

Editorial: Ten years of Tropical Bryology

The first issue of *Tropical Bryology* was published ten years ago in 1989. Only quite rarely is a new bryological journal founded, and it is a risk to introduce a new journal to those already established. There are examples (e.g., *Acta Bryolichenologica Asiatica*, *Cryptogamic Botany*) of other such attempts that have failed. However, the plan to edit a new journal was based on several new ideas.

First of all, computer technology made it possible for the first time to produce a journal by desktop publishing, although the costs of a laser printer, scanner and a computer were much higher when compared with today. So we were the first bryological journal to accept contributions only on disk, according to the rule that nothing which has once been typed needs ever be retyped. This procedure is now more and more common among other journals, although we were much ahead of the trend. Since not all colleagues had computers at the time, typewritten manuscripts were scanned and then fed through a text recognition program.

Next, bryological work in the tropics was increasing. For many years, tropical bryology was synonymous with the occasional collecting and describing of species from the tropics. Now, ecological, ecophysiological, plant geographical and phytosociological work has begun in tropical areas for the first time. Additionally, many colleagues in tropical countries had difficulties in obtaining literature and journals at reasonable prices, so we introduced a 50% reduction of subscription costs for subscribers from tropical countries. This policy was later copied by another journal, but unfortunately not by more. Finally, the journal was created as a non-profit journal, meaning that the price only just covers the printing and mailing costs. That did not automatically mean that the journal would be considerably cheaper than some other bryological journals published by societies, because the relatively low membership fee for these journals is possible only by charging a much (!) higher price to libraries for the journals. But our price is still low when compared to all other journals and the price has also only risen slightly, to \$5-6/100 printed pages for subscribers from tropical countries, and double that for all others. We are probably the last journal providing 100 reprints for free.

Another new innovation was the 'disk version'. All text and illustrations were available from the beginning on disk, first as ASCII-Text, later as a Windows-version, provided by Brian O'Shea. However, this version has not been much appreciated by subscribers. Apparently readers want to have journals on their bookshelves and not on the computer. Today it is possible to edit *Tropical Bryology* as facsimile edition on CD, but preparing the old volumes for such an edition is a much time consuming matter.

So *Tropical Bryology* started with several new innovations: a computer produced, non-profit journal, a focus only on tropical bryology, and a considerable price reduction for subscribers from tropical countries. The fact that *Tropical Bryology* has survived for 10 years shows that this risky attempt was successful. During this time, 16 volumes have been published (1-2 per year) with a total of almost 3000 pages. The number of subscribers has remained almost constant, 180-190, over the entire time. A problem for all newcomers in the journal market is that library subscriptions are low because of

steadily increasing prices for journals and lowered library budgets. About 50 copies of *Tropical Bryology* are ordered by libraries.

The survival of *Tropical Bryology* shows that the concept was basically correct and that the journal successfully fills a certain ecological niche amongst other journals. The original concept has been only slightly modified by the inclusion of contributions on tropical lichenology, from vol. 5 onward. With the latest volume we introduce another change, regional editors, who will manage manuscripts for their part of the world.

The editors