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The evolution of plant metabolism

A theme issue compiled and edited by Alisdair R Fernie, Sophie de Vries and Jan de Vries

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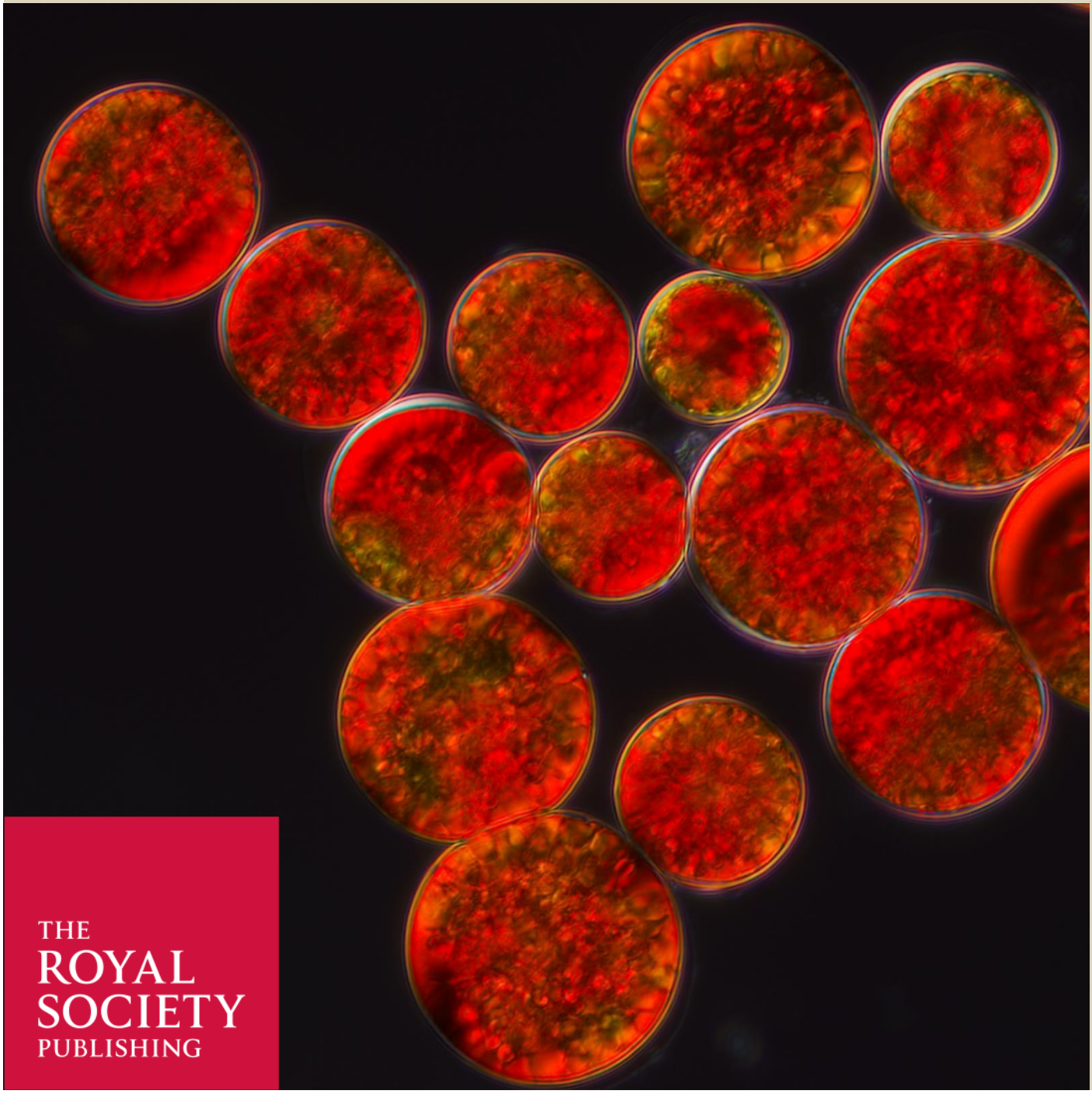

THE ROYAL SOCIETY PUBLISHING

About this issue

Plants and algae occur in almost any habitat imaginable on our Earth. In the course of evolution, they have diversified into a rich array of forms with astounding properties. An important part of this tangible diversity is the ability to produce a bouquet of compounds. These fulfil a whole range of functions, from attracting pollinators and repelling foes, to giving structure to the plant body and communicating across a single plant and between different individuals. Yet, we are only beginning to grasp the complex nature of this chemical diversity and its tangled evolutionary history. In this special issue, scientists from diverse field have come together to present their recent finding and thoughts on the evolution of plant chemical diversity.

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Front image: Light micrograph of *Haematococcus* sp. SAG 34-1f, which appears reddish owing to a high accumulation of the carotenoid astaxanthin. The image was taken by Dr T. Darienko (University of Göttingen).