

## Support your Colleagues and your Journals by Reviewing Manuscripts

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Our Society journals are critical to the visibility and viability of ASA, SSSA and CSSA. Maintaining or improving the quality of our journals depends not only on submissions of cutting edge research but also on timely, competent peer-reviews. At some stage in our careers, most of us will submit our research to one or more of the societies' top-tier, peer-reviewed journals. Those submissions will be evaluated by our peers, who provide voluntary, constructive reviews intended to improve the submission (or to suggest, nicely, that it be targeted elsewhere). The reviewer is critical to the progress of science.

However, the age-old issue of getting timely and complete reviews has become even more important as we compete with an increasing number of journals from commercial publishers. In an increasingly competitive publication world, constructive and timely reviews reduce the turn-around time of manuscripts from submission to acceptance. Rapid publication of results, especially in hot topic areas, will lead authors to submit future articles to the journal, potentially enhancing the quality metrics of the journals, including the Impact Factor. This, in-turn, benefits everyone else publishing in our Journals.

Those of us who have published in our journals realize the importance of the review process, not only in getting our work validated but also in improving our own ability to write a clear, concise manuscript. Reviewing is a mutually beneficial process, providing a great learning process for the reviewer, in addition to providing authors with constructive suggestions for improvement. Reviewing is also an excellent way to stay current in your area of science, even if just to come to the conclusion that you wouldn't do what the author of the paper just did.

When you are asked to review, please respond quickly to the request; if you agree, please give the review a high priority. Holding a manuscript for review creates a bottleneck that's difficult to overcome later in the process. Accept as many requests as you can, but don't commit to more than you can handle. Make it your policy to complete reviews well before the deadline.

Clearly, timeliness in the review process is very important. For example, early career scientists have a limited time to get manuscripts published, and extra months can greatly affect the quality of their dossier. Regardless of our career stage, we all expect rapid turn-around of our manuscripts, so that we can get our results to press as soon as possible.

The bottom line is that all authors, but especially members, should consider reviewing as part of the publication process. By reviewing our colleagues' research manuscripts, we are giving back to a process from which many of us have benefited greatly. So the next time you get a request to review a manuscript, give it serious consideration and if you agree, get it done on time. Your submitted manuscript may just be the next one that needs a quality and thorough review.