

## **Title:** The Flourishing of Plants: A neo-Aristotelian Approach to Plant Ethics

**Central Argument:** Plants possess innate capacities to thrive and flourish. Understanding plant flourishing provides a foundation for plant ethics, guiding human interactions with plants to ensure their well-being.

### **Key Points**

- **Flourishing as a Concept:**
  - **Empirical side:** A plant flourishes when it completes its life cycle, grows, develops innate capacities, and proliferates. This success hinges on the ability to handle external stressors.
  - **Evaluative side:** Flourishing represents the "good life" for a plant, comparable to the concept of welfare in other beings.
- **Harming Plants:** An action that hinders a plant's ability to flourish is considered harmful, even though plants don't feel pain in the same way humans or animals do.
- **Plants Matter:** Flourishing matters not just for the well-being of individual plants but it implies an evaluative assessment. We can act in ways that are beneficial or harmful to a plant's life.
- **Neo-Aristotelian Perspective**
  - Rejects the idea that only complex beings with sentience deserve moral consideration.
  - Focuses on the innate capacities of living beings and seeks to promote peaceful co-existence where all beings can flourish.

### **Human-Nature Relationships (Where Plant Ethics Applies)**

- **Wild Nature:** Respecting flourishing in wild nature means leaving nature undisturbed to allow for evolutionary processes.
- **Cultivated Nature:** Cultivation techniques should allow plants to fulfill their life cycles and develop optimally. Plant ethics extends beyond the individual to issues of water ethics and sustainable land use.
- **Utilized Nature:** Plant ethics provides a framework to critically evaluate the impact of technologies like smart farming and genetic engineering on a plant's capacity to flourish.

### **Conclusion**

- Plants don't have moral standing in the same way people do, but they still strive for a good life within their own terms.
- Understanding and respecting plant flourishing leads to constructive rather than destructive behaviors towards plant life.
- A neo-Aristotelian approach advocates for win-win scenarios where possible, ensuring a future where both plants and humans can flourish.