



My plant _____

INTRODUCTION

This small booklet, called "zine" for its hands-on creation process and easy and open distribution, is part of a bigger collection of 11 zines created within the "Planting Stories Pathways - Self Directed Learning Pathways" project.

This fun-to-use zine is filled with simple activities, reflections, and ideas inviting readers to connect with plants and, through this process, to themselves. Each reader is free to explore their relationship with plants in their own way and at their own pace.



It can be printed on any ordinary printer and paper, on single sheets or as booklet, and used whenever it feels right, whether there is a single plant or a green corner available.

There is no right or wrong way to work with it, you are free to accept or skip any invitation you want, and interact with it and personalise it as much as you like.

Planting Stories Pathways is brought to you thanks to the collaboration of KulturNest e.V. Germany and Tilia Association, Croatia, and our team of passionate artists, social workers, and coaches in close connection with plant experts.

During in-depth research in both countries we discovered a simple and surprising phenomenon: when we truly connect with the plants who surround us in our daily life, both we and they flourish.

We believe this gentle reconnection with the plant world offers comfort, grounding, and resilience that can stay with people wherever they go. We hope it can be a small, and yet meaningful, support in the life of people and communities.



For the full range of Planting Stories educational materials and for more information on the background of the zine and how to use them, please scan this QR code:



PRACTICAL INFORMATION

In the following pages you will find different questions and lots of blank space to support your reflection process.
This space is all yours to fill, colour, or even leave empty.

You are completely free to choose the materials and tools you prefer, and decide if you want to express yourself with writing or drawing, abstract art or realistic illustrations, poetry or prose, few words or long texts, and even, why not, something more experimental such as collage, photography or songwriting!

The important thing is that it serves
your learning process!



We invite you to use the blank space in these pages, transforming this zine in your personal journal and your tactile memory of a wonderful plant-ful journey.

Yet, whenever you prefer to use other notebooks or loose sheets, you are of course free to do so.



Disclaimer:

In this zine you will read many times the word "plant" or "plant", also when it could have been replaced by the personal pronoun "it".

This choice was made as "it" also refers to objects and other not-living things, and it still suggests a hierarchical and anthropocentric view of the world which sees humans at the top of a pyramid of evolution and importance, and plants consigned to the lower steps of this scale, perceived as much closer to the inorganic world than to the fullness of life.

In doing so, the hope is to reinforce a vision of plants as fully living and powerful beings, not inferior to animals and, on the contrary, exceptionally important for the existence and survival of the entire life on our planet.



GETTING READY

Before moving on and initiate this journey of connecting with a plant, here you can find some practical information of what you would need:

- A plant, of course!
- Something to write and draw on (type and colours of your choice).
- Some uninterrupted time set aside for you. How much? It depends on you, as everyone likes to learn at a different pace. Perhaps set aside 20 minutes at first, or a full hour if you have it.
- You can complete the zine in one go or work through slowly, coming back to learn again when you have the time.
- Your curiosity.

If you are all set, you can now check in with yourself and see if it is a good time to start this journey.

Colour or mark the leaves under every question, from 1 (little) to 5 (very much).

How ready do you feel?



How eager do you feel?



