

Zeitschrift: Bulletin of the Geobotanical Institute ETH
Herausgeber: Geobotanisches Institut, ETH Zürich, Stiftung Rübel
Band: 62 (1996)

Vorwort: Editorial
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Editorial policy

The *Bulletin of the Geobotanical Institute ETH* was first published in 1928 as the annual report of the Institute, and it has always included some scientific contributions. The *Bulletin* continues to report the activities of the Institute on an annual basis, but the main contents of the journal are more scientific papers. Although the *Bulletin* presents current results and new research projects of the Institute, we would like to include a growing number of contributions from outside the Institute. The focus of the Journal is on ecology and systematics of plants and fungi, but contributions on interactions of plants and animals and on landscape ecology are also welcome. Descriptive and experimental studies of communities, populations, individuals and their interaction with other organisms are all acceptable.

Instructions to authors

The *Bulletin* is published on an annual basis in May (price per volume 40 Sfr). The deadline for submission is the end of December of the previous year. Manuscripts in English are preferred, but German contributions will also be accepted. Three copies and one disk copy (3½-inch diskettes; Word, Excel) of the manuscript with all illustrations and tables should be sent with a covering letter to Dr. J. Kollmann, Geobotanisches Institut ETH, Zürichbergstrasse 38, CH-8044 Zürich, Tel. 0041-1-632-4307, Fax: 0041-1-632-1215, kollmann@geobot.umnw.ethz.ch.

Authors must confirm that the manuscript has not been submitted elsewhere. All parts of the manuscript must be typed double-spaced, with margins of 2.5 cm. The style of the manuscript (especially of the references) should be adapted to the last issue of the *Bulletin*. Abbreviations and symbols must be defined when they are first mentioned. The elements of the manuscript should be presented in the conventional order, including up to six keywords. For a description of these elements we refer to the current international standard of scientific papers. Manuscripts are submitted to two reviewers for evaluation of their scientific soundness and significance. Authors will generally be notified of acceptance, rejection, or need for revision within 1–2 months. Fifty offprints are supplied free of charge. Additional reprints may be ordered when authors will receive the proofs for checking.

Preface

PETER J. EDWARDS

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The way in which the results of scientific research are communicated has changed significantly since the *Berichte des Geobotanischen Institutes* was first published in 1928. At that time it was quite usual for important research to be published in the house journals of research institutes and universities. In Europe, an enormous number of such house journals still exist, though their importance as organs for the communication of science has steadily declined. As a glance at almost all scientific papers will show, a rather small number of journals in any field now dominate the literature. For example, in ecology less than ten journals account for the great majority of all citations. What are the reasons for this increasing dominance of a few journals? There are probably many factors at work, but two seem especially important. Firstly, with the enormous increase in scientific activity and the growing number of institutions which undertake research, it is simply not practical for each one to have its own publications. It is more convenient and more economical for there to be a few internationally recognised publications. Secondly, all academics face growing pressure to justify their activities by demonstrating that they have a significant impact upon the development of their research field. Publication of results in international journals with a high impact factor has become one of the most important criteria for judging research success.

Against this background, the time had come for us to take a close look at the publications of the Geobotanisches Institut, Stiftung Rübél. The *Berichte* has a long and distinguished tradition, and is widely known and respected, especially in continental Europe. After much thought, we have decided that it still has a useful role to play, since we believe that it offers the opportunity to publish papers of high quality which for some reason may not be appropriate for the major international journals. For example, we can publish research which is of regional interest in central Europe, but may be regarded as too parochial for some journals. We can also publish short notes or pilot studies for which no publishing opportunity exists elsewhere. Finally, we can provide a platform to describe work currently in progress and a forum for new ideas. Whatever the form of the paper, however, its quality is important. All papers will be refereed, and the standards for acceptance will be rigorous. In keeping with the international nature of science, we have decided that papers should, whenever possible, be in English.

This is the first issue of the *Bulletin* in its new format. We hope that readers approve of the changes, and we welcome any comments and suggestions for how it might be improved. In particular, we hope that people will want to publish in this journal, and look forward to receiving contributions.

