

Are humans more important than plants?

### **Essay**

In this day and age, it would be absurd to claim that one person's life is below that of a plant. Well actually plants hold a tremendous amount of worth in our world, even if we don't see it for ourselves. Some of the basics simply include, clearing our air, cleaning our water, and they aid in our nourishment. However, is that enough to place their lives above ours? When we talk about life we are usually referring to plants. When inquiring if life can survive on other planets we are referring to plants. When looking at organisms that can sustain an entire global population we are talking about plants. They're the reason we are alive. These plants clean the air, provide our food and there have been times where they have literally saved our lives and helped us improve civilization. There are so many things that we take for granted but actually we owe some of our thanks to plants. For example, many medicinal agents are derived from plants. The painkiller aspirin is one of them which is taken from the Willow tree. Acetylsalicylic acid is found in the bark of the white willow tree and is the key ingredient in Aspirin which has been used to reduce pain and even treat some types of cancer. Now that humans are damaging the earth, we are looking for escape. We have this big question: Can there be life outside of earth? We have been trying so hard to find the answer to this question and the first idea we think of is plants. It is the whole reason for launching rockets and spaceships into unknown territory just to see if a plant can survive somewhere else other than earth because if a plant can live then so can humans. They are leading and we are following so how can we have the audacity to place their life above ours? From a scientific or biblical perspective, plants have always come before humans. During the Jurassic period we know plants existed because we had dinosaurs that got their source of food from plants known as herbivores. It was an excellent time for plants as the climate shifted from dry and hot to warm and humid. Without plants as the producer the other trophic levels would collapse. Plants have always ensured the survival of all other organisms above them so surely we have a moral duty to also look after them. With respect to christianity, the creation story in the Bible states that God created plants before humans and that we had to look after them. It also mentions that we are to be stewards of earth and it is evident that we are failing in that simple role of caring for the organisms that provide for us. So it is not to say that they are more important than humans or vice versa but as a whole we should place them at an equal standing with the rest of humanity. On the topic of equality, how much value do we really place on plants to the extent that we would risk our lives to save a plant? There are so many things that we do unconsciously that harm a plant. For instance, something as simple as picking a flower or walking on grass, one would think nothing of it but what we are really doing is harming them. Imagine a person stepped on another or they tore a limb from them. We would absolutely have something to say about it then but just because it's a plant that can't communicate or feel emotions, humanity sees itself as superior. In 'Environmental Ethics' written by Paul W. Taylor, they state that 'we are capable of nobler achievements' It also argues that 'we possess a dignity and worth' that are absent in other forms of life. Our intelligence surpasses that of a plant, the memories that we possess and the emotions we feel and the impact that we have on other humans greatly exceeds those of a plant. For this reason one might consider that humans indeed have a certain level of superiority. We have seen that plants have provided the basis of medicine, they've existed far longer than humans but they lack the intelligence and power that humans possess. We have the power to be equal to them but we choose not to. I do not believe that it's a question of superiority but rather the unbalanced power relationship between humans and plants.