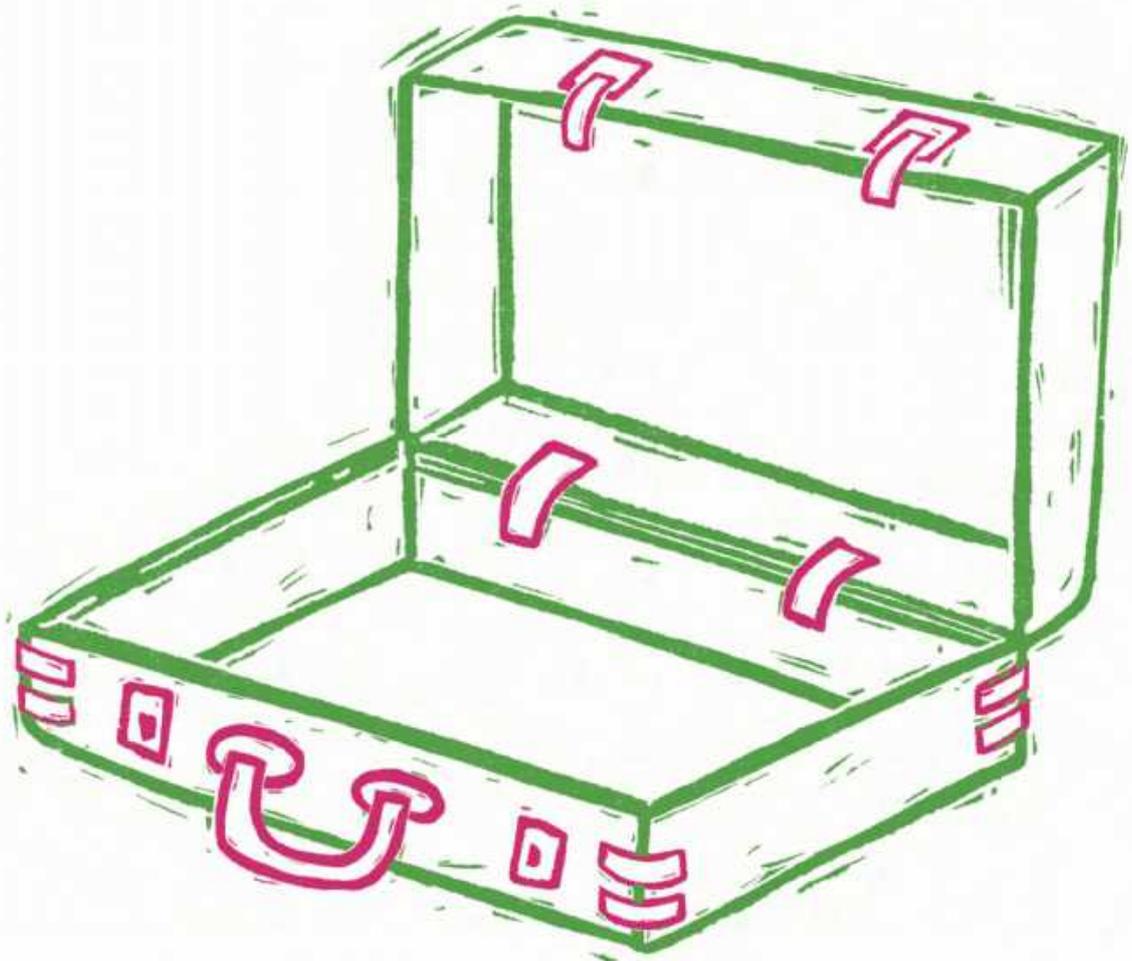
How comfortable do you feel?



What else would make you feel more at ease?

You can think about how you are dressed, how you are sitting, laying down or standing , the lighting of the space, the time of the day that suits you the best...

Write down what pops up in your mind in the luggage below or, if you prefer, anywhere on the page.



If for any reason you don't have all the materials you need or don't feel ready, eager, or comfortable enough to start, feel free to close this zine and come back whenever is a better time.

Remember that this journey is meant to serve you, and you know best how to make it more meaningful.

PLANT RELATEDNESS

How is your relationship with plants until now?



