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Science & Technology \ Biology \ Botany

Marder, Michael. **Plant-thinking: a philosophy of vegetal life.** Columbia, 2013. 223p bibl index afp; ISBN [9780231161244](#), \$90.00; ISBN [9780231161251](#) pbk, \$30.00; ISBN [9780231533256](#) e-book, contact publisher for price. Reviewed in 2013sep CHOICE.

Marder (philosophy, Univ. of the Basque Country, Vitoria-Gasteiz, Spain) attempts to ground an environmental ethic of respect for plant life, showing how people can properly "encounter plants." The author rejects the conception of the value of living nature as deriving from practical human needs, even in the case of plants. He goes beyond appreciation of the aesthetic value of the beauty of plants, proposing that a kind of "plant-thinking" could tap the roots of human thought lying beneath human language and cognition. The work is indeed profoundly original, even if the often convoluted rhetoric may strike some readers as a bit over the top. For example, Marder counsels readers: "to eat ethically, *eat like a plant!*" and "without endeavoring to swallow up its very otherness in one's corporeal and psychic interiority." The work is nevertheless more insightful than it might seem to those unaccustomed to postmodern rhetoric. Marder finds rapport with a host of reflections on plant life by philosophers from Plato to Derrida. The book also recognizes the increasing appreciation of the remarkable complexity of plant behavior revealed in recent botanical research. *Plant-Thinking* is valuable to those who can groove

to its deconstruction style of thinking. **Summing Up:** Highly recommended. Upper-division undergraduates, graduate students, and researchers/faculty. -- *H. C. Byerly, emeritus, University of Arizona*

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