

Plants Can See, Hear and Smell and Respond

By: **Josh Gabbatiss** for bbc.com on Jan. 11, 2017



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"Plants perceive the world without eyes, ears or brains. Understanding how can teach us a lot about them, and potentially a lot about us as well."

Plants, according to Jack C Schultz, "[are just very slow animals](#)".

This is not a misunderstanding of basic biology. [Schultz](#) is a professor in the Division of Plant Sciences at the University of Missouri in Columbia, and has spent four decades investigating the interactions between plants and insects. He knows his stuff.

Instead, he is making a point about common perceptions of our leafy cousins, which he feels are too often dismissed as part of the furniture. Plants fight for territory, seek out food, evade predators and trap prey. They are as alive as any animal, and – like animals – they exhibit behaviour.

"To see this, you just need to make a fast movie of a growing plant – then it will behave like an animal," enthuses [Olivier Hamant](#), a plant scientist at the University of Lyon, France. Indeed, a time-lapse camera reveals the alien world of plant behaviour in all its glory, as anyone who has seen [the famous woodland sequence from David Attenborough's Life series](#) can attest.

Read more: <http://www.bbc.com/earth/story/20170109-plants-can-see-hear-and-smell-and-respond>

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