



## Phytotaxa ten years on—the success of the foremost journal in botanical and mycological taxonomy

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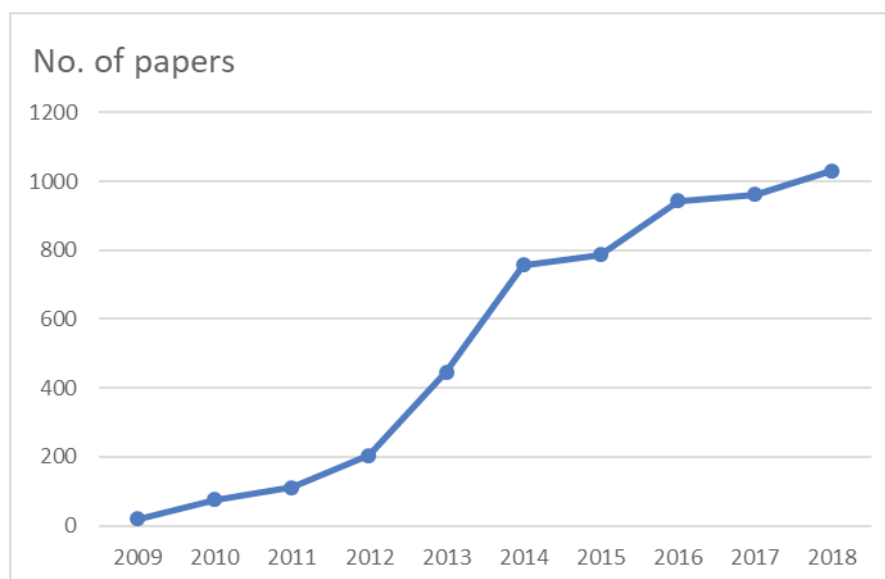
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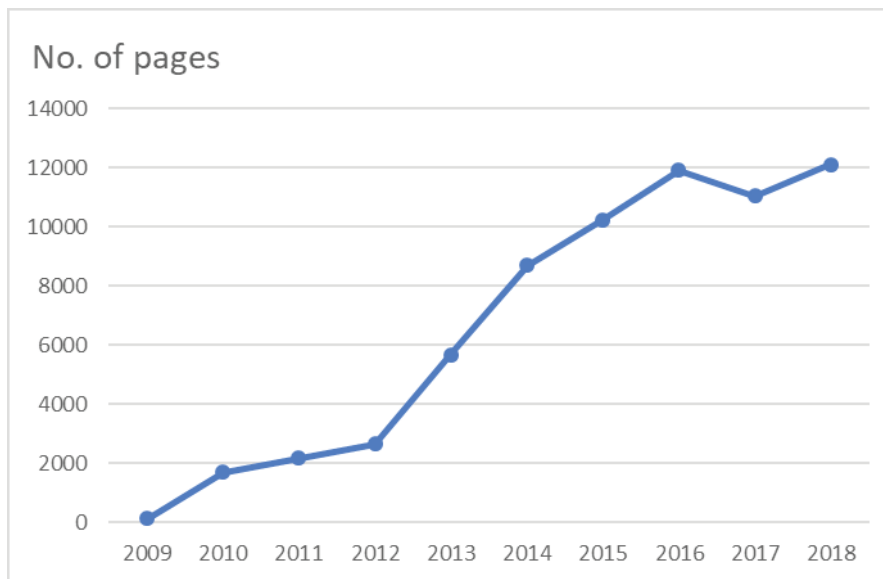
Ten years ago, a group of botanical and mycological taxonomists led by Dr Maarten Christenhusz (then at the Natural History Museum, London, UK) observed the early success of the mega-journal *Zootaxa* in helping zoological taxonomists rapidly document the world's biodiversity (Zhang 2006a, b) and the contributions *Zootaxa* had made to the progress of descriptive taxonomy (Zhang 2008). They wanted to emulate the success of *Zootaxa* and proposed to me the possibility of establishing a sister journal, *Phytotaxa*, for their community. After a short period of discussion and preparation, *Phytotaxa* was launched officially in late October 2009 to accelerate the description of plant, algal, and fungal biodiversity (Christenhusz *et al.* 2009). In its first couple of years *Phytotaxa* quickly gained community acceptance (Christenhusz *et al.* 2011a; Christenhusz & Zhang 2011) and grew rapidly over the next three years (Esser & Zhang 2012; Zhang *et al.* 2013, 2014). Now, ten years later, I review the growth and success of *Phytotaxa* during its first decade, with a focus on the last five years.

