



A new international journal for rapid publication of botanical taxonomy

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We are pleased to present you with the first issue of *Phytotaxa*, a new international journal for botanical taxonomy. Descriptive taxonomy—the discovery and description of taxa—is fundamental to biology and documentation of biological diversity (Wheeler 2007). With the current need to document and monitor biological diversity enshrined in international conventions (e.g. *Convention on Biological Diversity*, *Convention on Migratory Species*, *2010 Millennium Development Goals*) it is unfortunate that descriptive taxonomy finds itself marginalised within the scientific community and even in traditional centres of excellence such as natural history museums and universities (Zhang 2006). There is widespread perception among non-taxonomists that description of our flora and fauna was already completed years ago. This contributes to the bias against publications of new taxa.

Associated with this decline has been a reduction in access to media for taxonomic publication. In recent years, journal publishers/editors have prioritised non-descriptive analytical content. In addition, turnaround for publications can sometimes be in the order of years and there has been an increasing trend to levy page charges.

In an attempt to mitigate some of these trends, the journal *Zootaxa* was founded in 2001 (Zhang 2006). The aim of this journal was to provide a rapid outlet for descriptive taxonomic papers and monographs that were made available in the electronic form to increase availability and accessibility and concurrently in the printed form to conform to the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature, and was free to publish in, whilst maintaining a rapid turnaround time for manuscripts. Since its launch *Zootaxa* received tremendous support from the global taxonomic community, publishing 20 articles in its first year, which has risen to more than 2,600 articles by 2008. It currently has an impact factor of 0.74 (Zhang 2008). A major benefit of this journal is its improved access not only to research communities in developing countries but also to those in developed world institutions that are struggling to cope with the current rapid rise in cost of journal subscriptions. The success of *Zootaxa* cannot be denied, and it is extremely beneficial for the field of descriptive taxonomy (Zhang 2008).

With the same aims as *Zootaxa* but serving the botanical community, *Phytotaxa* will provide a high quality and rapid medium for the publication of taxonomic papers. *Phytotaxa* will publish descriptions of new species and longer articles that are currently difficult to publish elsewhere and often face substantial delays in traditional journals: monographs, checklists and floras. Moreover, publication of a new species, floras or monographs can be very rapid after acceptance of the manuscript.

Delays in publication will be reduced because the printed journal has unlimited pages. As soon as a volume is full, it will be published simultaneously online and in print. There will therefore be little backlog. This also eliminates the situation in which an editor rejects good manuscripts simply to control the size of the