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Preface

Adaptation of Plants to Flooding

Flooding is a very important phenomenon that occurs in coastal areas and river deltas in many parts of the world. In some regions the large-scale flooding of land leads to many problems in food supply; in other regions the biological significance of natural environments is determined by inundations that often are unpredictable in both frequency and intensity. Insight into plants' reactions to flooding is not only important for scientific reasons, but also for achieving a better management of agricultural areas influenced by fluctuating high water levels.

"Adaptation of Plants to Flooding" is the title of a Symposium, organized by the working group of "Plant Ecology and Vegetation Science" of the Foundation of Biological Research in The Netherlands (BION), that was held in December 1988 at Wageningen. Plant ecologists from The Netherlands, Great Britain, Germany and Belgium concentrated primarily on discussing the reactions of terrestrial and amphibious plants to flooding. The particular value of this meeting was that various approaches from different disciplines in biology were involved. Papers on responses at the ecological, physiological and genetic level were presented. A review of the effects of waterlogging on microbial and chemical processes and a description of the altered activities of microorganisms in over-wet soils which strongly affect the plants' nutrient supply, was a valuable addition increasing the insight into the adaptation of plants to flooding.

This special issue of *Aquatic Botany* consists of the papers presented at the Wageningen Symposium.

The responses of terrestrial plants to flooding is compared with the adaptations of aquatic plants in two papers on the physiological behaviour of plants growing in aquatic environments. Both articles complete this volume.

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