Something yet
to be planted



Something to give
more time to



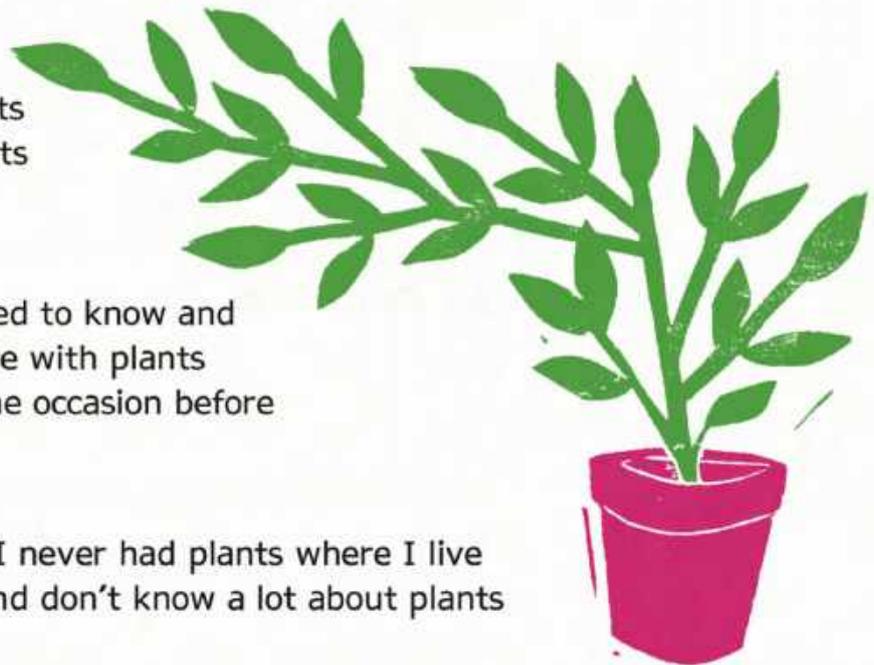
Something
steady

Which is the role of plants in your life?

I always cared about plants
and know a lot about plants

I always wanted to know and
connect more with plants
but never had the occasion before

I never had plants where I live
and don't know a lot about plants



What else comes up to your mind if you think about
your connection with plants?

PLANTS' BEAUTY

Did you know that...

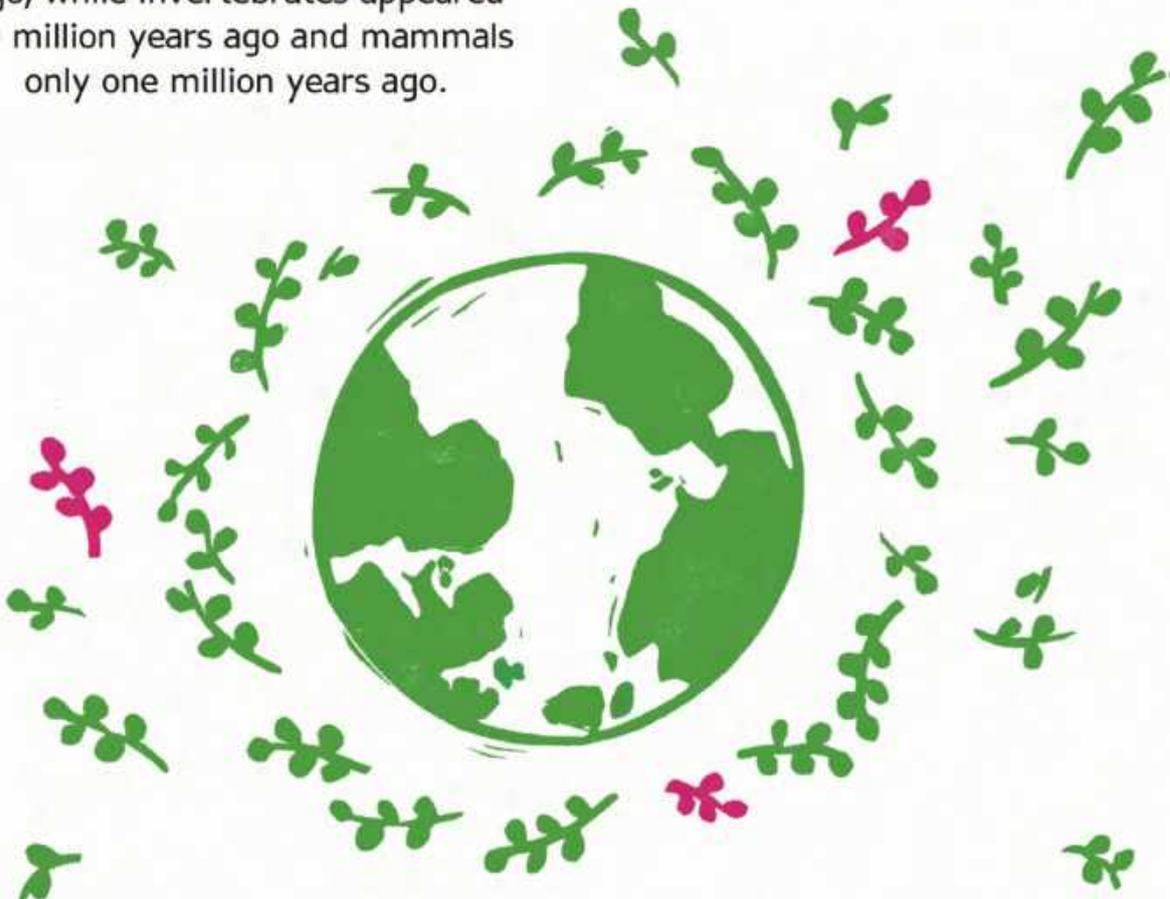
Along with algae and cyanobacteria, plants are the "makers" of all the oxygen we breathe and of all the energy consumed by any other living being on our planet.

