

## A ton of *Plants*



**This month's *Nature Plants* is issue 100. A lot has happened in the hundred months since issue 1, and yet much that concerned us then continues to concern us now.**

**T**he phrase 'it seems like only yesterday that ...' might be an anticipated way to start an Editorial such as this, looking back as it does over the first 100 issues of the journal.

However, it really doesn't feel like a short time since the 8th of January 2015 when we were celebrating the publication of *Nature Plants*' first issue. So much has happened in that relatively short time; within the journal, within plant science and in the world in general.

When *Nature Plants* launched, Barack Obama was still President of the United States of America, the United Kingdom was still a member of the European Union and only trained virologists had heard of coronaviruses. Since then, the Olympic games have been held twice (both summer and winter), as has the football world cup, not without controversy on both occasions. There have been terrorist attacks in major European cities, political upheavals and armed conflicts across the globe. We have experienced four years with the highest average global temperature ever recorded (and six of the hottest ten years) and a plethora of extreme weather events including devastating storms, floods and wildfires.

We have also experienced a global viral pandemic that elicited unprecedented restrictions on people's freedom of movement and resulted in **tens of millions of excess deaths** worldwide, and it is still going on. There has been a pandemic of avian flu, also ongoing, affecting wild and domesticated birds, causing over 100 million chickens

and other domestic fowl to be slaughtered since 2020.

Nevertheless, many of the topics that were preoccupying us in our first issue continue to do so a hundred issues later. In issue 1, we published a Comment discussing the potential regulation that might sensibly apply to crop varieties created by the then 'fledgling' technologies of genome engineering<sup>1</sup>. In the intervening years, genome editing has progressed dramatically and *Nature Plants* has published many important advances in the area – see for example two papers in this issue (Hu et al. and Zhou et al.) and the inversion of almost the entirety of a chromosome published in September last year<sup>2</sup> – but its regulation is if anything less clear than in 2015.

Sustainable agriculture has proved to be a frequent topic, whether represented by the Comment in issue 1 about the prospects of its improvement in sub-Saharan Africa<sup>3</sup>, by the various studies covering agroecology or by our involvement in the [collection](#) of evidence syntheses relating to the CERES2030 initiative published across a number of journals in 2020. We have also published multiple studies on the domestication of crops: maize in southwestern North America in our first issue<sup>4</sup> (prompting the memorable News and Views title 'Corn in the USA'<sup>5</sup>) or bread wheat and its relatives as investigated in a study published just last month<sup>6</sup>.

Despite the many research papers that we have published on these and other applied topics, the core of our content remains plant genetics, molecular and cell biology. For example this issue contains reports of work on transcriptional networks (Briones-Moreno et al.), gibberellin signalling (Mäkilä et al.), the genetics of sugar cane and its relatives (Wang et al.), circadian signalling (Cano-Ramirez et al.) and responses to salt stress (Liu et al.). Another

consistent feature has been the editorial team behind *Nature Plants*. Of the four editors working on the journal in 2015, three of them are still here today, while the fourth remains a close colleague on another Springer Nature title – as does one of our other long-serving editors.

There have also been a number of changes to the journal since its launch, although we hope that these 'internal' developments have gone mainly unnoticed by readers and authors. One that hopefully has not been missed relates to how our papers are published. In 2015, all of our content was only available through subscriptions or site-licences (with the exception of first publications of plant genomes); in 2023 authors have the option to publish their work open access, and we look forward to a time in the not-too-distant future when all the research in *Nature Plants* can be presented in this way.

Issue 100, while a pleasant milestone to pass, is no more special than every other issue of *Nature Plants*. In fact, while this editorial is being written, we are already assembling the contents of issue 101, and when you are reading it we will be worrying over what will be in issues 102, 103 and onwards. We will attempt to ensure that the science appearing in those issues, and all the others to 200, 300 and beyond, will be at least as interesting and important as that in the 100 just gone.

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### References

1. Jones, H. *Nat. Plants* **1**, 14011 (2015).
2. Rönspies, M. et al. *Nat. Plants* **8**, 1153–1159 (2022).
3. Sanchez, P. *Nat. Plants* **1**, 14014 (2015).
4. da Fonseca, R. et al. *Nat. Plants* **1**, 14003 (2015).
5. Larson, G. *Nat. Plants* **1**, 14009 (2015).
6. Zhao, X. et al. *Nat. Plants* **9**, 403–419 (2023).