

Can plants talk?

By Mickayla Smith
Staff Writer

According to NPR, plant enthusiasts can tune into their plants to see how they're doing. Using bio-sonification, devices like Music of the Plants and PlantWave enable plants to talk.

PlantWave grew from Data Garden started by Joe Patitucci and Alex Tyson in 2011. In 2012, PlantWave was born when the Philadelphia Museum of Art invited the label to do a demonstration at the museum.

Data Garden worked with an engineer named Sam Cusumano, who made a device that translated micro-conductivity on the surface of plants into a graph that can be used to control hardware and software synthesizers. What came out of this collaboration was "Data Garden Quartet" which featured four harmonizing plants that played music.

The music produced by the plants can be used in many different ways for many different occasions. However, PlantWave's goal is to develop an awareness that plants are living organisms.

"I think some people are very aware that plants are sentient beings that are, arguably, making decisions for themselves and responding to their environment," product development manager of Data Garden Jon Shapiro said. "But for a lot of people that's not something they think about every day. It

does allow people, and it has allowed me, to look at other life forms and appreciate their aliveness in a different way."

Don't be confused by their liveliness. They don't respond to things as humans do. "Plants don't sound like flutes," Shapiro said. The consumer version of the invention includes sensors that issue small signals through the plant, measuring variations in electrical resistance between two points within it.

"The variation in the connection is largely related to how much water is between those two points, which changes a lot as the plant is moving water around while it's photosynthesizing," Shapiro said. "Then we graphed that change as a wave, and then we translated that wave into pitch, so then essentially we're getting a stream of all these pitch messages coming from the plant." These pitches are then sent to the device's software to be turned into piano notes or guitar chords.

Some plants aren't made to produce music because of their size or delicate nature. So, picking the right plants to use is essential. The sounds the plants produce is a way for them to communicate their needs, but not to humans.

This is kind of like when our stomachs rumble; that means we're hungry. Plants react to their environment and things moving around them. That is how they produce sounds.

Weekly Horoscopes

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Aries: Caution, don't lose your composure. Work on whatever you think needs fixing in your personal life.

Taurus: Don't feel pressured to do something that makes you uncomfortable.

Gemini: Remember physical distancing, not social distancing.

Cancer: You will find that people are giving you the recognition and admiration you need to build yourself up this week. Take this to heart.

Leo: Your finances are troubling you now. As time passes, so will this worry.

Virgo: Focus on your well-being this week. Your focus may be on someone else right now, but you need to draw the attention back to yourself for a while.

Libra: Are you fully prepared to start pursuing one of your dreams? If so, do it! If not, wait.

Scorpio: Communication is key this week. Maybe rehearse what you want to say before you start talking to someone.

Sagittarius: Seek emotional shelter right now. There is a lot on your plate and it's starting to get overwhelming. Take this time to work through your emotions.

Capricorn: You now have the time to move forward with something you have wanted to accomplish for a while.

Aquarius: You will be able to find closure this week with something personal you've been dealing with for a long time.

Pisces: Friendship is SO important now. Take this time to get back in touch with some old friends that have always brought light into your life.



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