Thank you plants!

Plants constitute the biggest kingdom on earth (trees, for example, are 3000 billions while humans just reach 7.5 billions) and represent the 80% of all the biomass (the mass of living biological organisms) of the planet. Humans represent only 0,01% ...

Plants have been living on our planet since...ages!

Some species of plants were already widespread on earth 350 million years ago, while invertebrates appeared 10 million years ago and mammals only one million years ago.



What are your first thoughts after reading these facts?
Write, draw, note down what is alive in you at the moment.

STARTING THE JOURNEY

What is the plant you would like to bring with you on this journey?

How familiar are you with this plant?

Is this plant new or was the plant already part of your life?

What do you know about this plant?

What does this plant need in terms of water, light and care?

Are you the main caregiver or are there other people who take care after the plant?



After having reflected on these questions, how do you feel about your plant?

YOUR TOPIC

You are next to your plant, you can sit, lay or stand.

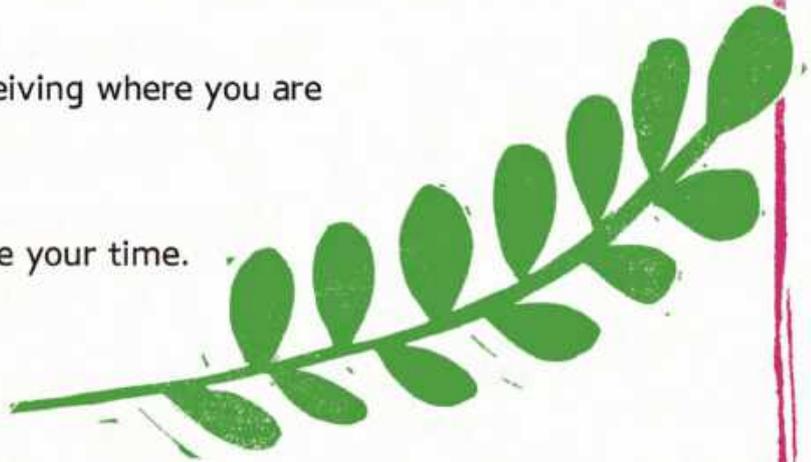
Take a few deep breaths, becoming more aware of the sensations present in your body.

Look around with a soft focus, perceiving where you are and what surrounds you.

