

# Facebook-fed Aussie plant killed by kindness

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An Australian plant called "Meet Eater" is fed via Facebook. The real plant is watered when Facebook users become fans and post on its wall. The adage "killing with kindness" has been proven through the Queensland University project with fans of the plant literally loving it to death through overwatering, researchers said.

An Australian plant fed via Facebook has given proof to the adage "killing with kindness", with its fans on the site literally loving it to death, researchers said.

A real plant called "Meet Eater" is watered when Facebook users become fans and post on its wall, in an interactive project at Queensland state library that aims to explore the emotions involved in using social media.

Creator Bashkim Isai said he had wanted to see whether people could care enough about a plant seen on Facebook to keep it alive, and had

been overwhelmed by the response.

Since its unveiling two months ago, Isai said Meet Eater had attracted more than 5,000 fans from across the world -- including a five-fold spike in the past fortnight -- literally drowning it with love.

"We found that it's been over-loved, it's actually died two times from having too much stimulation, which is an interesting outcome for us," said Isai, a Queensland University student in interactive design.

Visitors to its [Facebook](#) page can watch live footage of Meet Eater, now in its third incarnation. They are invited to boost its [water](#) rations by becoming a fan, or can give Meet Eater a squirt of water by writing on its wall.

"There have been some people who are very proactive with the plant's engagement who maintain conversations with the plant over some weeks," he told AFP.

"But there are a very large number of people who just come on there, say hello and then do nothing more, they don't really have an interest in continuing."

People are able to feed the plant by visiting the project at the Queensland library and literally stroking its fronds or soil, which Isai said would prompt it to "croon and purr" through a sound box. It weeps if left too long without attention.

Isai, 22, said Meet Eater's third incarnation was a "much more water tolerant" plant species and he had adjusted the automatic programme to lower the water levels.

He said the research showed meaningful connections could be made

online, but also some "needs and responses" could not be met via computers.

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