

## With gratitude for the *Journal of Plant Research*

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Four years have passed since I got a telephone call from Prof. Hirokazu Tsukaya, the Editor-in-Chief at that time of the *Journal of Plant Research* (JPR), who encouraged me to take his position during the 2013–2016 term. Now, it is my turn to hand over my role to Prof. Kouki Hikosaka, a new Editor-in-Chief for the 2017–2020 term. Prof. Hikosaka will start his mission from March 2017, 2 months after the beginning of the New Year owing to administrative reasons of the Botanical Society of Japan (BSJ) as a Public Interest Corporation.

Four years have passed too quickly to maximize the international credibility of JPR (Nishida 2015) despite the strong financial support of KAKENHI. We were able to organize six international symposia in the past BSJ meetings held in 2014, 2015, and 2016, but only 14 articles from the initial two symposia held in 2014 have been published in 2016 as special issues (Terashima et al. 2016; Kong and Okajima 2016). Our efforts will be eagerly succeeded by the new editorial members. The journal's impact factor recorded 1.684 (2.081 for a 5-year score) in 2015, and this score will surely be improved this year.

### JPR symposia in 2017

JPR symposia in 2017 are scheduled as below, being based on the two international symposia held in 2015 at Niigata Convention Center.

The first JPR symposium, entitled “Expanding plant non-coding RNA world”, is published in this issue under the supervision of Drs. Misato Ohtani, Reina Komiya, and Yuichiro Watanabe. Thanks to the development of high-throughput sequencing technology, non-coding RNAs have emerged in the scope of plant researchers studying control and regulation of gene expression and development. Contributors to this symposium report and discuss recent advances in biosynthesis and molecular functions of plant non-coding RNAs.

The second JPR symposium, entitled “Fusion” in fertilization: interdisciplinary collaboration among plant and animal scientists”, is scheduled for a March issue this year under the supervision of Drs. Katsuyuki T. Yamato, Kazuyuki Kuchitsu, and Kenji Miyado. Sexual reproduction is the most important process for maintaining successive life in eukaryotes. Sexual reproduction includes gametogenesis and fertilization, but these processes include many variations and much diversity across the biological systems. In this symposium, plant and animal scientists get together to exchange and discuss their recent findings in the study of gametogenesis and fertilization processes.

A proposal for a JPR symposium is open to every member of BSJ. Applications to the next JPR symposium in the coming Annual Meeting of the BSJ, to be held 8–10 September 2017 at Tokyo Science University (Noda campus), will be called for soon. Two programs will be selected from applications, and recipients will receive some financial support from the BSJ and invitations for regular or review articles in the early issues of JPR 2019.

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## Current topics of plant sciences

We continue to accept excellent review articles under the category of *Current Topics of Plant Sciences*.

## With gratitude to all editorial members

JPR provides opportunities for publishing across the breadth of plant sciences (Nishida 2013, 2014a, 2015). We request that all manuscripts from non-native speakers of English undergo professional English editing, which is necessary for rapid reviewing and better understanding by a readership outside their own research fields. To guarantee the originality and quality of accepted articles, we would like to welcome four new editors for the 2017–2020 term: Dr. Hiroyuki Muraoka in the field of ecology, ecophysiology, and environmental biology; and Drs. Tomoaki Fujita, Hajime Wada, and Naoto Kawakami in the fields of physiology, biochemistry, and molecular and cellular biology. Dr. Ichirou Karahara, the editor in the field of morphology, anatomy, and structural biology, continues his mission for the 2017–2020 term.

I would like to acknowledge continued support from the current editors: Drs. Atsushi Ebihara, Hajime Ikeda, Eric DeChaine, Rhett D. Harrison, Shuichi Sakaguchi, Ichiro Karahara, Tomoaki Nishiyama, Thomas Berberich, and Kintake Sonoike. We welcome new Editorial Board members who begin their 4-year terms in January 2017: Drs. Yuki Mitsui, Shimpei Oikawa, Atsushi Ishida, Akitoshi Iwamoto, Yuling Jiao, Stefan de Folter, Ali Ferjani, Keiko Sugimoto, Iwane Suzuki, Michiko Sasabe, and Misato Ohtani. Miles Peterson, our editorial coordinator, is doing an excellent job in a final brush-up of the articles. The highly professional support by the Springer team, especially Angeline Stella, Yoshiko Shikano, and Yuko Matsumoto, is also to be acknowledged for the outstanding contribution of JPR in plant sciences.

Special thanks are to be given to the following former editors who have dedicated an enormous amount of their time for swift manuscript handling and decisions while maintaining high quality for the last 4 years: Profs. Kouki Hikosaka, Shuichi Sakaguchi, Masaki Ito, Maki Katsuhara, and Shinobu Satoh. We also thank those who rotate off the Board including Drs. Tzen-Yuh Chiang, Tadashi Yamashiro, Ko Noguchi, Roy C. Brown, Mitsuhiro Aida, Keiko U. Torii, Dierk Wanke, Yashuhiro Kashino, and Hajime Wada. Dr. Yasuhiro Utsumi graciously agreed to extend his mission as an Editorial Board member for a 2017–2020 term.

Finally, I would like to express my greatest gratitude to Mrs. Junko Kadkhodaei, who worked as a JPR secretary with me in the past 3 years, and Mrs. Yukiko Tezuka, for her patient work in manuscript editing and organization of international symposia. Without their dedication, I could not have accomplished my duty so successfully.

We wish you a Very Happy New Year and we welcome submissions of excellent articles in 2017.

Ikuro Nishida  
Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of Plant Research*

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