

### ***Plants in Discourse from Neglect to Recognition***

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This workshop focuses on how plants are represented in discourse, and why this deserves consideration. The workshop starts presenting the discrepancy between the crucial importance of plants for the life on the planet and a generalised lack of plant awareness in many socio-cultural contexts, especially in industrialised and urban societies (Wandersee & Schussler, 2001; Pany *et al.* 2019). Lack of plant awareness informs neglect in discourse and vice versa. The result is that plants tend to be erased, backgrounded, represented as objects or goods providers, and, ultimately, either as inanimate background or, at best, resources at our disposal. Examples of plant representation in different discourse contexts are discussed with a focus on discursive representation of agency. Agency both influences and is influenced by our perception or construal of animacy, since our cognitive and sensory capabilities interact with socio-cultural and linguistic perspectives.

Beyond plant sciences, several disciplines have devoted research and attention to plants, for instance, plant humanities, plant sociology, plant geography, etc. Other fields, such as ecolinguistics, have only recently started to develop a consideration for plants as participants in discourse (Bortoluzzi, forthcoming). Ecolinguistics investigates the role of language and discourse in ecosystems, and how they shape and are informed by the connection between humans and the environment (Fill, 2018; Stibbe, 2021; Steffensen, 2024.). The workshop adopts an ecolinguistics lens to discuss the under-explored field of plant discourse while promoting methodological reflections. In general, methodologies originally developed for the investigation of human groups are adapted and used to analyse other-than-human participants in discourse, such as plants, other organisms, elements of the landscape or weather events, among others. Plant discourse interrogates some well-established categories, and discursive representation of agency is among them.

Exploring plant discourse helps us to get to know ourselves from a new perspective, moving beyond anthropocentricity, and learning how to engage in ecosystems through respect and responsibility.

### **References**

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