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Dear Dr. Brink,

I’d like to submit a short letter to Trends in Plant Science. It concerns open access publishing: something that most of us are grappling with, and something that we think deserves significant clarification after reading a recent letter in your journal (Agrawal AA. 2014. Four more reasons to be skeptical of open-access publishing. Trends Plant Sci 19:133). Neither my co-author or I are open access fanatics – for example we have both published recently in TREE and various other traditional journals. But we do think that open access deserves a fair trial, and we hope you can help.

Agrawal’s letter is symptomatic of a general and damaging misconception about open access publishing: that all open access journals are non-selective. Our letter describes (with evidence) the true diversity of open access publishing policies, which range from non-selective to highly selective. We think this will be of general interest to many of your readers.

It is a simple point, but one we hope you will consider publishing. It is only by providing and disseminating reliable information on publishing policies that researchers can make informed decisions, and that hiring and granting committees can make informed judgements of fellow scientists.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Lanfear