

Plants are conscious? Some evidence says yes, but not all experts are convinced

Plants *are* conscious, according to LINV director [Stefano Mancuso](#), an arboriculture professor at the University of Florence. Mancuso's case for plant consciousness hinges on evidence that they are aware of their existence, of their surroundings, and of the passing of time. Among other things, Mancuso [quotes the renowned physicist Michio Kaku](#) and argues that, if consciousness is the ability to build a model of yourself in relationship to space, others, and time, then plants therefore must be conscious, because of their sensitivity to chemical and physical stimuli, to their competitors, and between themselves.

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In fact, not all academics feels comfortable drawing comparisons between humans and plants. Last year, a group of scientists published a [downright exasperated paper](#) challenging the increasingly common view that plants possess consciousness. It's title says it all: "Plants Neither Possess nor Require Consciousness."

"In claiming that plants have consciousness, 'plant neurobiologists' have consistently glossed over the remarkable degree of structural and functional complexity that the brain had to evolve for consciousness to emerge," the paper reads. The lead author of this research, biologist [Lincoln Taiz](#) from the University of California at Santa Cruz, wrote: "There is no evidence that plants require, and thus have evolved, energy-expensive mental faculties, such as consciousness, feelings, and intentionality, to survive or to reproduce."

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