

Beyond the Green Lung: Relational Plant Ethics in the Climate Crisis

Olusola Ayomide Asaju

Obafemi Awolowo University, Department of Philosophy, Ile-Ife, NIGERIA

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Abstract

As climate change victims, plants are gaining attention. However, their value has been characterized as carbon sinks, food sources, or planetary lungs. The study proposes a relational plant ethics that goes beyond utilitarian calculations without ignoring plant science. Based on recent plant neurobiology, environmental virtue ethics, and nature aesthetics, I propose that plants deserve moral consideration not only because they satisfy human interests but also because they organize, collaborate, and thrive, challenging anthropocentric beliefs about intelligent life. The paper argues that plant intelligence challenges the ontological distinction between subjects and objects, that flourishing provides a justifiable basis for attributing the good-of-itself to vegetal life without biocentric egalitarianism, and that empathetic relationships with plants, such as repair and healing, are self-care for humans in an ecological crisis. I argue that plant ethics can offer new conservation arguments and a critical lens to evaluate capitalist climate change temporalities.

Keywords: plant ethics, climate change, flourishing, environmental virtue ethics, plant intelligence, relational values.

1. Introduction

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has unequivocally indicated that vegetation death and atmospheric degradation are in a vicious cycle (IPCC Synthesis Report 2023). The warming, drought, and flooding are disproportionately harmful to plants; plants do not migrate, and their adaptive ability cannot keep up with the rate of anthropogenic change (Bertrand et al., 2011). However, in environmental philosophy, plants have been strangely unseen, either as resources (useless) or as homogenous parts of ecologies, in which their worth lies in their role in biodiversity or carbon sequestration.

This instrumental framing is neither bad nor incorrect, but it is radically incomplete. Plants survey their environments, decide, engage in chemical networks, and exhibit forms of cooperation that disrupt hierarchies of sentience, as recent investigations in plant neurobiology show (Calvo, 2022; Mancuso & Viola, 2015). These discoveries have elicited a philosophical re-evaluation. According to Michael Marder (2013), the subject-object dichotomy upon which Western metaphysics is organized is deconstructed in plant-being.¹ Stefano Mancuso (2021) goes

¹ Marder develops this argument most fully in *Plant-Thinking* (2013), drawing on Heidegger's distinction between *World* (for animals) and *environment* (for plants).

beyond this, suggesting that plant organization can provide examples of decentralized political collaboration. And Angelika Krebs (2021) argues that the re-enchantment of the world demeaned by capitalist rationality should be achieved by empathetic interaction with vegetal life.

This article will bring these new areas of investigation together into a logical relationship structure of plant ethics. Part one examines the constraints of instrumental methods of plant conservation, which, despite their effectiveness, leave unexplored the more fundamental issue of anthropocentric valuation. Part two discusses what plant organization can tell us about cooperation, individuality, and the web of life. Part three focuses on the controversial question of whether plants can be said to flourish or are dignified, and engages recent scholarship on plant sentience. Part four elaborates on the virtue-ethical aspects of plant growing, especially how patience, humility, and repair play out in a lossy era. Section five shifts to aesthetic and empathetic relationships with plants, asserting that the cyclical temporalities of vegetal life oppose the linear, progressive logic that causes ecological destruction. I conclude that plant ethics is not a niche issue but an essential part of a proper response to the climate crisis.

1.1 Methodological framework: A relational approach to plant ethics

This paper proposes relational plant ethics, which differs from instrumental and intrinsic value theories. According to IPBES (Chan et al. 2016; IPBES 2022), relational values are “preferences, principles, and virtues associated with relationships, both interpersonal and as articulated by policies and social norms”. Eudaimonic values those from living well with others are included.

Operationally, this paper’s relational framework rests on three pillars:

Relational Ontology

Philosophical Source: Marder (2013) – plants as “open beings” with porous boundaries.

Scientific Grounding: Plant physiology – mycorrhizal networks, horizontal gene transfer, and chemical signaling.

Relational Virtues

Philosophical Source: Brook (2010); Kallhoff & Schörgenhumer (2017) – patience, humility, and care.

Scientific Grounding: Gardening and ecological restoration practice.

Relational Values

Philosophical Source: Chan et al. (2016) – value as derivative of relationship, not an inherent property of an object.

