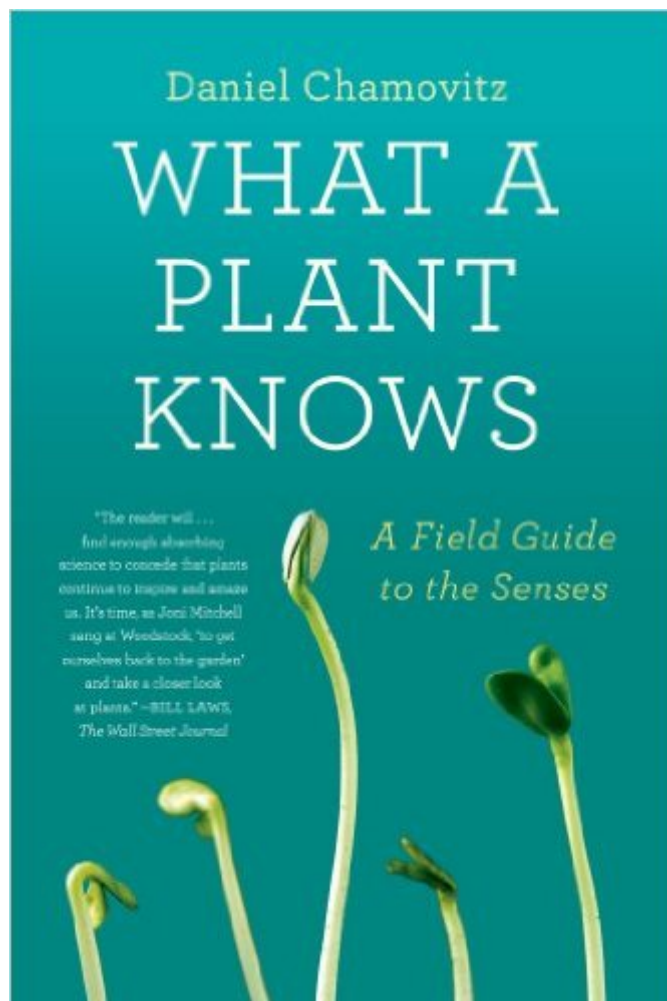


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# What A Plant Knows: A Field Guide To The Senses



## Synopsis

"Enough absorbing science to concede that plants continue to inspire and amaze us." —The Wall Street Journal

How does a Venus flytrap know when to snap shut? Can it feel an insect's tiny, spindly legs? And how do cherry blossoms know when to bloom? Can they remember the weather? For centuries we have marveled at plant diversity and form—from Charles Darwin's early fascination with stems to Seymour Krelborn's distorted doting in *Little Shop of Horrors*. But now, in *What a Plant Knows*, the renowned biologist Daniel Chamovitz presents an intriguing and scrupulous look at how plants themselves experience the world—from the colors they see to the schedules they keep. Highlighting the latest research in genetics and more, he takes us into the inner lives of plants and draws parallels with the human senses to reveal that we have much more in common with sunflowers and oak trees than we may realize. Chamovitz shows how plants know up from down, how they know when a neighbor has been infested by a group of hungry beetles, and whether they appreciate the Led Zeppelin you've been playing for them or if they're more partial to the melodic riffs of Bach. Covering touch, sound, smell, sight, and even memory, Chamovitz encourages us to consider whether plants might even be aware. A rare inside look at what life is really like for the grass we walk on, the flowers we sniff, and the trees we climb, *What a Plant Knows* offers us a greater understanding of botany and science and our place in nature.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“Of the dozens of books I read in 2012, several stand out. But there's one I keep coming back to, thumbing through it, letting people know about it. It's Daniel Chamovitz's *What A Plant Knows*: A

Field Guide to the Senses . . . It's incredibly interesting material, presented in an entertaining and fun way -- in about only 140 pages. What A Plant Knows is a nice fit on my shelf of gardening books -- and that's where it will stay. Although I've recommended the book to several people, I've ungraciously not let them borrow my copy. I fear I won't get it back.

• Chicago Tribune • The reader...will find enough absorbing science to concede that plants continue to inspire and amaze us. It's time, as Joni Mitchell sang at Woodstock, 'to get ourselves back to the garden' and take a closer look at plants.

• The Wall Street Journal • This elegantly written account of plant biology will change the way you see your garden...Chamovitz lets us see plants in a new light, one which reveals their true wonder.

• The Guardian • Thick with eccentric plant experiments and astonishing plant science.

• Sunday Times (UK) • Plants may be brainless, eyeless and devoid of senses as we know them, but they have a rudimentary 'awareness', says biologist Daniel Chamovitz. In this beautiful reframing of the botanical, he reveals the extent and kind of that awareness through a bumper crop of research.

• Nature • For everyone who has wondered at Mimosa, the suddenly snapping Venus flytrap or the way a sunflower's head unerringly turns to follow the sun, Daniel Chamovitz has written the perfect book.

• American Scientist • [A] fascinating inside look at what a plant's life is like, and a new lens on our own place in nature.

• Maria Popova, Brain Pickings • Verdict: Plant-astic.

• Herald Sun (Australia) • This well-researched book makes the compelling argument that plants "know" a lot more than most people give them credit for . . . Chamovitz eloquently elucidates that scientific evidence that proves it in easy-to-understand terms.