*Phytotaxa* expanded in size every year during its first decade (Fig. 1). The most rapid growth was seen in 2013 and 2014—over these two years the number of papers nearly quadrupled. By the fifth year, it was already the largest journal in botanical and mycological taxonomy (Zhang *et al.* 2014). In 2018, a new milestone was reached—the number of papers exceeded 1,000. The number of pages also increased every year except 2017 and were consistently above 10,000 during the last four years (Fig. 2). The average size of papers is 13 pages (ranging from 6 in 2009 to 22 in 2010).

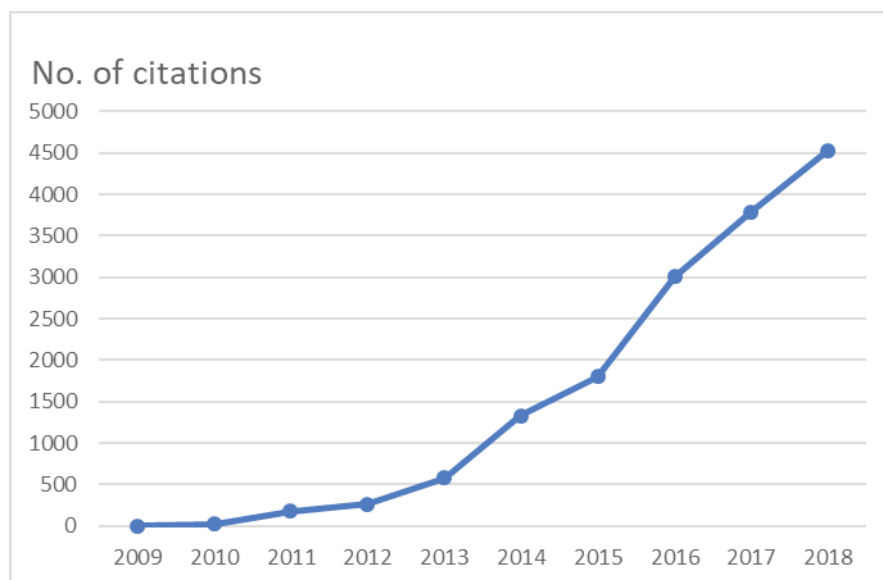
In 2011, *Phytotaxa* was accepted for coverage in *Science Citation Index Expanded (SCIE)* and all issues were indexed (Esser & Zhang 2012). This allows the analysis of citation patterns in *Phytotaxa* papers from 2009 and 2018 (Fig. 3). The last five years saw the most rapid increase in citations that *Phytotaxa* received in SCIE, culminating in over 4,500 cites in 2018.



**FIGURE 1.** The numbers of papers (all items) published in *Phytotaxa* from 2009 to 2018.



**FIGURE 2.** The numbers of pages published in *Phytotaxa* from 2009 to 2018.



**FIGURE 3.** Numbers of citations to *Phytotaxa* from 2009 to 2018 (data as of 20 Oct 2019 Web of Science Core Collection).

*Phytotaxa* has published many highly cited papers. The top 10 most-cited papers during the first ten years contributed a total of 1,289 citations to *Phytotaxa* (Table 1), with the top paper by Christenhusz *et al.* (2011d) being cited 266 times. Three of the top-cited papers were from a special issue ‘Linear sequence, classification, synonymy, and bibliography of vascular plants: Lycophytes, ferns, gymnosperms and angiosperms’ (Christenhusz *et al.* 2011b). It is interesting to note that, with one exception, all top-cited papers are revision/review papers or checklists of monographic scale and originated from developed countries; the exception was an international collaborative project to describe one hundred new species of lichenized fungi (Lumbsch *et al.* 2011).

Between 2009 and 2018, 5,552 papers by 7,920 authors from 2,610 institutions (82 records without institutions listed) in 130 countries (54 records without list of countries) were published in *Phytotaxa* (data from Web of Science Core Collection on 30 Oct 2019). In comparison, 857 papers by 1,587 authors from 724 institutions in 74 countries were published in *Phytotaxa* between 2009 and 2013 (Zhang *et al.* 2014). Thus the increase in the number of papers and authors since 2014 were most dramatic.

