

PLANTING
STORIES.

9/11

THE STORY OF LAYERS
...AND STRENGTH...



HELLO!

This zine is inspired by plants and lovingly adapted for self-discovery work with indoor plants. It is part of a larger collection of educational materials titled Planting Stories, aiming to explore and embrace the relationship between potted plants and humans.

A zine is a small, homemade magazine that people create to share their thoughts, art or interests. It's usually made by hand or on a computer, then copied and shared with others (self-published). For audio information on the background of this zine and how to use it, please scan this QR code:



Let's start:

Sit with a plant in front of you.

Let your breathing settle and your mind calm down.
Take your time to connect to the plant by observing it for a few minutes.
If you wish, gently touch its leaves or soil.

Think about the roots of this plant and how they hold its whole structure.
Observe this plant's stems and leaves - how they are perfectly imperfect in their structure and strength.

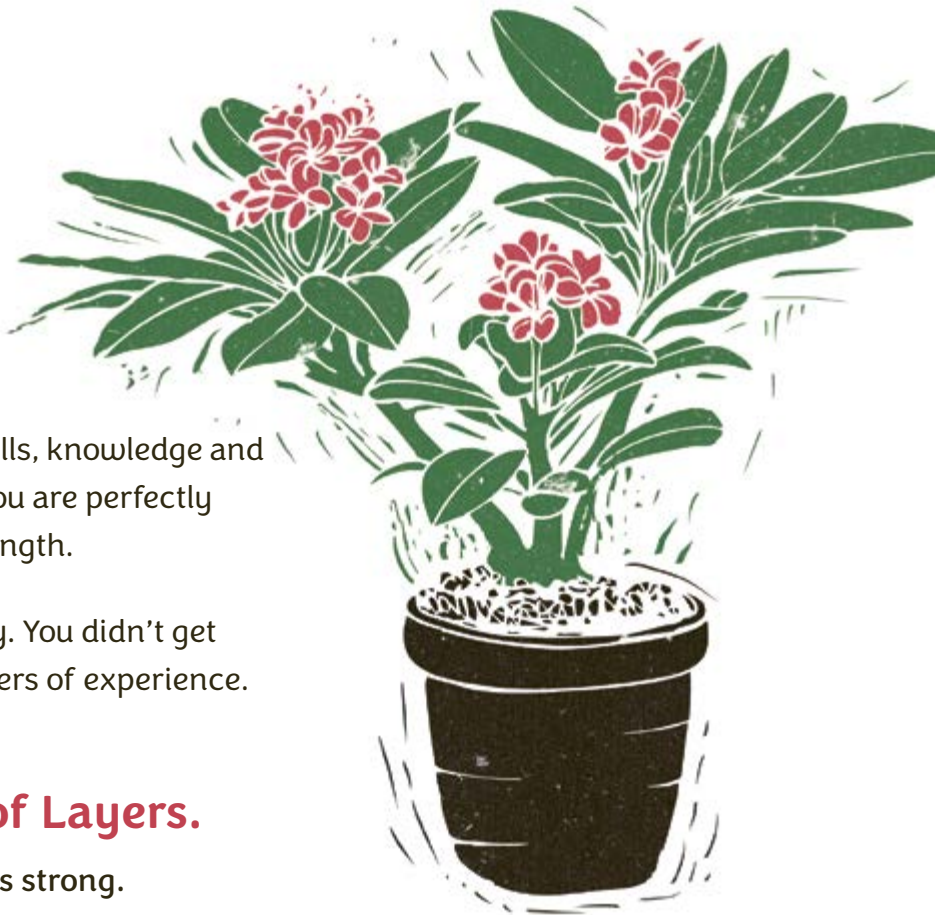
Now, do the same about yourself:
Think about something that grounds you - perhaps about where you come from, your tradition, your values (...) Think about in which way this is holding you.