Scientific Grounding: Social-ecological systems research.

The paradigm incorporates virtue ethics (character-based), aesthetics (experience-based), and political philosophy (institution-based) without ordering them. Plant neurobiology and ecology evidence is morally relevant, not conclusive. In cases of disputed scientific evidence, such as plant sensibility, the study takes a precautionary approach: plant welfare provides *prima facie* reasons against arbitrary injury.²

² The precautionary principle is here adapted from its use in environmental policy (Rio Declaration 1992, Principle 15). For its application to plant ethics, see ECNH (2008, 22–24).

2. The limitations of instrumental reason

The simplest example of plant defense is based on human interests. Plants generate oxygen, store carbon, regulate local climate, and serve as the foundation of terrestrial food webs. According to this perspective, climate change is mainly an issue of resource mismanagement: fossil fuels are remnants of ancient plants, and burning them has altered the atmosphere. The answer, then, is to bury plant materials, re-establish forests as carbon sinks, and create more robust agricultural systems (Castelli, Castelli & Bresci 2019).

These are not insignificant arguments. The experience of the Native Plant Trust with climate-adapted native species shows that local warming can be reduced through strategic vegetation management and that biodiversity can be preserved.³ The Food and Agriculture Organization's warning about disruptions to the food system due to climate change is becoming more acute (FAO). And the amount of carbon dioxide that needs to be removed to achieve Paris Agreement targets is so great that it requires a huge investment in soil carbon sequestration and afforestation.

However, instrumental arguments are well-documented to have limitations. First, they make plants fungible: if a technological fix, say, direct air capture, is cheaper or more effective than restoring forests, the instrumental logic provides no argument for favoring living plants over machines. Second, it is impossible to explain the normative power of plant conservation through instrumental reasoning when human interests are not under threat. Take the final tree of a species of no value on a mountain top on which no man will ever set foot: instrumentalism is not heard. Third, and most fundamentally, instrumental approaches hold that the human standpoint is the only source of value, a view that has been widely criticized in environmental ethics (Naess, 1989; Attfield, 1981).

The sentience of plants is a topic of recent discussion, which makes the instrumental picture even more complicated. Segundo-Ortin and Calvo (2023) posit that plant cognition, memory, decision-making, and even pain perception has sufficient evidence to serve as moral warning bells, despite the inability to provide concrete proof. The Swiss Federal Ethics Committee on Non-human Biotechnology (ECNH 2008) has already acknowledged that the arbitrary suffering of plants can constitute a breach of their dignity. This controversial stance indicates a new moral terrain.

What is required, then, is a means that does not leave practical conservation objectives on the shelf nor degrade plants to the point of uselessness. Such an approach is provided by relational plant ethics, which addresses the particular forms of being that define vegetal life and the constitutive relation between human and plant flourishing.

2.2 *Climate justice and unequal vulnerability*

Distributive and procedural justice should also be taken care of by a relational plant ethics. Plant loss due to climate changes, droughts, heat waves, desertification, and pest outbreaks, are all unevenly distributed among the most vulnerable human populations of the world. To Indigenous peoples and subsistence farmers in the Global South, plant death is not an ecological measure but the death of food, medicine, shelter and cultural identity. Indigenous Peoples perceive their territories as the overall habitat they inhabit or use whereby culture, identity, and

³ The Native Plant Trust (formerly New England Wild Flower Society) manages seed banks and restoration projects across northeastern North America. See <https://www.nativeplanttrust.org>. Accessed 01 March 2026.

livelihoods are based as documented by the Nyéléni newsletter. The death of plants results in the death of languages, rituals and transfer of knowledge between generations.

Further, climate mitigation policies in themselves can become a tool of injustice. Displacement of smallholder farmers by carbon offset projects, exclusion of local communities by biodiversity conservation initiatives on ancestral lands, and substitution of various native plants with industrial tree plantations, these can be described by some scholars as green grabbing.⁴ According to interventions to the UN Office of the High Commissioner to Human Rights, climate shocks destroying crops and seed systems, debt pressures forcing families to starvation, land dispossession by conservation as seen in Kenya, carbon markets are all ways of climate injustice, which can not be overlooked by a plant ethics.