Get as comfortable as you can.

Now start observing your plant, take your time.

There is no rush.



How does it feel to slow down?

Look at your plant and notice the dimensions, the colours, the shapes and the directions the plants have.



On the cover of this zine you can find a special frame for your plant's portrait. Draw your plant using the materials you prefer.



Remember that you can also "draw" with abstract signs or even words! You can do what feels more comfortable to you but also challenge yourself to new ways of expression.



Don't look for a masterpiece, rather enjoy the process of understanding more about something thanks to the process of portraying it.



Additional tip: try to pay attention to what you notice and draw what you are seeing, not what you think you know about the plant or the image of the plant you have in your mind.

When you are satisfied, look at the drawing with attention and love, and then come back to this page.



What did you notice while looking at the plant?

What did the plant remind you of?



Which questions did it evoke?



After this reflection, choose the question or topic you would like to be exploring during this plant journey.

Write down one sentence or word about it:

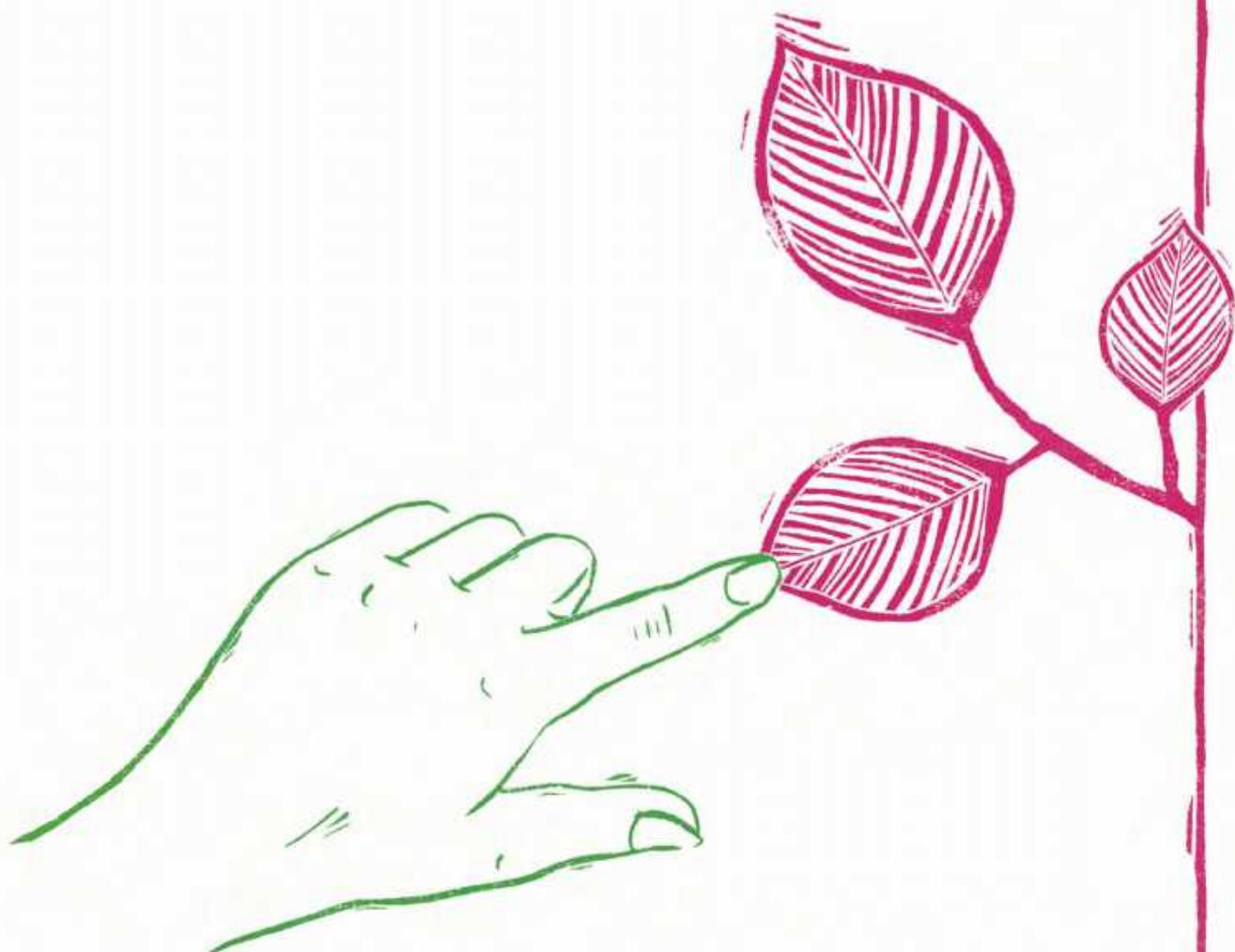
Today, my topic is:



