

ECOSYSTEMS

MTH place: House plants
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"Ecosystems" is a research project focusing on different types of environments from a plant's perspective.

To do so, I considered three different ecosystem types: the natural one, domestic, and a terrarium. I began my journey by building a terrarium, viewing it as a mix between nature and domestic house planting due to its self-managing structure and mostly independent environment. It exhibits a more balanced routine for plants because of its own rain cycles and the lesser human impact



NATURE



TERRARIUM

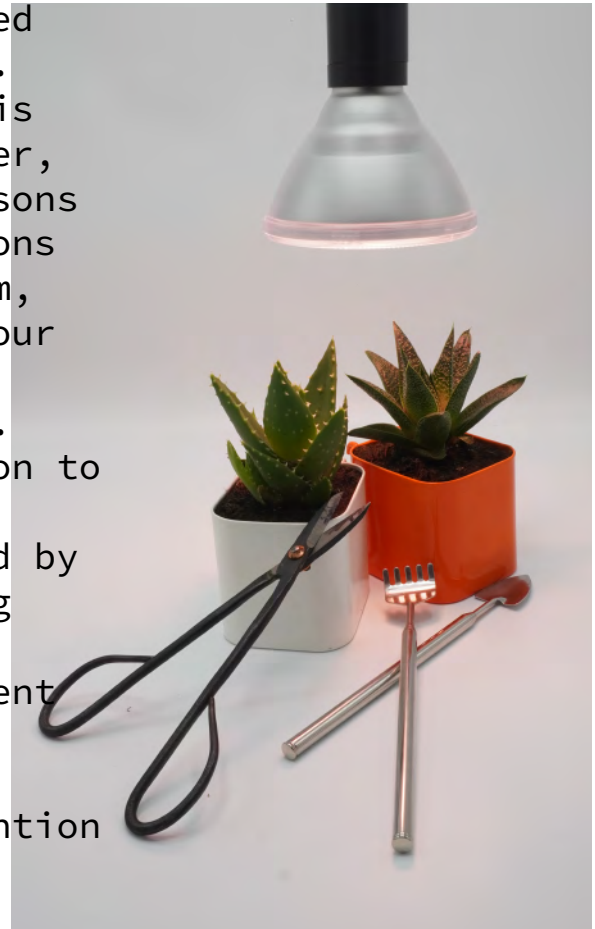


HOUSE

However, beyond all of this, it is still a very human construct and artificial object, which made me doubt and think about its ethical background. To explore this, I started thinking about plants more generally. Overall, plants are more than human entities that, during their life cycle and reproduction, expect the intervention of an external entity. The seeds of a fruit are meant to be eaten and spread around by any creature. But when thinking about pruning, watering, fertilizing, and so on, is the concept still valid?

If we think about horses, during their life, they need their hooves to be cut and sanded. Cows need their horns to be trimmed. But is all this human intervention dictated by nature, or are these society-built concepts?

Plants in domestic environments need constant care, watering, and so on. Obviously, the indoor environment is not meant for them; it is much drier, there is no rain, sun, and the seasons do not happen. These harsh conditions push us to continue caring for them, creating a different ecosystem in our houses just to make the survival of these more-than-humans possible. With globalization, it is now common to have a cactus growing in Northern Europe. But is all of this dictated by nature? Is it right? Are we talking about forced survival? Are we unnaturally forcing their development by pruning and fertilizing them? So, is a terrarium natural? Is it artificial? Is human intervention natural? Is nature itself natural or artificial?



I got the idea from watching how plants grow in a park near my house. When I go there, I enjoy the peacefulness away from the busy city. The plants are thriving, birds are singing, and it has that humid and refreshing typical smell of nature. But then, when I hear cars passing by, it reminds me that even nature spots are influenced by people. The park has fences, wooden constructions, and clear paths. Gardeners probably come here to trim, water, and look after it, making sure everything's just right for the plants.

