



## Vegetal Poetics Narrating Plants in Culture and History

Whether in the garden, house, field, or forest, plants are all around us, but we often do not notice them. This “plant blindness” (Wandersee & Schussler) also extends to the abundance of plants in literature, and it obscures their roles in cultural and historical developments.

Recent plant studies research in the humanities has begun to bring plants out of the ornamental background and the realm of the symbolic in order to investigate the role of botanical entities and the imagination surrounding vegetal matter(s).

Building on these forays into plant studies, this conference asks about the nature of vegetal poetics. What kinds of stories are told about, with, and by plants, and how? In which ways and to what effect do the differences but also commonalities between people and plants catalyze ecocentric, ecological, or ecocritical literature? And how do plant (hi)stories relate to the material, epistemological, cultural, aesthetic, and affective environments that these narratives co-constitute?

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DEUTSCHES  
HYGIENE-MUSEUM  
DRESDEN

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## Conference Venue

Deutsches Hygiene-Museum Dresden  
Conference Center  
Lingnerplatz 1, 01069 Dresden

A conference by the  
**Literary and Cultural Plant Studies Network**  
<https://plants.sites.arizona.edu/>

<https://tu-dresden.de/gsw/vegetal-poetics-conference>



Partner of



International Conference of the Literary  
and Cultural Plant Studies Network

# Vegetal Poetics

Narrating Plants in Culture and History

## Thursday, June 6

Hörsaal of the Museum

### 1pm Guided Tour

through the exhibit "People and Plants" with curator **Kathrin Meyer** (for panelists, meeting in the lobby of the museum)

### 2:30pm Welcome Address

**Joela Jacobs, Isabel Kranz, Solvejg Nitzke**

### 3–4:30pm Political Gardens (Joela Jacobs)

**Andrée-Anne Kekeh-Dika** (University of Paris 8): Jamaica Kincaid's Writings, or the Possibilities of "Green"

**Christine Gerhardt** (University of Bamberg): "My Jungle fronts on Wall Street": The Plant Politics of Emily Dickinson's Exotic Gardens

### 4:30pm Coffee Break

### 5–6:30pm Plant Potentials (Isabel Kranz)

**Helga Braunbeck** (North Carolina State University): Writing Trees and Chasing Spirits: Marion Poschmann's and Esther Kinsky's Third Nature Poetics

**Eva Axer** (Leibniz Center for Literary and Cultural Research): *Metamorphosis of Plants* 2.0: Exploring the time scale of literary narratives and the 'deep time' of plants

### 7–8:30pm Reading and Discussion

**Sabine Scho**: "Pflanzen erzählen – Pflanzen zwischen Wissenschaft und Dichtung" with Solvejg Nitzke, Isabel Kranz, and Joela Jacobs

This is a public event taking place in German. Panelists are invited to attend or take a break.

## Friday, June 7

Martha-Fraenkel Saal  
Conference Center of the Museum

### 9–10:30am Literary Botanies (Joela Jacobs)

**Rachel Bouvet** (University of Quebec at Montreal) and **Stephanie Posthumus** (McGill University): The Botanical Imaginary

**Oliver Völker** (Goethe University Frankfurt): Intricate Plants and Figures of Growth in Alfred Döblin's Writings

### 10:30am Coffee Break

### 11am–12:30pm Arboreal Poetics (Nicole Thesz)

**Patrícia Vieira** (University of Coimbra): The Amazonian Rainforest in Literature, Cinema and Art

**Susan McHugh** (University of New England): Forest Thinking in Contemporary Environmentalist Film and Fiction

### 12:30pm Lunch

### 2–3:30pm Vegetal Temporalities (Isabel Kranz)

**Klara Schubenz** (Mainz University): On Stifter's *Law of Gradualness*

**Robert Barrett** (University of Illinois): The Vegetal Temporality of Medieval British Drama

### 3:30pm Coffee Break

### 4–5:30pm Vegetal Agencies (Solvejg Nitzke)

**Giulia Pacini** (College of William & Mary): Saving the Body Politic: Ensuring the Flow of Tree Sap in French Revolutionary Discourse

**Ragnild Lome** (Linköping University): Imaginations of Plant Agency in the 1950s and 60s: Readings of the Short Story *Trapperne* by Cecil Bødker and the Radio Play *The Day of the Triffids* by John Wyndham

### 6–7pm Reading and Discussion

**Christian Lehnert**: "Narrating Plants – Plants between Science and Poetry" with Solvejg Nitzke, Isabel Kranz, and Joela Jacobs  
This is a public event taking place in German. English translations will be provided. Panelists are invited to attend or take a break.

### 8pm Conference Dinner (for panelists)

## Saturday, June 8

Martha-Fraenkel Saal  
Conference Center of the Museum

### 9–10:30am Plant Bodies (Solvejg Nitzke)

**Alessandro Buccheri** (LabEx haStec/Centre Jean Pépin): Talking about Plants in Ancient Greek Poetry and Medicine: A Dialogue between Homer and Hippocrates

**Pamela MacKenzie** (University of British Columbia): The Hand, the Eye, the Microscope, and the Knife in Nehemiah Grew's *Anatomy of Plants* (1682)

### 10:30am Coffee Break

### 11am–12:30pm Romantic Plants (Christina Becher)

**Anke Kramer** (University of Siegen): Dynamic Plants in Tieck's *Phantasus*

**Michael Bies** (Free University Berlin): Vegetal Life, Vegetal Poetics, and Goethe's *Novella*

### 12:30pm Lunch

### 1:30–3pm Plant Palpations (Frederike Middelhoff)

**Jana Kittelmann** (University Halle-Wittenberg): "Amor unit plantas": Plants as Actors in 18th-Century Idyll and Love Poetry

**Maren Mayer-Schwieger** (Leuphana University Lüneburg): Phytotaxis: Getting in Touch with Climbing Plants

### 3pm Coffee Break

### 3:30pm Concluding Remarks

**Joela Jacobs, Isabel Kranz, Solvejg Nitzke**