LEAVES' EXPLORATION

Let's go deeper into the sensorial exploration of the plant and focus your attention on the leaves.

What do you see, smell, hear or touch?



If you can, change the perspective you are observing the plant from or try to imagine how the leaves would look from another point of view.

LEAVES' CONNECTION

Keeping in mind the topic you chose, what could the leaves reveal to you?

If they could speak, which message, word, or whisper would they tell you?

What gifts are the leaves carrying for you?

Take a moment to visualise this thought or gesture of care and affection.

What could it mean for you?

How does it make you feel?



LEAVES' BEAUTY

The shape and structure of the leaves depends on the adaptations to climate conditions, availability of light and nutrients, and presence of ecological competitors.



Plants are autotrophic, they produce their own "food" through the leaves

The leftover from the "food production" is a gas called oxygen, which is essential for the survival of all animated beings. This gas is produced during photosynthesis and released in the air through the leaves.

What insights does this information suggest you?

Is there a meaning that is relevant for you or your topic?



STEMS' EXPLORATION

Now focus your attention on the stems of your plant.

What happens if you follow the stems with your fingers?



Notice the structure they create.

Which posture or attitude do they suggest?

What pattern can you identify?

What aspects of this exploration are meaningful to your process?

STEMS' CONNECTION

Keeping in mind the topic you choose, what could the stems reveal to you?

If they could speak, which message, word, or whisper would they tell you?

What support are the stems providing you?