A just plant ethics should then incorporate: (a) an acknowledgment of unequal distribution of plant vulnerability; (b) procedural incorporation of communities affected in conservation decision-making; and (c) consideration of the interface of plant ethics with food sovereignty, land rights, and historical responsibility of emissions.

3. The wisdom of the organization of plants

Plant science has emphatically turned the picture of plants as passive automatons on its head. Plants can perceive light wavelengths, water content, movement, nutrients, soil life, neighboring competition, herbivory, wind, and heat (Calvo, 2022: 209). They combine these sensory signals to regulate growth, defense, and reproduction. They use volatile organic compounds and mycorrhizal networks to signal other plants about herbivore predation and to allocate resources to stressed conspecifics.

Three philosophical interpretations of these capacities have been inspired that defy fundamental assumptions of Western thought.

Marder (2013) has developed the merging view most systematically. However, the essence of this view is that plants are not found in discrete boundaries, but engage in an ongoing process of chemical, nutrient, and even genetic exchange with their environment. Plants are semi-permeable surfaces, unlike animals, with a sharp inside-outside boundary created by the skin or exoskeleton. Marder appeals to the ecstatic nature of plant existence, as Heidegger conceived of *Dasein*: thrown into the world by the dispersal of seeds and projecting toward the light and the nourishing elements as it grows. This vegetal existence, he argues, turns about the conventional philosophical priorities that put self over other, depth over surface, permanence over flux.

The cooperation perspective, developed by Mancuso (2021) and his colleagues, concerns sociality in plants. An example of a mutualism that does not degenerate into competitive individualism is the symbiosis between trees and mycorrhizal fungi, in which the fungi provide the trees with photosynthetic sugars in exchange for phosphate and salt. Mancuso suggests provocatively the idea of a Nation of Plants based on the principles of distributed decision-making, resource sharing, and long-term ecological stability. Although not a direct political declaration, the proposal serves as what Thompson (2018) describes as a sociotechnical imaginary: a story that re-orientates collective action toward more sustainable futures.⁵

⁴ Green grabbing” refers to the appropriation of land and resources for environmental ends (e.g., conservation, carbon offsets) in ways that dispossess local communities. See Fairhead, Leach, & Scoones (2012) *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39(2): 237–261.

⁵ The concept of sociotechnical imaginaries was developed by Jasanoff & Kim (2015) to describe collectively held, institutionally stabilized visions of desirable future.

The web-of-life perspective, as articulated by Naess (1989), holds that it is the right of all living beings to prosper. Ecosophy T, based on observations of his patients in fjord ecosystems, holds that the self-realization of any organism is not possible beyond the relational matrix that supports it. This is not just an ecological argument of causal interdependence but is a normative argument: flourishing is inherently relational.

These three views are not exclusive of each other. They jointly imply that plant organization provides a means of rethinking human social organization. The merging perspective is a threat to hyper-individualism because it shows boundaries as porous and identities as constituted by relations. The cooperation perspective offers empirical frameworks of decentralized coordination that escape both centralized control and anarchy. These insights are based on a normative framework of equal respect between different life-forms in the web-of-life view.

3.1 Indigenous and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK)

The relational plant ethics worked out here has strong resonance, and a long history, in Indigenous knowledge systems where plants were long treated as kin, as teachers, and persons, not as resources. Worldview: Robin Wall Kimmerer (2013), a botanist and a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, describes a world-view where humans are mutually responsible to the vegetal world: The belief that humans are kin to other beings on Earth, to plants and animals, is central to Braiding Sweetgrass. Kimmerer observes the practice of Honorable Harvest, in which he seeks permission of plants to harvest, leaves the first fruits behind and thanks in the form of offerings like tobacco.

This is no animistic projection, but an advanced ecological ethic based on thousands of years of observation. The mutualistic polyculture of the Three Sisters (maize, beans, squash) is an example of this; here, all plants benefit each other, a living example of the cooperation viewpoint that Mancuso (2021) takes out of plant science. Equally, numerous Indigenous agricultural systems represent what Kimmerer refers to as the grammar of animacy,⁶ whereby language itself would not wish to be a dead object.⁷

The introduction of TEK does not simply provide a footnote to Western plant ethics; it questions the notion that relational thinking is a new invention into philosophy. The Indigenous and local knowledge systems, as the IPBES Values Assessment (2022) has identified, are invaluable when it comes to comprehending the contribution of nature to individuals and developing equitable conservation policies.⁸ An ethics of plants which does not take these traditions into consideration risks epistemic hubris as well as practical failure.