The top ten authors (by number of papers) are: K.D. Hyde (156), M. Von Konrat (74), A. Hagborg (73), L. Söderström (72), J.P. Kocielek (52), L.B. Zhang (50), M.B. Crespo (48), M. Kessler (47), M.J.M. Christenhusz (46), and A.R. Smith (42). It is interesting to note that (1) all these authors are based in developed countries, except one (Hyde, a British mycologist working in China/Thailand), and (2) the top 5 authors are taxonomists working on fungi, algae or early land plants.

**TABLE 1.** Top 10 *Phytotaxa* papers published from 2009 to 2018, ranked by the number of citations in *Web of Science Core Collection* (data from Web of Science Core Collection as of 28 Oct 2019)

Times cited	Title of papers	Source
266	A linear sequence of extant families and genera of lycophytes and ferns	Christenhusz <i>et al.</i> 2011d
234	The number of known plants species in the world and its annual increase	Christenhusz & Byng 2016
177	A new classification and linear sequence of extant gymnosperms	Christenhusz <i>et al.</i> 2011c
145	One hundred new species of lichenized fungi: a signature of undiscovered global diversity	Lumbsch <i>et al.</i> 2011
99	Moss diversity: A molecular phylogenetic analysis of genera	Cox <i>et al.</i> 2010
79	An updated classification for Apocynaceae	Endress <i>et al.</i> 2014
76	An inventory of the names of vascular plants endemic to Italy, their loci classici and types	Peruzzi <i>et al.</i> 2015
75	An inventory of vascular plants endemic to Italy	Peruzzi <i>et al.</i> 2014
75	APG III: Bibliographical Information and Synonymy of Magnoliidae	Reveal & Chase 2011
63	Revised circumscription of <i>Nothofagus</i> and recognition of the segregate genera <i>Fuscospora</i> , <i>Lophozonia</i> , and <i>Trisyngyne</i> (Nothofagaceae)	Heenan & Smitsen 2013

The top ten institutions by number of papers are: Chinese Academy of Sciences (701); University of Chinese Academy of Sciences Cas (214); Royal Botanic Gardens Kew (202); Kunming Institute of Botany CAS (181); Mae Fah Luang University (157); Universidade de Sao Paulo (151); South China Botanical Garden CAS (147), Missouri Botanical Gardens (143), Botanical Survey of India (142), and Universidade Estadual De Feira De Santana (126). It is interesting to see the dominance of institutions from developing or middle-income countries in this top 10 list. The top ten countries by number of papers are: Peoples R China (1,175); Brazil (996); USA (903); India (458); Germany (321); England, UK (308); Thailand (277); Spain (240); and Italy (235). Again, developing or middle-income countries are well represented. Zhang *et al.* (2014) attributed the success of *Phytotaxa* in part to the increased funding in these countries and also in part to the lack of required page charge in *Phytotaxa*—the latter enables all authors (regardless of their financial ability) to publish in this journal.

Editors play key roles in guiding the development of the journal and its quality control (Zhang 2014). *Phytotaxa* was fortunate to have a large team of 160 active editors (who accepted at least one articles) between 2009 and 2018 (Table 2). Dr M.J.M. Christenhusz served as the Chief Editor for the journal from 2009 to 2011, and Dr H. Esser during 2012: they edited a significant portion of the papers during these four years (Christenhusz did 36% from 2009 to 2011 and Esser did 17% in 2012). From 2013, I started to manage the editorial team and increased the number of active editors per year from 34 in 2012 to 60 in 2013. I further increased the team to 105 active editors in 2018. As a result, each editor accepted on average 10 papers during the last five years; this is close to the average number of papers per year for each editor in *Zootaxa* in 2013 (Zhang 2014). Editors vary greatly in the number of papers they processed due to the subject areas they covered, or their terms of editorship. Some of our editors are highly efficient and very productive. We have 13 editors who accepted over 100 papers during the last decade (Table 2). Two of these highly productive editors accepted over 200 manuscripts: A. Sennikov (288 papers) and L. Peruzzia (211 papers)—both have been active since 2012. M. Chase is also among the top 3: he accepted 196 papers during 2010–2018. Only three editors (Christenhusz, Esser, and Z.Q. Zhang) accepted at least one paper every year between 2009 and 2018. Six other long-serving editors accepted at least one paper in nine of the ten years (W. Baker, M. Chase, E. Gouda, E. McKenzie, A. Monro, W.Y. Zhuang). Sennikov made a record in 2016 (accepting 80 papers in that year).