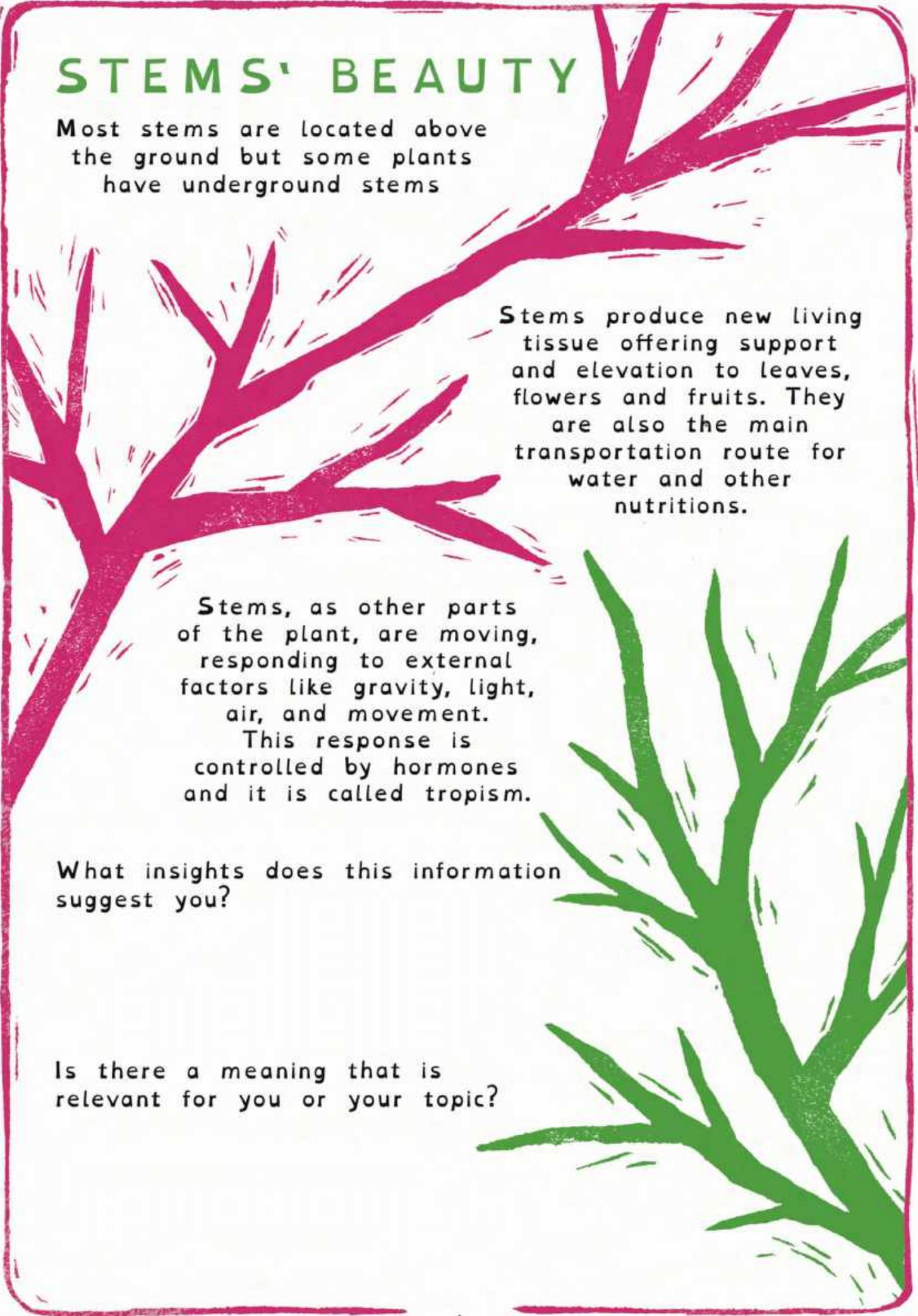
Take a moment to visualise this thought or gesture of care and affection.

What could it mean for you?

How does it make you feel?



STEMS' BEAUTY



Most stems are located above the ground but some plants have underground stems

Stems produce new living tissue offering support and elevation to leaves, flowers and fruits. They are also the main transportation route for water and other nutrients.

Stems, as other parts of the plant, are moving, responding to external factors like gravity, light, air, and movement.

This response is controlled by hormones and it is called tropism.

What insights does this information suggest you?

Is there a meaning that is relevant for you or your topic?

ROOTS' EXPLORATION

It is now time to look underneath.

How are the roots of your plants?

Are they visible over the surface of the soil or maybe visible through the water?

Observe them if you can,
otherwise, imagine them.

How do they move?

How deep do they go?

How thin or thick are they?



ROOTS' CONNECTION

Keeping in mind the topic you chose, what could the roots represent for you?

If they could speak, what message, word, or whisper would they tell you?

What do they need in order to thrive?

Take a moment to visualise this thought or gesture of care and affection.

What could it mean for you?

How does it make you feel?



ROOTS' BEAUTY

Roots serve as anchors for the plant and absorb water and minerals.

Some roots, those that are bulbs like tulips, crocus and daffodils, also work as storage for nutrients!

Roots are endogenous, they develop from the inner layer of the plant's "core".

What insights does this information suggest you?

Is there a meaning that is relevant for you or your topic?

The radicle, the embryo of the root, is the first part of the plant to germinate from the seed.