4. Thriving and the ethical moral personhood of plants

The argument that there is a good of plants is still debated. According to skeptics, plants lack the neural substrates that support consciousness and thus cannot be considered to possess interests or welfare. Advocates answer that welfare does not necessitate subjective

⁶ Kimmerer, R. W. (2013). *Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants*. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions.

⁷ In Potawatomi and many other Indigenous languages, nouns are assigned animacy status, meaning that plants, stones, and water can be grammatically treated as persons rather than objects. See Kimmerer (2013, 48–59).

⁸ IPBES (2022). *Summary for Policymakers of the Methodological Assessment of the Diverse Values and Valuation of Nature*. Bonn: IPBES Secretariat.

experience; a living being can be either helped or hurt as long as its character functions are either assisted or hindered.

This position is worked out systematically by Kallhoff (2014). She uses the notion of flourishing as proposed by Aristotelian virtue ethics to claim that there are species-typical standards of development in plants: a beech tree without sunlight, a succulent with frost, a vine without structural support are, in a non-metaphorical sense, all in bad health. These are not just evaluative projections, but they are based on plant physiology and ecology. The Federal Ethics Committee on Non-human Biotechnology (ECNH 2008) also reached a similar conclusion, stating that plants have a dignity that does not allow them to be arbitrarily instrumentalized, even though this dignity is not the same as human dignity.

4.1 *Reply to the sentience objection*

A key criticism of plant ethics is based on preference utilitarianism as developed by Peter Singer which is that only sentient beings since they are the only beings capable of experiencing pleasure and pain can have their interests taken into account. According to this perspective, plants, as they do not possess a central nervous system, are morally invisible. But this stance has a challenge: plants do appear to have interests in an objective sense. A beech-tree must have sunlight; a vine must have a support. Because an organism has a biological good, a concept of interests rooted in the biological good of the organism can be a neo-Aristotelian concept, according to Gary Varner (2002), without being based on felt experience.⁹ It is this that Kallhoff (2014) works to develop: flourishing does not presuppose a subjective perspective, just that a being is able to be assisted or impeded in the discharge of its characteristic functions.

Besides, the sentientist response that plant interests imply machine interests cars require oil-just like plants require water-is of the category error. The need of a car is externally determined, and is the teleological outcome of human purposes; the need of a plant is inherent in itself, existing whether or not it is valued by any human. The onus of argument is on those who would deny moral considerability to any living being that can be beneficially or adversely affected in regard to its own flourishing.

Behavioral experiments are the most compelling evidence for the flourishing of plants as a morally relevant category. Calvo (2022) explains a study in which young maize seedlings, when presented with a decision about whether to grow towards a crowded or an uncrowded place, consistently choose the less crowded one. The seedlings will not just be reacting to immediate stimuli; they will also incorporate knowledge of future conditions. Wohlleben (2016) describes observations of so-called alpha" elm trees which redirect root growth to rescue starving seedlings, a type of allocare that had previously been thought exclusive to social animals.¹⁰

These results do not imply that plants possess rights equal to those of humans, or that photosynthesis and predation are morally equal. They do, however, weaken the opinion that plants are moral non-entities. A defensible plant ethics is a compromise between biocentric egalitarianism, which considers all life to be equally deserving of protection, and anthropocentric dismissiveness, which regards plants as entities. Plants, from this intermediate perspective, possess goods of their own that produce *prima facie* moral reasons why humans should not cause

⁹ Varner distinguishes between *biocentric individualism* (each living organism has a good of its own) and *biocentric egalitarianism* (all such goods count equally). The present paper accepts the former but rejects the latter.

¹⁰ Wohlleben's observations have been criticized for anthropomorphic interpretation; however, subsequent studies on kin recognition in roots (e.g., Dudley & File 2007 *Biology Letters*, 3(6): 620–623) provide partial support.

arbitrary harm, which can be trumped by other moral considerations but cannot be disregarded without reason.