**TABLE 2.** Editors who accepted at least 1 paper from 2009 to 2018 in *Phytotaxa* and statistics.

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	all
Sennikov A	64	46	80	42	37	16	3				288
Peruzzi L	28	37	33	60	31	17	5				211
Chase M	32	24	31	22	35	17	27	7	1		196
Esser HJ	7	15	14	11	17	42	37	8	5	1	157
Christenhusz M	1	4	12	14	14	23	23	33	23	7	154
Lamonico D	33	34	21	26	14	17					145
Lanza SB			37	51	19	17	1	2			127

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**TABLE 2.** (Continued)

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	all
van den Berg C	26	19	30	31	12	2	5				125
Gates G	24	34	29	16	21						124
Bartolucci F	23	31	37	31							122
Karunarithna S	31	34	33	20	1						119
Zhang ZQ	5	5	27	42	29	2	1	1	1	1	114
Lehnert M	27	21	17	19	13	7	3	1			108
Zhang LB	9	20	21	29	12	6					97
He H	21	29	31	11							92
Saarela J	15	20	19	18	16	2					90
Sobral M	21	15	31	15	7						89
Mckenzie E	15	11	12	9	25	6	1	1	1		81
Mansano V			15	21	15	24	5				80
Marhold K	28	12	14	12	8	4					78
Goldenberg R	18	16	14	6	13	4					71
Sajeewa M.	25	19	16	10	1						71
Hyde K	19	13	11	8	15	1					67
Lehnebach C	15	22	20	5							62
Ghobad-Nejhad M	7	10	17	10	7	6	4				61
Lehtonen S	12	11	15	12	3	5		1			59
Ma J	9	12	12	17	8						58
Cargill C	11	7	6	12	18	3					57
Gouda E	11	6	8	8	8	5	7	2	2		57
Söderström L	9	7	9	8	21	2	1				57
Delprete P	5	10	11	16	5	6		3			56
González-Gallegos JG	6	14	13	15	7						55
Luebert F	8	4	10	18	13	2					55
Williams D				6	16	15	13	4	1		55
Vorontsova M			4	8	12	23	6	1			54
Crespo M	19	13	20								52
Shaw J						33	14		5		52
Von Konrat M	10	6	4	7	4	5	6		10		52
Muasya M	12	11	8	12	4						47
Deng Y	8	17	16	3							44
Chen Y	11	14	13	4							42
Liu ZJ	10	29	3								42
Sohrabi M	2	2	5	3	22	5	2				41
Wong SY	26	13									39
Monro A	2	4	8	4	12	4		1	2	1	38
Baker W	1	5	3	5	7	5	3	6	2		37
Borges L	15	11	11								37
Kociolek P				4	19	11	2				36
Rodríguez RR			6	14	15						35
Printzen C	11	11	9	3							34
Zhuang WY	9	5	5	4	2	5		1	1	1	33
Thomas E	18	4			5	4					31

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**TABLE 2.** (Continued)

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	all
Brauchler C	7	16	7								30
Liu JK	4	5	11	9	1						30
Giulietti Harley A	7	5	5	8	4						29
Boatwright J	10	11	8								29
Reveal J				5	24						29
Samain MS	12	15	2								29
Aboal M	3	7	17	2							29
Lumsch T				7	11	4	4	1			27
Govaerts R						1	8	6	7	3	25
Hamilton P	10	15									25
de Boer H		6	9	9	1						25
Hughey J	11	7	7								25
Fritsch P	3	12	9								24
Fucikova K	13	10	1								24
Rohwer J	5	5	4	8		2					24
Nitta J	19	4									23
Lucas EJ					1	16	5	1			23
Troia A	12	9									21
Belgrano M				3	4	12					19
Davis C		3	5	3		2	3		2	1	19
Heenan P				7	5	7					19
Krings A			1	13	5						19
Pederneiras LC	4	13	2								19
Arriola AH	2	8	6	2							18
Martinez-Azorin M	8	4	6								18
Lohmann L		6	6	1	3		2				18
Rodda M	7	2	8								17
Nicodemo P	8	9									17
Utteridge T				7	6	4					17
Ruth C		2		9	5						16
Klopper R	9	7									16
Udayanga D		2	10	4							16
Yang Q	6	9									15
Fleischmann A	3	1		6	4						14
Callmander M	1	3	2	2	5		1				14
Lobban CS		9	5								14
Domina G	8	4	2								14
Freudenstein J	2	11	1								14
Pelser P						4	7	2	1		14
Carine M				3	4	2	3	1			13
Deng M	3	3	4	3							13
Oliveira R			12	1							13
Wagensommer RP	7	6									13
Van Wyk A		7	2	3							12
Endress M			6	2	4						12

