Fire is a natural disturbance in many biomes, but altered fire regimes are a global change threat impacting both fire-sensitive and fire-dependent ecosystems. Novel fire regimes now affect many ecosystems, and as the main fuels of wildfires, plants feature prominently in our understanding of fire as part of a changing world. The American Journal of Botany is organizing a special issue to showcase studies using trait-based approaches to understand fire–plant dynamics from evolutionary, ecological, organismal, physiological, fire management, and conservation perspectives.

Plant traits—in the broad sense, including functional, species, response and effect, and emergent traits—can provide mechanistic insights across biological scales, improving our understandings of evolutionary syndromes conferring fire tolerance to plants, plant responses to altered frequency and intensity of fires, the role of plant flammability, plant community assembly under novel fire regimes, restoration in the context of fire, fire as a restoration tool, Indigenous land management incorporating fire, and many other botanical aspects of novel fire regimes.

We welcome studies using a diversity of approaches, including experiments, field studies, restoration projects, syntheses, and reviews. Given that altered fire regimes are global phenomena, we strive for a special issue with a global perspective. In particular, fire is emerging as a novel threat in many regions with historically low fire frequency, making these systems promising sites for novel fire regime studies, such as the Pacific Islands, tropical wet forests, high-elevation and cloud forests, alpine and polar forests, grasslands, and bogs. We encourage authors from all parts of the world and at all career stages to submit proposals for studies examining plant traits in the context of novel fire regimes.

How to submit a proposal: Authors interested in contributing to the “Plant Traits in Novel Fire Regimes” special issue of AJB should email a proposal to ajb@botany.org that includes a tentative title; tentative author list, including each author’s career stage and affiliation; and a 300-word abstract. The abstract should clearly convey the study objectives, biogeographic focus, plant traits examined, and scope of the novel fire regime. Please contact Special Issue Co-Editor Kasey Barton with any questions (kbarton@hawaii.edu).

The deadline for proposal submission is March 1, 2024. Proposals will be reviewed by the Editor-in-Chief and Special Issue Guest Editors; authors will be notified by April 1, 2024, as to whether their proposal was accepted. Proposal submissions from early-career researchers are particularly encouraged.

Authors whose proposals are accepted should submit their manuscript by August 1, 2024. Note that acceptance of a proposal does not guarantee the eventual acceptance of the manuscript, as all manuscripts will be rigorously peer-reviewed and held to the standards of the journal. The target date for publication of the special issue is spring 2025.

AJB is a hybrid journal, with an option for Open Access. See the Author Guidelines for details on journal scope, article types, and manuscript preparation.

Sincerely,
Special Issue Editors
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