Also, think about all your talents, skills, knowledge and gifts, who you are today and how you are perfectly imperfect in your structure and strength.

This plant didn't get there in one day. You didn't get here in one day. It took time and layers of experience.

Welcome to the Story of Layers.

The story of what actually makes us strong.



How do plants grow?

Roots first. Even the tiniest houseplant begins by sending roots deep into the soil before focusing on leaves or flowers. That hidden foundation decides how strong the plant can grow. It anchors the plant and absorbs water and nutrients before anything else grows.



Leaves fuel everything. Each new leaf is like adding a solar panel. Once the first leaves appear, they start producing sugars through photosynthesis, fueling further growth. The healthier leaves a plant has, the more energy it stores for future growth and flowering.



Growth comes in bursts. Periods of rapid expansion are followed by pauses where the focus is on strengthening tissues. A houseplant may seem still for weeks, then suddenly, it pushes out new leaves. During the “quiet times,” energy is going into the roots while strengthening stems.

Light shapes them. Young shoots bend toward sunlight (phototropism) to maximize energy capture. Indoor plants bend and stretch toward the nearest light source. Rotating your potted plants every few weeks helps them grow balanced and steady.

Stress makes plants tougher. Moderate wind, shifting temperatures, or limited water can lead to stronger stems and deeper roots—a process called stress hardening. Even a little movement from a window breeze or a fan helps indoor stems grow sturdier, preparing plants to hold more leaves and—eventually—some of the flowers and fruit.

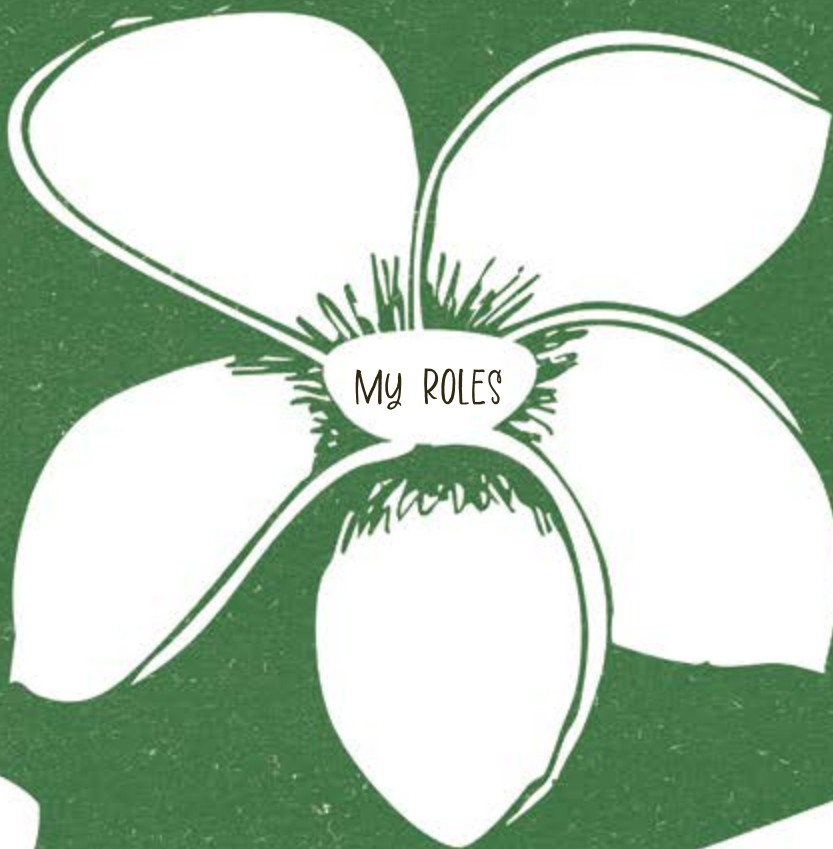
Flowering is a big energy shift. Before producing flowers and fruits, plants spend a lot of energy building strong vegetative structures (roots, stems and leaves). Only then do they switch to reproduction mode.





