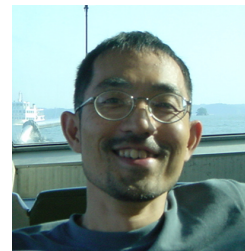


The "Plant Root" has been launched

Ichirou Karahara

Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, University of Toyama, 3190 Gofuku, Toyama 930-8555, Japan. E-mail: karahara@sci.u-toyama.ac.jp, Fax: + 81-76-445-6549



Received on January 20, 2007; Accepted on March 1, 2007

The "Plant Root" is taking off. It is fitting that we should commemorate the birth of our new journal for a moment. It is certainly an honor to have a chance to send a message for the inaugural issue. Here I would like to describe the background of launching this journal and our hopes for its destination. I think it is good to capture and write down the atmosphere now, I believe, that is shared by the people who are involved in the launching of this journal.

How did we come here? Background of the founding of this journal

Generally speaking, every research project itself tends to be increasingly specialized, which is not only the case for root research. The more our research is specialized, however, the more we want to get an overview of the area. Plant root researchers are distributed over a wide spectrum of research fields. Of course, all researchers who deal with higher plants need to pay attention to their roots. Also generally speaking, what can we say about scientific journals? Scientific journals are ranked in order of their impact factor these days. Under high competition, researchers tend to use more convenient materials and more convenient techniques. As a result, similar types of studies appear in every scientific journal, and every scientific journal appears to tend to be more generalized rather than being more specialized and thereby fostering greater diversity.

Based on that situation, active young members (including would-be young ones like me) of the *Japanese Society for Root Research* started to feel that now is the time to cultivate a journal that is specific to root research, where everybody can present ideas to root specialists across borders separating fields and countries. That would be a place where we can stimulate each other, educate each other, and help each other to think in a different way and to come up with new ideas. We finally gathered to organize the preparatory committee in May 2006. The committee discussed the scope, the medium, the organization, and the instructions for authors of the journal. Then the committee called for votes for the journal name,

and organized the editorial board in September 2006 with the help of root research experts. Of course, we still had so many technical details to discuss, like how to handle manuscripts, how to connect the journal to the scientific information network on the internet. These kinds of activities and decisions formed the foundation of the journal. Members of the preparatory committee remained on the Editorial Board and formed the steering committee to discuss these issues and build up the system. Particularly the Managing Editors, the core of the Editorial Board, have been making every effort to establish and run the system at full throttle, simultaneously handling manuscripts as their primary role.

Where are we going? Hopes and the destination

We surely know that each research area has existing high-profile journals and we do have reasons to submit manuscripts to them. In stark contrast, this journal is a newborn baby. So I cannot boldly say that we can collect all the manuscripts related to root research in this journal. However, let us pause and consider the matter in a different way. Nowadays, submitting manuscripts to high-profile journals might no longer mean that we can receive high-quality advice because of the increasing number of submitted manuscripts. In contrast, this journal boasts many well-known root scientists who have joined the Editorial Board and have started to ask for reviews to selected reviewers for the purpose of educating young root scientists and nourishing our root research community. Thanks to the small number of submissions, at least in the beginning, the authors can receive constructive and educative advice from excellent world-class reviewers through an elaborate review process. Such value of the journal cannot be measured using the impact factor.

It will take some time to be an "established" journal, of course. All we can do so far is to start and to continue accumulating knowledge and information related to root research from basic to cutting edge, from microscopic to macroscopic, from local to global, and from agricultural to environmental point of views.

This "community-driven" journal will start by offering its resources only on-line. To the extent that we try to run this journal at sustainable cost and energy, this journal will last until we understand all about plant roots. Do not let your research achievement be kept in your refrigerator. Carve it in stone instead. It might help to solve food crises or global warming problems that shall confront us all in the near future, or other problems that loom large for our descendants. Who knows? We think that exchanging information among different fields is an extremely important purpose of this journal. Therefore, even small review articles are very welcome. Ideas for featured article are also welcome. Please solicit your ideas and give us opinions about what to do in this journal and where to go in the future. Please pass at least some of your expertise on to the next generation. This journal is not

just one of a kind; it is in fact the ONLY root-specific journal. This journal also gives open access, which means that any root scientist from anywhere in the world can access its contents if they have internet access: they are our readers. Your articles will also be available to researchers forever in the future. Moreover, there is no need to worry about money to pay for color pages at all. Please submit your manuscripts to this journal and advertise your article and this journal as well by delivering it to your colleagues, collaborators, students and friends. Thank you.

Ichirou Karahara
Editor-in-chief

Editorial Board

Editor-in-chief

Dr. Ichirou Karahara
University of Toyama, Japan.

Managing editors

Dr. Hideki Araki
Yamaguchi University, Japan.

Dr. Satoru Muranaka
International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), Nigeria.

Dr. Jun Abe
The University of Tokyo, Japan.

Editors (in alphabetical sequence of family names)

Dr. Peter W. Barlow
University of Bristol, UK.

Prof. Jiftah Ben-Asher
Ben Gurion University of the Negev-beer Sheva, Israel.

Dr. Ivano Brunner
Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research (WSL), Switzerland.

Dr. Hiroyuki Daimon
Osaka Prefecture University, Japan.

Dr. Bingru Huang
Rutgers - The State University of New Jersey, USA.

Dr. Osamu Ito
Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Sciences (JIRCAS), Japan.

Dr. Maki Katsuhara
Okayama University, Japan.

Prof. John Z. Kiss
Miami University, USA.

Prof. Takayoshi Koike
Hokkaido University, Japan.

Dr. Atsushi Kume
University of Toyama, Japan.

Prof. Alexander Lux
Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia.

Prof. Shigenori Morita
The University of Tokyo, Japan.

Dr. Toshifumi Murakami
National Agricultural Research Center for Tohoku Region, NARO, Japan.

Dr. Akimasa Nakano
National Institute of Vegetable and Tea Science, NARO, Japan.

Dr. Yuka Nakano
National Institute of Vegetable and Tea Science, NARO, Japan.

Dr. Mizue Ohashi
Finnish Forest Research Institute, Finland.

Dr. Loïc Pagès
Institut National de la Recherche Agronomique (INRA), France.

Prof. Emeritus Thomas L. Rost
University of California, Davis, USA.

Prof. Shinobu Satoh
University of Tsukuba, Japan.

Prof. Lukas Schreiber
University of Bonn, Germany.

Prof. Wendy K. Silk
University of California, Davis, USA.

Prof. Hideyuki Takahashi
Tohoku University, Japan.

Prof. Shuhei Tanaka
Yamaguchi University, Japan.

Prof. Eiichi Tanimoto
Nagoya City University, Japan.

Prof. Philip White
Scottish Crop Research Institute, UK

Dr. Yajun Wu
Utah State University, USA.

Prof. Akira Yamauchi
Nagoya University, Japan.

Publisher: Japanese Society for Root Research

President

Dr. Atsushi Oyanagi
National Institute of Crop Science, NARO, Japan