor will suggest changes by which the author can satisfy as many as possible of the objections raised by all reviewers.

If two reviewers recommend rejection of a manuscript, the senior editor usually follows this recommendation. The reviewers and editor usually suggest ways to expand, repeat, or refine the work so that an acceptable paper eventually can be prepared.

If a manuscript is rejected, the author may ask the senior editor to reconsider the decision, and if not satisfied with the senior editor's response, may appeal to the Editor-in-Chief, whose decision is final.

Delays in the review process are to be avoided. If one reviewer cannot complete the assigned task, the senior editor has the prerogative to accept the manuscript on the basis of one review (plus detailed editorial evaluation). Normally, however, the editor obtains a second review.

After deciding on acceptability of a manuscript and reporting to the author, the editor sends each reviewer a copy of the cover letter sent to the author and a copy of the other's review. This practice shows reviewers whether their main recommendations were followed and may improve future reviews when preparers of cursory reviews see the output of more conscientious colleagues.

## **PUBLICATION ETHICS POLICIES**

The editors of PHP support commonly held standards of ethics and principles shared by scholarly professional publishers. For the publication ethics policy of *Plant Health Progress* at the American Phytopathological Society website, see [http://apsjournals.apsnet.org/page/Ethics\\_Statement](http://apsjournals.apsnet.org/page/Ethics_Statement).