What have you grown into?

Write down in petals all **roles** you have in this life season right now.

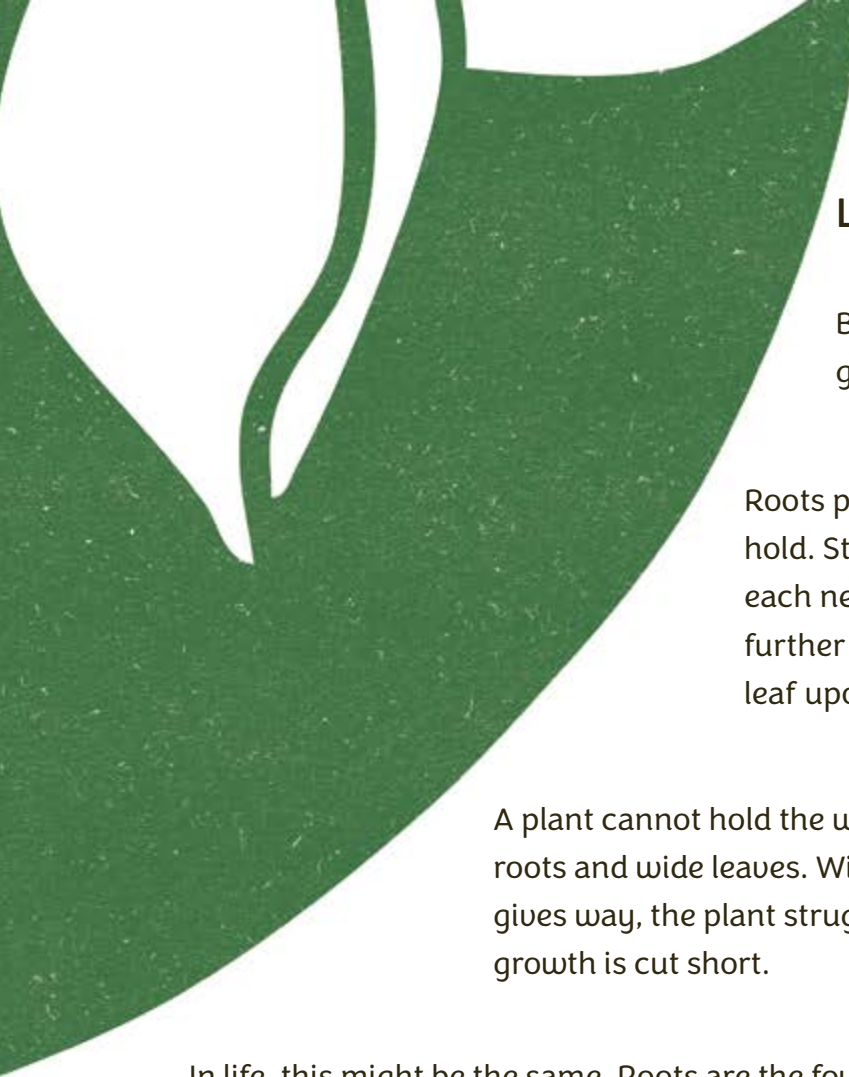


Draw or write how you imagine your oasis of peace.

A large rectangular area defined by a dashed line, intended for drawing or writing.

"TO PLANT A GARDEN
IS TO DREAM OF
TOMORROW."

~ AUDREY HEPBURN ~



LAYERS

Before flowers open or fruit appears, growth happens where we cannot see it.

Roots press deeper into the soil, finding their hold. Stems rise higher. Leaves keep unfolding, each new one adding to the last, stretching further to gather light. Strength is stored quietly, leaf upon leaf, stem upon stem—layer upon layer.

A plant cannot hold the weight of flowers and fruit without deep roots and wide leaves. Without them, the stem bends, the structure gives way, the plant struggles to stand tall, and the journey of growth is cut short.