4.2 The “Trumping Problem” when may human interests override plant flourishing.¹¹

The acknowledgment of the good-of-their-own of plants does not imply biocentric egalitarianism, or that all living things are equal in their moral status. There are legal cases when human interests can be justified to outweigh *prima facie* plant interests. These include:

Competing Human Interest: Life-saving medicine derived from plants

Possible Justification: Direct necessity. *Limiting Condition:* Minimize harm; seek synthetic alternatives.

Competing Human Interest: Housing and infrastructure for vulnerable populations

Possible Justification: Basic needs. *Limiting Condition:* Prioritize degraded land over intact ecosystems.

Competing Human Interest: Wildfire prevention through vegetation management

Possible Justification: Harm prevention to humans and ecosystems. *Limiting Condition:* Avoid arbitrary or excessive clearing.

Competing Human Interest: Traditional subsistence practices (e.g., Indigenous harvesting)

Possible Justification: Cultural survival and reciprocity. *Limiting Condition:* Respect sustainable methods and gratitude protocols.

The point is that these overrides have to be explicitly justified; they cannot be presupposed as a matter of course. The Swiss Federal Ethics Committee (ECNH 2008) argues that absolute ownership of plants cannot be ethically justified, that every instance of overriding must be handled on a case-by-case basis, and therefore involves moral reasoning.¹²

5. Virtues of cultivation in an age of loss

When plants possess a good quality, it is not a technical but a moral practice to cultivate them. Environmental virtue ethics has created a comprehensive list of virtues that apply in plant relations: patience, humility, respect for reality, openness, willingness to make space for the other, caring attention (Brook, 2010; van Wensveen, 2000; Kallhoff & Schorergenhummer, 2017).

An especially enlightening example is gardening, since it lies in a gray zone between nature and the man-made. A garden is a domesticated space, shaped by design and labor. But a gardener who neglects the individual requirements of plants—who waters according to a timetable, and not according to the moisture of the soil, who plants in shady places that are sun-loving,

¹¹ The term “trumping” is borrowed from Ronald Dworkin’s legal philosophy (*Taking Rights Seriously*, 1977), where rights “trump” collective goals. Here, it refers to circumstances where human interests override *prima facie* plant claims.

¹² Federal Ethics Committee on Non-human Biotechnology (ECNH). 2008. “The Dignity of Living Beings with regard to Plants.” Berne: ECNH Secretariat.

who hustles with too much manure--he will fail even by the standards of instruments. Effective gardening involves what Brook (2010) terms respect of reality: that plants are not passive objects of human will but living organisms with their own timeframes and needs.

This virtue-ethical approach is particularly pressing in the context of climate change, where the circumstances that gardeners were educated on are becoming increasingly unstable. Invasive species, droughts, and heat waves upset standard practices. Instead of denial or despair, I would propose turning to repair¹³ as the proper virtue response. Healing damaged ecosystems, replanting forests destroyed by fires, and regenerating damaged soils are not only compensatory but also constitutive of a good life in the circumstances of loss. To argue with nature, something like the Promethean fear, as Williams (1995) argued, is necessary; that is, our powers, however great, are not absolute.

The virtue approach also sheds light on the loss when plant relations are transformed into the extraction of resources. Industrial agriculture, which treats plants as a biomass to be maximized, deliberately leaves out the virtues of patience, attention, and humility. The outcome is not just ecological degradation, but also a decrease in human flourishing. Nussbaum (2006) adds a connection with other species to her list of central human capabilities, indicating that a life without such connections is, in that sense, not entirely human.

6. Empathy, temporality, and re-enchantment of nature

Plant relations provide aesthetic and spiritual resources that are especially relevant in a time of ecological crisis, as well as virtue. Krebs (2021) develops a unique method grounded in empathy and personalization. She defends against the accusation of anthropomorphism by stating that there is no cognitive error of emotional projection, but rather a requirement for actual moral interaction with non-human beings. The traditional country custom of placing a bowl of milk before snowfall to feed hedgehogs is scientifically inaccurate, as hedgehogs do not require milk.¹⁴ However, it is a good example of an attentional form essential to making the world significant.

The main argument of Krebs is that time is rendered inhospitable due to the linear, progressive temporality of capitalism: that is, always more, always faster. The waiting until snowdrops will grow, of seeing corn mature, of going back to the same linden tree every year, these temporalities of cyclic nature provide relief against the tyranny of ever-increasing velocity. She writes that beautiful landscapes beckon us to stay; they free us from time and allow us to adopt a relaxed attitude towards the past and the future (Krebs 2021: 63, my translation). After we have heard crowing roosters, smelled linden blossoms, and seen snowdrops, we know that this has all been, and will be again. Time becomes habitable.

