BLUMEA JUBILEE VOLUME 50

This 50th volume of Blumea – the international Journal of Plant Taxonomy and Plant Geography of the National Herbarium of the Netherlands (NHN) – offers a good opportunity to reflect on past and future of this periodical. Begun in 1934 by the then director of the Rijksherbarium Herman J. Lam as the successor to the miscellaneous series of 'Mededelingen van 's Rijks Herbarium, Leiden' (Communications of the Rijksherbarium, of which altogether 70 issues made it into print), Blumea has always aspired to be more than just the in-house journal of our institute. From Volume one onwards prominent plant taxonomists from outside have contributed to its contents, but papers by Rijksherbarium staff and studies by others making use of the Leiden collections, and concerning the flora and vegetation of the Malay Archipelago and adjacent countries have enjoyed precedence over others. In 1999 when the three big herbaria of the universities of Leiden, Utrecht and Wageningen were merged into the decentral NHN, the scope of Blumea was expanded from Southeast Asia to tropical Africa and the Neotropics to incorporate the strengths of research and collections of the Utrecht and Wageningen branches of the NHN. Papers on European phanerogams and algae have also regularly enriched the contents of Blumea. In recent decades contributions from authors outside the NHN account for about 40–50% of all papers.

The publication of journals like Blumea, largely serving as a vehicle of immensely useful publications on plant taxonomy, will remain a core duty of large herbaria like the NHN. Taxonomic revisions are by their very nature practical aids in identification and compact sources of information, and thus condemned to low impact factors but enjoying a citation half life that exceeds that of most other branches of science. That combination of attributes makes taxonomic journals unattractive for commercial publishers and here large international herbaria and natural history museums have to take their responsibility. The NHN is fortunate in having a dedicated team of volunteer editors headed by Frits Adema and a skilled desk editor in the person of Connie Baak. It is befitting to thank them and their predecessors on the occasion of this 50th jubilee volume for their good work in plant taxonomic publishing.

Meanwhile, Blumea continues to aspire to be a journal that also includes papers on molecular phylogenetics, ethnobotany, comparative morphology and anatomy, biogeography, species concepts (Volume 1 already included a thought provoking paper on this subject by W.A. Goddijn), etc. Increasingly, Blumea will also be accessible on the web (at www.nationaalherbarium.nl). Challenging new perspectives lie ahead when web-based revisionary taxonomy, now strongly advocated by a broad constituency of botanists, zoologists and mycologists, comes of age and when taxonomic knowledge becomes available as a mix of dynamic interactive information systems on the web, complemented by milestones that also make it into hard copy of periodicals like Blumea. Nobody can foresee how volume 100 of Blumea will look like. It will certainly be very different from the format we are used to, and which has served us so well until now.

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