In life, this might be the same. Roots are the foundation within us, leaves and branches are the ways we meet the world. If they are not ready, giving too much too soon can leave us drained.

Layers take time. Strength takes time. Roots deepen in stillness, leaves widen in patience, branches grow steady in quiet seasons. Each part is a silent investment in all that will follow.

When the base is strong, the bloom does not hurry—it arrives certain, holds steady, and endures.

Build your layers well, and your strength will not only grow... it will become permanent.



Reflect on the following questions.

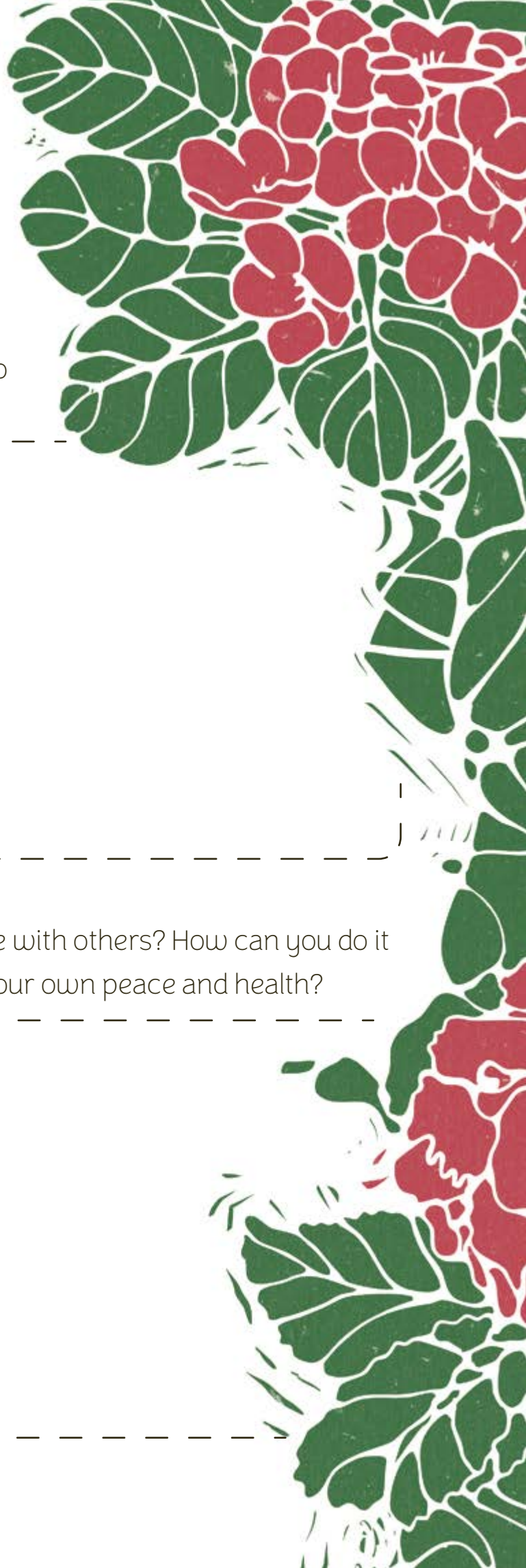
Notice what feels true for you, and write down your answers—or simply make notes or sketch your thoughts.

How can you practice giving from abundance, not from exhaustion – like a plant that first builds itself in order to bloom?

A large rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for writing answers to the first question.

What would you like to create or share with others? How can you do it without it coming at the expense of your own peace and health?

A large rectangular area with a dashed border, intended for writing answers to the second question.



I WOULD LOVE TO:

Decide: When opportunity presents itself, do those activities.

Thank you for taking this journey of
growth and connection.

Check for other resources at:

kulturnest.org/socio-cultural/planting-stories

or udruga-tilia.hr/planting-stories/

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**PLANTING
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