EXPLORING THE PLANT AS A WHOLE

Now, embrace the plant as a whole, trying to keep in mind the different aspects, insights, revelation and reflection you had throughout this journey.

You may also have a look at the previous pages with your drawings and notes.

Observe the plant from this new perspective.
What do you notice?

If you go back to the portrait you did on the cover, is there any change in what you see and how you perceive the plant?



CONNECTING WITH A PLANT AS A WHOLE

How might these reflections relate to your own process and topic?

What about the plant leaves?

And the stems?

The roots?



Is there any other part or aspect of the plant that is telling you something?

What small action could you take in your life to reflect this metaphor of transformation?

CLOSING THE JOURNEY

Now look at this whole process.
What did you enjoy the most?

What did you learn about the plant?

What has changed in the way you look at the plant?

What did you learn
about yourself?

What has changed in the way
you look at yourself?



How would you summarise this experience?

Is there a word or a message you would like to note or write down for yourself, to hold onto this experience?

Maybe a symbol?

What are you taking with you from this process?

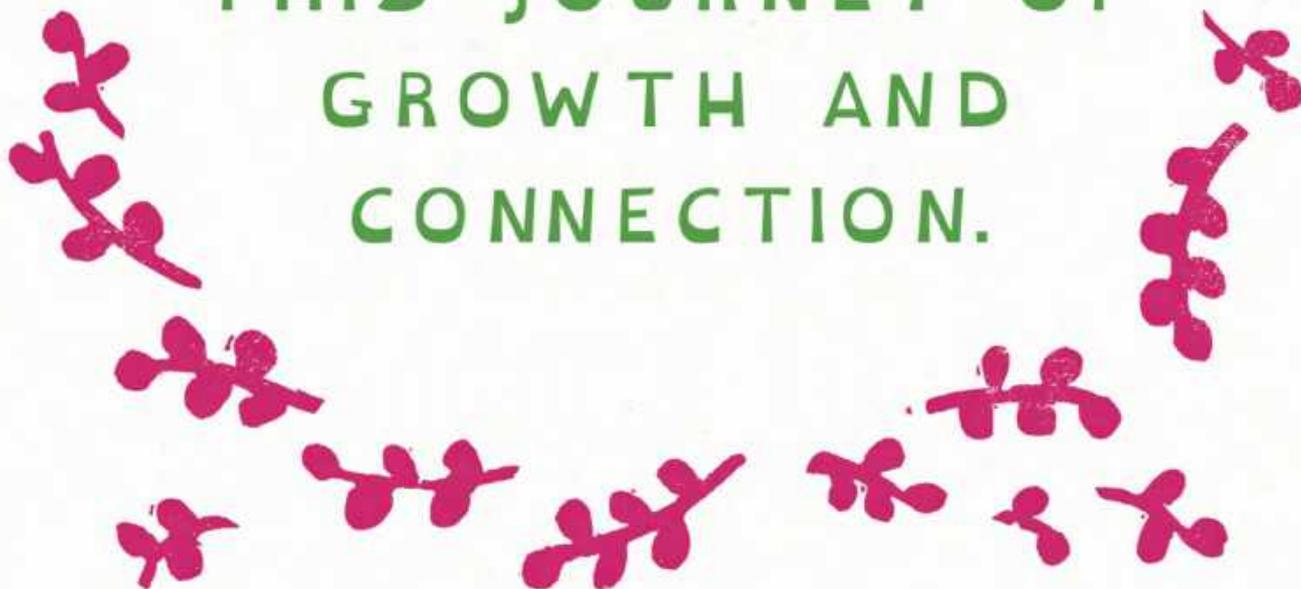


Use this space freely :)





THANK YOU FOR TAKING THIS JOURNEY OF GROWTH AND CONNECTION.



Check for other resources at:

<https://www.kulturnest.org/socio-cultural/planting-stories>
or udrugatilia.hr/plantingstories

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