• The American Gardener • Chamovitz's book is pop science at its best, full of vivid examples of barely imaginable ways of living.

• BBC Wildlife • In a lively and delightful discourse that aligns botany with human biology, [Chamovitz] articulates his findings, about plants and the senses in accessible, often whimsical observations that make complex science not only comprehensible but fun to ponder.

• Booklist • [A] handy guide to our own senses as well as those of plants.

• Audubon • An intriguing and scientific--but easy to read--look at how plants experience life.

• Gardens Illustrated • [Chamovitz] gently hints that we should have a greater appreciation of plants' complexity and perceptiveness . . . If plants can see, smell, feel, know where they are, and remember, then perhaps they do possess some kind of intelligence. Maybe that is worth reflecting on the next time you casually stroll past a plant.

• Chelsie Eller, Science • Like us, a plant that aspires to win the rat race must exploit its environment. Even a daffodil can detect when you're standing in its light, and a rhododendron knows when you're savaging its neighbor with the pruning shears. With deftness and clarity, Daniel Chamovitz introduces plants' equivalent of our senses, plus floral forms of memory and orientation. When you

realize how much plants know, you may think twice before you bite them.â

- Hannah Holmes, author of *Quirk and Suburban Safari*âJust as his groundbreaking research uncovered connections between the plant- and animal kingdoms, Daniel Chamovitz's insights in *What a Plant Knows* transcend the world of plants. This entertaining and educational book is filled with wondrous examples that underscore how the legacy of shared genomes enables plants and animals to respond to their environments. You'll see plants in a new light after reading *What a Plant Knows*.
- Gloria M. Coruzzi, Carroll and Milton Petrie Professor, Center for Genomics and Systems Biology, New York UniversityâIf you've ever marveled at how and why plants make the choices they do, *What a Plant Knows* holds your answer. Chamovitz is a master at translating the science of botany into the language of the layman.
- Michael Malice, author, subject of *Ego & Hubris*, and succulent enthusiastâChamovitz walks the *Homo sapiens* reader right into the shoes--or I should say roots--of the plant world. After reading this book you will never again walk innocently past a plant or reach insensitively for a leaf. You will marvel and be haunted by a plant's sensory attributes and the shared genes between the plant and animals kingdoms.
- Elisabeth Tova Bailey, author of *The Sound of a Wild Snail Eating*â*What a Plant Knows* is lively, eloquent, scientifically accurate, and easy to read. I commend this engaging text to all who wonder about life on earth and seek a compelling introduction to the lives of plants as revealed through centuries of careful scientific experimentation.
- Professor Stephen D. Hopper, Director, Royal Botanic Gardens, KewâA fascinating book that explores accessibly the evidence that plants share more properties with animals than most people appreciate. It may come as a relief to vegetarians to learn that plants do not feel pain or suffer, in the human sense, when harvested. Nevertheless, after reading *What a Plant Knows*, we wanted to apologize to our daffodils for the times when our shadows have shielded them from the Sun.
- John and Mary Gribbin, authors of *The Flower Hunters*âBy comparing human senses to the abilities of plants to adapt to their surroundings, the author provides a fascinating and logical explanation of how plants survive despite the inability to move from one site to another. Backed by new research on plant biology, this is an intriguing look at a plant's consciousness.
- Kirkus

Daniel Chamovitz, Ph.D., is the director of the Manna Center for Plant Biosciences at Tel Aviv University. He has served as a visiting scientist at Yale University and at the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center, and has lectured at universities around the world. His research has appeared in leading scientific journals. Chamovitz lives with his wife and three children in Hod HaSharon, Israel.

PBS did a special recently, and I wanted to read this - I will still make my donation to them, but this way I get my book & read it now, while they usually take 6 - 8 weeks to get the materials to me - 3 days beats several weeks hands down! The info in the book is really fascinating! I had learned some of this when a student at university many moons (decades) ago, but this expands far beyond that and is simply put, amazing. I hope it makes people think about the incredible variety of life and wonder about just what defines consciousness. My partner says 'it's scary - like aliens among us.' I prefer to think that now there's no reason to distinguish between carnivore and herbivore - and I'll continue to enjoy my steak and veggies, with gratitude and respect to all the creatures who are giving me life.

interesting read. hard to stay engaged. condition was great and delivery was great

an interesting short glimpse into the botanical world, lighter and less informative and abundant than "the secret life of plants". an easy and enjoyable reading.

Ignored a lots of evidence that didn't fit his thesis. Only so-so

As a plant physiologist working with major row crops I am always looking for insight into what makes plants "tick". This book was easy to read and well structured yet not "dumbed down" like many articles intended for the general public tend to be. I had to think back to many a college lecture to try to keep up. I suspect that most of our scientifically deficient society will pass this over but IF one could get some young minds to read this it would no doubt encourage at least a few of them to maybe think that science CAN be cool. We need more young minds to be turned on to science. Books like this could help! Very well done a great read.

not quite done with it yet, but cool info.

You will learn a lot about plants!

This book is interesting, short and to the point. It's very easy to understand and has basic plant science. I thought it would be a little more in depth but even so it was a quick enjoyable read. The author cites studies to back up his claims and is thorough in his findings. A great introduction to the

life of a plant.

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