



Editorial

Phytochemistry 2000

Issue 54:1 marks a further stage in the changes being introduced to *Phytochemistry*. We hope that the adoption of a full colour cover depicting plants and their components, along with an improvement in the paper quality has already been appreciated. In this issue we announce changes to the Editorial Board; we retain some old friends and thank those leaving the Board for their past services with gratitude. We are pleased to welcome those joining the Board, all of whom are leaders in their particular fields of plant metabolism. This issue also consolidates changes to the sections. We have introduced new sections and completely re-organised the sections of regular issues to reflect the changing emphasis in molecular plant sciences. We still retain the status of *Phytochemistry* in the description of secondary plant compounds, but due to the increasing number of these received, and also to make such reports more conveniently accessible, we are devoting one special issue in each volume for the reporting of these. Finally this issue uses the new standardised reference style.

We are pleased to announce that we will shortly commence a new section entitled 'Editorial Comment'. This will be an occasional series of articles where Regional Editors, Board members and other "guest" editors will be invited to comment on phytochemistry topics of global interest and debate. Thus we intend to raise issues relating to the GM debate, patenting of plants and plant products and, since many of the plant products come from the indigenous flora of the developing world, issues of biopiracy and the transfer of technology.

The first article in a new section "Molecules of Interest" is also published in this issue. This will be a regular series of short reviews about newly discovered plant products or new roles for well characterised compounds that are of significance in aspects of basic plant biology or of commercial or medical importance. We hope that these short reviews of topics of general interest will be appreciated by our readership.

Regular sections also show permanent changes which reflect the new emphasis of the Journal and areas of work we wish to encourage publication of in

Phytochemistry. Although we will continue to occupy a premier position in the publication of the chemistry of plant compounds, we wish to show a greater emphasis on the biosynthesis and metabolism of plant products. The advent of databases containing ESTs (expressed sequence tags) and genomic sequences indicate that individual species have a greater complement of genes coding for proteins that could potentially be used to synthesise a greater range of primary and secondary compounds, than those characteristically seen in routine analysis. This raises many questions relating to the evolution of plant metabolism and its regulation. We will encourage publication of work on the regulation of metabolism at the gene, protein and pathway levels. We will also encourage work in the genomic area that explains the capacity of plants to synthesise compounds. Recently, direct analysis, use of transgenesis or analysis of mutants is revealing hitherto unrealised capacity of plant metabolism with the discovery of new pathways. Two examples are the non-mevalonate pathway for terpenoids and the redrawing of the metabolic map describing phenylpropanoid and lignin biosynthesis. We feel that *Phytochemistry* is a natural outlet for reporting such findings and hope authors will respond positively.

We have also been exercising a new policy with regards to the reporting of structure elucidation. Rapid development of technology has allowed routine isolation and structural characterisation of natural products, and this has led to an explosion of chemical papers. Unfortunately, as a consequence of this we are receiving increasing numbers of reports of known compounds from a new plant source, or reports of just one or two compounds in a fragmentary series of papers. For various reasons, we, along with other journals, believe this should be discouraged. Therefore, only more substantial chemical work, including reasons why the work was performed will be acceptable in *Phytochemistry* in future. We will expand on the reasons for this policy, which has been in operation since mid-1999, in a future editorial.

We, the Editors, are committed to maintaining *Phytochemistry*'s particular niche while expanding its pro-

file into some of the most exciting research areas, where modern methods are being used to explore the biosynthesis and metabolism of plant products. We are also committed to aiding the authors by rapid reviewing and fast publication of their contributions. We hope this will keep *Phytochemistry* in the forefront of disseminating novel and exciting work in the areas of

research that enlighten us in understanding why plants are such consummate biochemists.

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Phytochemistry Regional Editors