The trees and plants are planted in a regular and ritmical way, and birdhouses are built on them. The same goes for forests in Finland, they're mostly made by plantations for the timber production. So, even in what seems like wild nature, people play a big part in how things grow.

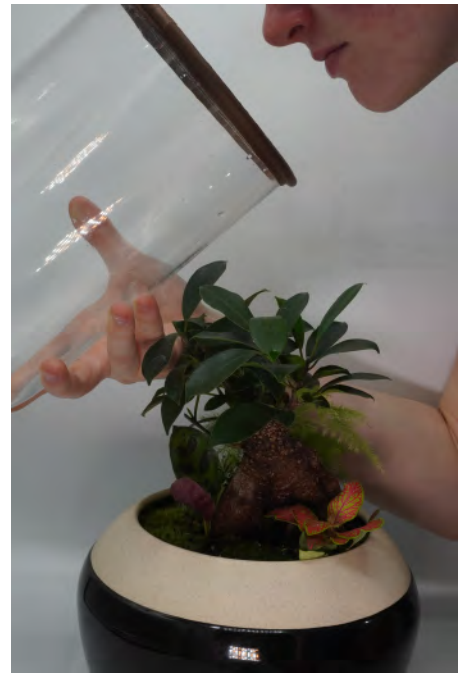


Is it all a matter of upscaling and downscaling? A forest, a park, a house, a terrarium, a pot are all human-controlled environments. What is the element that changes our perspectives? The size? What makes us perceive the natural aspect of a thing? Having all our senses involved might be what makes our experiences special.



I personally have no answer for this. Mine is not even an attempt to suggest a replacement of attitude. I think, though, that a terrarium in a less human-influenced structure for plants to grow, in which they can independently manage their resources.

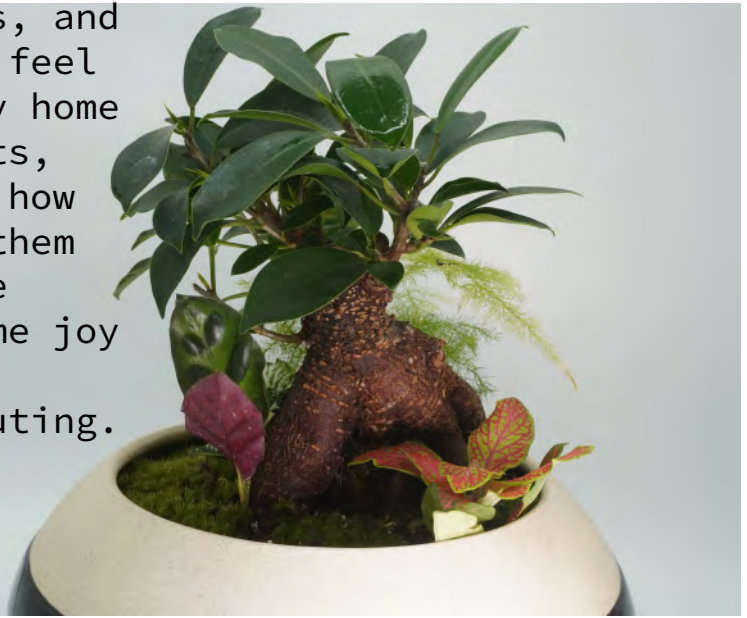
I created two terrariums in which the smell is a key component to connect with the natural environment. One, with a more direct interaction, lifting the lid makes it possible to smell the fragrance of the ecosystem created inside.



The second one is accessible by rotating the spherical cork tap on top, revealing the humidity-soaked side. Doing so makes it possible to scent the fragrance inside the terrarium without bothering the contained humidity.



I am passionate about plants, and having them around makes me feel more connected to nature. My home is filled with lots of plants, and I always keep an eye on how they're doing. I even give them names and care for them like they're my kids. It brings me joy to see them grow, with new leaves or branches sprouting. Taking care of them and creating a terrarium felt very calming and fulfilling. I really enjoyed making a cozy space where they can thrive on their own.



THANK YOU!