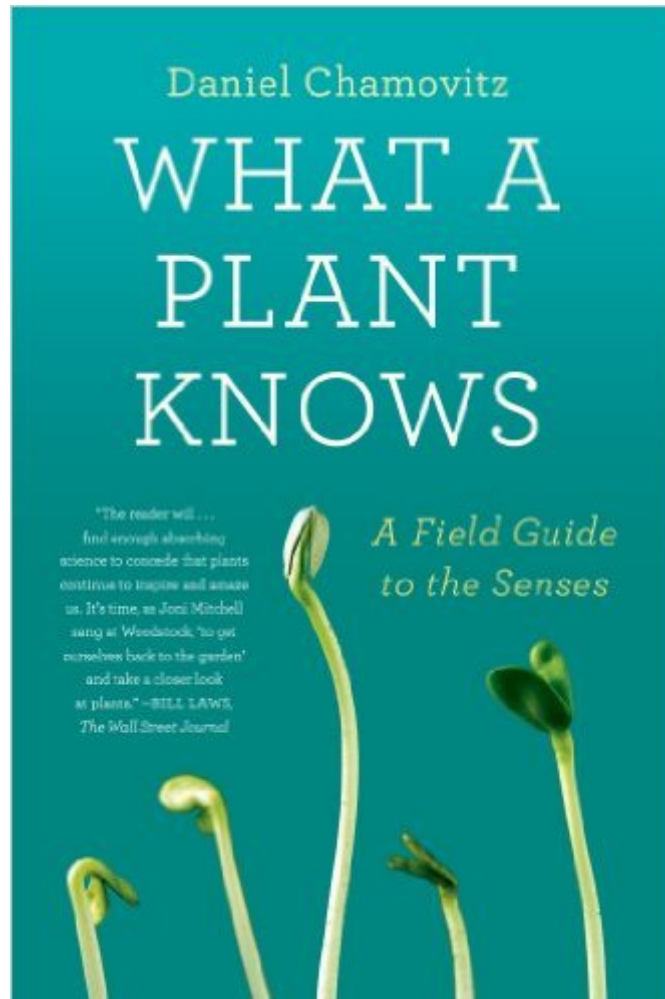


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# What A Plant Knows: A Field Guide To The Senses



## 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

*What a Plant Knows* is a rare and beautiful piece of science journalism. Author Daniel Chamovitz's writing threads a needle with an aperture so fine that it is only rarely successfully accomplished: in

elegantly simple language that is accompanied by a gentle sense of humor and deep integrity, he guides the reader to a new door of knowledge in a fashion that guarantees one will step through it. And once he/she steps through it, the reader's appreciation of what a plant can sense and remember (yes, remember, in a very specific sense) will be irrevocably altered. This is not a dry and dusty tome. Though the phrase "I read it in a single sitting" more commonly applies to fictional thrillers (e.g. The DaVinci Code), it's applicable occasionally in science writing, and it's applicable to What a Plant Knows. Chamovitz, is a natural born teacher. When the reader wants to know "How the heck does a plant know which way is up, and which way is down?", Chamovitz refuses to plop the final answer out in one paragraph, instead, teasing the reader along the actual historical pathway that elucidates what we now know. And in so doing, he brings the full beauty of any given aspect of plant biology into focus, but ALSO brings to light the beauty and power of science that is well done; science done by people with a careful but insatiable need to know; science done by people whose need to be accurate exceeds their desire to prove their own theory right. Chamovitz has the startling belief that the unvarnished truth is more fascinating than hyperbole, and hence What a Plant Knows is completely absent the hype and goofiness of The Secret Lives of Plants.

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