

Editorial

In this special issue of PAN, a diverse collection of contributors have responded to the call in my recent book, *Plants as Persons: A Philosophical Botany*, for the reconsideration of plants in the realm of human moral responsibility. The issue opens with an excerpt from *Plants as Persons* (kind permission of SUNY Press) which details some of the philosophical background for the systematic exclusion of plants from moral consideration and the accompanying backgrounding of plant life as passive, inert and as primarily an instrument to satisfy human need – a stance which still characterises the way in which many people view and behave toward plants. After setting out the status quo of exclusion, the book moves on to investigate philosophies and traditions of inclusion, in which plants are recognised as morally significant and subjective locations of life, with their own purposes and ways of living, that is, plants as persons.

The invited contributions to the discussion of plant persons and plant ethics begin with a light hearted take on the meaning of personhood. Graham Harvey's *Animist Manifesto* is reprinted here to convey the idea that recognising plants as persons, or incorporating plants into moral consideration, principally concerns the need for respect and care - things that can only be worked out in real relationships with plants.

In one way or another, the contributions in the issue build on this idea of person-person relationship. Samuel Nyamekye's article on *akyeneboa* does so in a discussion of the ritual and ancestral recognition of plant totems amongst the Akan people of Ghana. Jo Day's paper re-examines the understanding of the relationship between human beings and trees in ancient Minoan culture. Thom Van Dooren's contribution discusses the relationship between human beings and agricultural plants and John Ryan investigates the role of gesture and contact in the development of intimate relationships between humans and plants. A couple of articles acknowledge the person-person relationship, but focus more on the practical implementation of a plant ethics. Thom Heyd explores the botanic garden as a site for the development of more respectful behaviour toward plants and Alasdair Reid details the opportunities for the incorporation of plant ethics, and a wider environmental ethic, into schools education.

These more scholarly articles are supplemented by two short personal essays on the lived relationships between humans and plants. Mairi Gillies discusses plant ethics in the context of motherhood, whilst Nancy Wisser reflects on the relationship between older women and their gardens. To conclude this special issue, poems by John Ryan and Peter Boyle bring to mind the intelligent presence and vitality of the plants which underpin all life on Earth.

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