The practical implication of this aesthetic argument exists. Plant protection is not just a matter of carbon accounting or biodiversity goals; it is about conserving the circumstances of experience of the future that cannot be recreated in virtual reality or greenwashed cities. The artificiality of well-groomed corporate campuses cannot offer the same pleasure since it does not possess the autonomy of temporality of life. It is not a surprise to us that an artificial tree will not bloom prematurely, nor cause us grief when it is ruined by frost; it does not beckon us to live in it.

On the part of Krebs, the stakes are existential in the end. The deprivation of meaningful relation with the vegetal world is not just an aesthetic deprivation but a sort of

¹³ On “repair” as an ecological virtue, see also Andrew King’s concept of “restorative humility” (King 2019 *Environmental Ethics*, 41(1): 23–41).

¹⁴ Hedgehogs are actually lactose intolerant; water or cat food is preferable. Krebs uses this example deliberately to show that factual error does not invalidate the attentional attitude.

homelessness. Repatriating spaces in which humans can coexist with plants, not as resources but as co-inhabitants, is a precondition to the continuation of human life-forms recognizably human.

6.1 *Toward plant-informed policy*

Relational plant ethics is policy-relevant, not just academic. Based on legal and institutional precedents, I offer four policy directions:

(1) Plant dignity legalized. Article 120 of the Swiss Constitution requires “account to be taken of the dignity of creation when handling animals, plants and other organisms”.¹⁵ This means that acts that arbitrarily hurt plants must be justified morally, according to the Swiss Federal Ethics Committee for Non-Human Biotechnology (ECNH 2008). The 2008 Ecuadorian Constitution recognizes “inalienable, substantive rights to nature”. The precedents could be extended to demand plant-focused environmental impact studies for substantial land-use changes.

(2) Conservation metrics for plants. Current biodiversity targets (e.g., 30x30)¹⁶ prioritize species counts and habitat expansion. Relational metrics such functional plant communities, mycorrhizal network integrity, and plant–human cultural interactions (e.g., heritage varieties, sacred groves, traditional harvesting places) would be added to plant ethics.

(3) Agroecological funding changes. The EU and national agricultural policies continue to support plant-killing industrial monocultures. Civil society calls to “allocate at least 30% of agricultural funding to agroecology” and “phase out chemical fertilizers; promote agroecological soil practices” are practicable. Plant ethics supports these transitions as appreciation of plants’ own good, not only production or carbon.

(4) Plant climate adaptation ethics. The UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021–2030) and EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 give foundations for plant ethics in restoration. Prioritize native, climate-adapted genotypes, respect natural regeneration, integrate local and Indigenous groups in restoration governance, and practice “do no harm” for plant communities.

7. Conclusion

This paper has defended a relational approach to plant ethics that does not forego practical conservation objectives. To defend plants in a climate change age is not only about needing them to get through it which we do but also about using them to show us how to live. Their modes of organization put possessive individualism to the test; their ability to flourish requires ethical consideration; their cultivation develops virtues; their temporalities render time habitable.

The other, which Guattari (2008) cautioned against, is not a steady state but a hastening catastrophe. Nowadays, we degrade vegetation through various means: we steal plant fossils, cut forests, decomplexify agroecosystems, and this degradation comes back to us. Climate change is not a technical issue that can be resolved; it is a symptom of a failed relationship with the vegetal world.

Plant philosophy is not an easy way out. It does propose a different direction, however, not to fight climate change as an external foe, but to mend a relationship that was never, simply,

¹⁵ Swiss Federal Constitution, Art. 120(2): “The Confederation shall legislate on the use of reproductive and genetic material from animals, plants and other organisms. In doing so, it shall take into account the dignity of living beings as well as the safety of human beings, animals and the environment.”

¹⁶ The “30x30” target refers to the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (2022), which aims to protect 30% of terrestrial and marine areas by 2030.

instrumental. Plants are needed to sustain us. But we can learn to live otherwise too, when we look after them well, at a slow pace, and with humility and compassion. It is the pledge and the work of plant ethics in the face of the climate crisis.

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