



UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG

TAKING A DIFFERENT VIEW: ECOLOGY ACROSS BORDERS

DAWN SANDERS

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL

15: Life on Land

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.

The most fundamental and irreversible human impact on nature is species extinction. The Red List Index – which measures the risk of extinction, in which a value of 1 indicates no threat to any species, and a value of 0 indicates that all species are extinct – has deteriorated from 0.82 in 1993 to 0.73 globally in 2019.

(UN, 2019)

EXTINCTION IS AN ABSOLUTE TERM,
MEANING THAT NO INDIVIDUAL OF A
SPECIES REMAINS ALIVE.

State of The Worlds Plants Report, 2017

“ Every species has a narrative of its own, a biography. The loss of a species is not just one lower point on a graph of biodiversity, it is also the loss of a unique story.”

(Fortey 2012)

Humans are “story-telling organisms who individually and socially lead storied lives”
(Barker 2007,)

“ At this very moment, many of Earth’s living kinds are slipping away; sometimes quietly, sometimes in bright bursts of controversy, chaos and pain”

Bird Rose, Van Dooren and Chrulew, 2017

“When we read a story, we inhabit it.”

John Berger

CENTRE & MARGIN



What does it mean to be positioned in the margin or center, and what are the implications this has for ways of knowing, talking and acting? What happens when the center or margin is used to understand, challenge and collapse the other?

(Roth & Calabrese-Barton, 2004).



Border Crossings and Boundary Objects





EVERY **PLANT** HAS A NAME

todas as plantas têm nome

Why are plants Green?

Can I have plants in my bedroom?

What do carnivorous plants eat?

António C. Gouveia



'By Jove, I sometimes think Drosera is a
disguised animal ' Charles Darwin



Photo: Paris Williams

TIME AND SPACE

**WHERE ARE THE ANIMALS IN THE
SOCIOLOGY OF CLIMATE CHANGE?
(PEDERSEN, 2018)
AND WHERE ARE THE PLANTS?**



PPPP

Plants, People, Planet

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Standing in the shadows of
plants: new perspectives on
plant blindness

***Arabidopsis thaliana* (Thale Cress) ‘The Fruit-Fly of the Botanist’.**

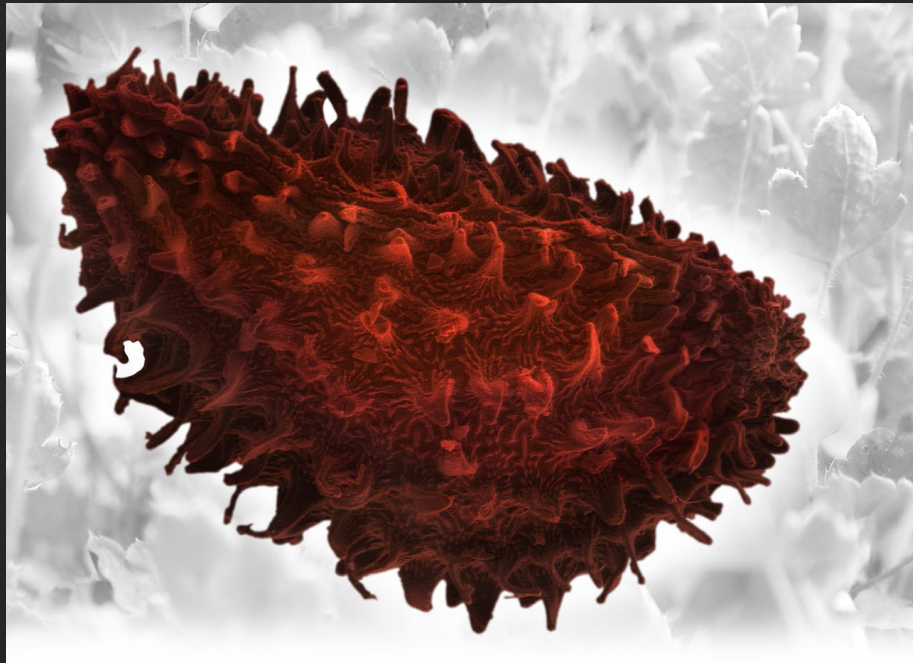
Through the lens of thale-cress, we can see deep into the lives of plants ...Scattered about in the neglected part of gardens, in wasteland or on walls. Inconspicuous and ignored; common, but unfamiliar’.

