

Are plants sentient beings with rights? What would this mean for conservation and agriculture?

Plants are intelligent. Plants deserve rights. To most of us these statements may sound, at best, insupportable or, at worst, crazy. But a new book, [Brilliant Green: the Surprising History and Science of Plant Intelligence](#), by plant neurobiologist (yes, plant neurobiologist), Stefano Mancuso and journalist, Alessandra Viola, makes a compelling and fascinating case not only for plant sentience and smarts, but also plant rights.

As radical as Mancuso's ideas may seem, he's actually in good company. Charles Darwin, who studied plants meticulously for decades, was one of the first scientists to break from the crowd and recognise that plants move and respond to sensation – i.e., are sentient. Moreover, Darwin observed that the root tip “acts like the brain of one of the lower animals.”

Plants face many of the same problems as animals, though they differ significantly in their approach. Plants have to find energy, reproduce and stave off predators. To do these things, Mancuso argues, plants have developed smarts and sentience. “Intelligence is the ability to solve problems and plants are amazingly good in solving their problems,” Mancuso noted.

So, why has plant sentience – or if you don't buy that yet, plant behaviour – been ignored for so long? Mancuso says this is because plants are so drastically different from us. He says it is “impossible” for us to put ourselves in the place of a plant.

“Sentient or not sentient, intelligent or not... life on the Earth is possible just because plants exist,” said Mancuso. “Is not a matter of preserving plants: plants will survive. The conservation implications are for humans: fragile and dependent organisms.” Mancuso says the state of plant conservation and the rising evidence that plants are sentient should make people consider something really radical: plants' rights.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis. Read full, original post: [Are plants intelligent? New book says yes](#)