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**TABLE 2.** (Continued)

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	all
Prabhukumar KM	12										12
vanEe B					3	5	2	2			12
Weigend M					1	5		4	1	1	12
Pennesi C	10	1									11
Levkov Z	11										11
Duretto M			2		4	4					10
Patova E	8	2									10
Williams J	6	3	1								10
Mejias JP	3	5	2								10
Renzaglia K	1		2	2	3	1	1				10
Wood J	6	2	1								9
Julius ML						9					9
Neinhuis C				4	4	1					9
Hongsanan S	9										9
Proschold T	7	2									9
Wilkin P		1	3	5							9
Jones G					8						8
Ameka G	2				1	3	1				7
Greuter W					5	2					7
Hughes M	7										7
Dessein S				7							7
Leavitt S	3	4									7
Antonelli A			1	2	1	2					6
Morawetz J						2	2	1	1		6
Novis P						1	3	1	1		6
Chen W	4	1									5
Edlund M						5					5
Fay M								5			5
Jones G						3			2		5
Lagomarsino L	3	2									5
Caddah M	3	2									5
Weston P		1	1	2	1						5
Moonlight P	4										4
Nobis M	4										4
Vizzini A	4										4
Trias-Blasi A			1	2							3
Braga MJ					3						3
Gurgel FD	1	2									3
Tian D	3										3
Jayawardena R	3										3
Jeewon R	3										3
Wanke S		1	2								3
Conn B					1	1					2
Ebach M			1	1							2
Del Guacchio E	1	1									2

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**TABLE 2.** (Continued)

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	all
Rumsey F				2							2
Johansen J	2										2
Wiersema J	1				1						2
Morrone J	1	1									2
Lombardi J				1		1					2
Tebbitt M	2										2
Romoleroux K						2					2
Vellinga E	2										2
Shui Y	2										2
Zamora JC	2										2
Karremans A	1										1
Maneveldt G.				1							1
Alejandro J			1								1
Mazumdar J	1										1
Conran J					1						1
Knapp S							1				1
Molau U							1				1
Horta P					1						1
Zappi D.	1										1
No-editor	3		13	13	6	6	4	23	9	3	80
Total accepted by active editors	1036	974	997	868	688	447	213	96	69	16	
Number of active editors	105	94	86	80	72	60	34	25	19	8	
Number of papers per editor	10	10	12	11	10	7	6	4	4	2	

One of the goals of *Phytotaxa* is to accelerate the publication of taxonomic papers. In 2013, it started to use the Open Journal Systems for manuscript submission, review, and online publication. This system allows automatic generation of statistics, which showed that the delay in review was reduced from 90 days on average in 2013 to 53 days on average in 2019, and the total time from submission to online publication was reduced from 203 days in 2013 to 106 days in 2019 (Table 3). The rate of rejection steadily increased from 11% in 2013 to 37% in 2019.

One of the main goals of *Phytotaxa* is to facilitate the description of undiscovered biodiversity, and *Phytotaxa* excelled doing this. It ranked as the top journal in the number of new plant names published in 2012—accounting for 9.5% all new plant names indexed in IPNI (Zhang *et al.* 2014). This share increased steadily later and exceeded 25% in 2015 (Christenhusz & Byng 2016)—a level matching the success of *Zootaxa* during its first decade (Zhang 2011).

**TABLE 3.** Journal statistics from online submission system of *Phytotaxa* (2013 to 2019).

Journal statistics	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019***
Rejection rates	11%	20%	26%	26%	27%	29%	37%
Days to review*	90	59	64	63	68	73	53
Days to publication**	203	193	172	166	181	165	106

\*Days required for peer review (from submission to acceptance).

\*\*From submission to online publication.

\*\*\* Data incomplete (up to 31 Oct 2019)

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