Harberd, 2006

SEEING BEYOND SCIENCE

‘We lean towards a relational and ecological paradigm in which the species *Homo sapiens* is accepted as merely a player amongst a multitude of players’ [snæbjörnsdóttir/wilson](#)

Art as a way of thinking



I am not sure why I chose this plant. I don't have much of a story to go with it. *Heschbergia* is from a large genus of American plants related to *Saxifraga*, which has recently been subjected to a lot of hybridization. There are 100s of forms that have been selected for this. This hybridization has been going on for about 115 years now, producing different things there. *Heschbergia* is really a hybrid plant that does but I has been consistently very popular. You will find it almost everywhere in Britain as well as in Sweden but the *Heschbergia pulchella* is one of the *Androsace* species that grows high up in the mountains in Northern Mexico. It is a distinctive plant with very long, thin leaves that are about 4-5 cm in diameter and then there are small, bright pink flowers. It is one of my darlings and it is rare. It was collected by this man, Ben Achilleid, now passed away but he was in northern Spain, a Scotman living in Wales, he went all around the world collecting. Always travelling together with his wife, Mrs. Achilleid, started in the '60s with a long trip to New Zealand, Denmark and India. They also went to the mountains of Southern Europe and Turkey and then began to visit North America and finally New Mexico. They collected the seeds of this plant there in 1990 and the plant in the rock garden is from that collection. In nature it is a rock plant growing in the trace of crevices on cliff faces. Many of the *Heschbergia* are a bit coarse but it is a big genus and there are few nice plants here. The connection with Ben Achilleid is very precise. The last trip we made together was to Georgia. From all the experience in the past through the years, Ben had developed the concept which caused him difficulties but he was still able to make this trip and I am so grateful for that. Since 1991 we had been in regular contact - we met every 30 years at a conference - in 1991 and 2001 and in 2011 he was supposed to give a lecture but fell ill. He suggested that we would give this paper together but then he died, so I gave this lecture alone, which I presented as a tribute to him. He has really inspired us, and the Garden with so many rare plants. He has been very important. Ben first got to meet our Ben Dronov. Per Vindahl in 60s and 70s. He inspired the Vindahl to reach out from his travels in Asia where he found a new *Diospyros* he had described a specimen of more than 4000 years old, which, once you cannot go higher than 2000 meters in a car, meant that in August, when the north is scorching dry and it's very very hot he had to climb the last 2000 meters. There he collected the plant, named *Archibaldii* which since then we have been growing. In 2002 we were in the area of *Diospyros archibaldii* and there we collected a species that had hitherto been called a *Diospyros Brasiliensis* but soon after, was confirmed by my friend Magnus in Uppsala, a specialist on *Diospyros*, to be another form of *Archibaldii*. With our collection of this specimen is really unique. It is growing very well. The other one was difficult, but this is an easy plant and flowers very well. So we are happy to have made this introduction in the museum of Ben.

Photograph: ©Snaebjörnsdóttir/Wilson



Photograph M. Wilson



‘Removing plants from the human view makes it easier for us to exploit them but so reduces our ability to see into their worlds; how might taking a different view improve our understanding and sensitivity to the lives of plants?’

WITNESSING AND EXPERIENCING

How Does Extinction Feel?

Her eyes gave him no sign of love
or farewell or recognition.

Eveline, James Joyce

‘The last fallen mahogany would lie perceptibly on the landscape, and the last black rhino would be obvious in its loneliness, but a marine species may disappear beneath the waves unobserved and the sea would seem to roll on the same as always’.

Ray, G.C. 1988

Should we trust or ever read writers at all unless they speak
and encourage us to speak of extinction analysis and
healing? What are you not writing that you would write?
What do you already know that would turn your knowledge
and living the other way round?

Tiplady, 2019



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