

Ear to the ground: Crops' roots use sound to find water

A new study from the University of Western Australia's Center for Evolutionary Biology, published in *Oecologia* on April 5, [2017] examined whether plants [tune in to sound](#) when seeking water. Plant cognition researchers, led by [Monica Gagliano](#), found that plant root systems travel toward water sources by sensing acoustic vibrations.

In other words, plants respond to the sounds rather than the presence of moisture, as if they can feel sound. The team played water flowing through a sink and a recording of the same sound to common pea plants with roots separated in tubes and examined how the roots responded. The scientists found that root systems did not grow toward the recorded sound but did grow toward the water flowing through a sink. They could distinguish between fake water sounds and the real thing.

"It was...extraordinary and surprising that the plant could actually tell when the sound of running water was a recording and when it was real, and that the plant did not like the recorded sound," writes Gagliano.

[Read the full study [here](#) (behind paywall)]

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Plants use acoustic vibes to find a drink](#)

For more background on the Genetic Literacy Project, read [GLP on Wikipedia](#)