

# Lexicon for Slow Plants on a Burning Planet: A Companion to *Elderflora*

Jared Farmer

## I. Keywords with definitions

### **tree**, *n.*

*Human Ecology.* A terrestrial life-form with treeness. A largish plant that lives a longish time. A single-trunked plant, with or without wood, filled with human meaning. A modular organism or a nodal superorganism honored through misunderstanding as an individual. A plant that people call a tree.

### **treehood**, *n.*

*Botany.* The multitudinousness of a tree, including its habitat-forming canopy and its cross-species root system. Arboreality. Of vascular plants: A state of clonality or communality. Compare against TREENESS.

### **megaflo**ra, *n.*

*Botany.* With plural agreement: The largest vascular plants (tracheophytes) of a particular region, habitat, or epoch. Derivative: **megafloral**. Compare with MEGAFUNA.

### **elderflora**, *n.*

*Botany.* With plural agreement: The longest-lasting plants—defined as organisms, populations, or species—of a particular region, habitat, or epoch. Derivative: **elderfloral**.

### **perdurance**, *n.*

*Biology and Ecology.* Of an organism or population: Resilience over a long time.

### **perdurable**, *adj.* and *n.*

*Botany.* Of plants: Having a prolonged life cycle. A thousand-year conifer, or of its nature. Compare with EPHEMERAL, ANNUAL, BIENNIAL, and PERENNIAL.

### **millennial**, *n.*

*Botany.* A perdurable plant, having reached its potential for maturity.

### **longevity placeway**, *n.* (compound)

*Ecology and Botany.* The spatial, temporal, and environmental conditions under which certain woody plants—those with genetic potential for persistence—can achieve extreme longevity, either with human care or without human interference. The phyto geography of oldness. Compare with LONGEVITY PATHWAY.

**Old One**, *n.* (compound)

*Human Ecology.* A title of respect, without a personifying name and without patriarchal or maternal gendering, for a venerable tree. Compare against GRANDFATHER TREE and MOTHER TREE.

**temporal service**, *n.* (compound)

*Human Ecology.* Chiefly in plural: An indirect benefit of age-old things, particularly elderflora, to human life, such as the encouragement to meditate, or engage in long-term thinking. Compare with ECOSYSTEM SERVICE.

**chronodiversity**, *n.*

*Ecology.* The condition of temporal richness in a particular habitat or ecosystem. The existence of species of various evolutionary ages, species of various life strategies and life spans—and, within communities of plants, specimens of various ages. Compare with BIODIVERSITY.

**Great Diminution**, *n.* (compound with *the*)

*Ecology and History.* The mutual lessening of biodiversity and chronodiversity on a planetary scale due to anthropogenic impacts. The simultaneous decline of megafauna, megaflora, elderflora, ancient forests, ancient species, and total species. Compare with GREAT ACCELERATION.

## II. Keywords with evocations

### **longest nineteenth century**

The period when planetary age, evolutionary age, and arboreal age pulled consciousness far backward in linear time, and, simultaneously, when the transition to mineral energy hurtled human impacts far into the future. The temporal aftermath of settler colonialism, fossil-fuel capitalism, and Christian millenarianism. The globalized time of overshoot. Terminal modernity.

### **long time**

A duration between the deep time of geology and the short time of business, politics, and popular culture. More than a human lifetime. The saeculum between deceased grandparents and unborn grandchildren. The speed of geomorphology and dendrochronology. A temporality that is predictive as well as historical, covering the planetary future of humans as well as the human past. The timescale of intergenerational ethics, Earth system modeling, and arboreal existence.

### **placetime**

A tree's lived experience of time in place, and place in time. The synchronicity of multiple temporalities—at the speeds of geology, evolution, and history—in one rooted locus. The spatial conditions and temporal dimensions of hyperlocality. Timefulness employed.

**relational age**

A non-numeric, non-scientific measure of the approximate duration of a living tree—viz, as old as a city, or a temple, or a founding figure; as old as an associated story or tradition. A relationship, in human time, between a plant, a place, and a practice. The manner of expressing the longevity of a consecrated tree.

**consecrated tree**

A plant with treeness made sacred through a spiritual act or practice or tradition, and maintained (or replanted or replaced) by local wardens. A renewable resource for temporal services.

**cambial age**

A numeric, scientific measure of the absolute duration of a living tree—viz, exactly as old as the calendar year assigned to the oldest datable layer of cambium. The numerable time contained in tree-rings. The temporality of dendrochronology. The manner of expressing the longevity of a secular sacred tree.

**secular sacred tree**

A woody plant made sacred as a result of scientific validation of extraordinary age, size, or form, and guarded as irreplaceable by state rangers.

**latest oldest tree**

A mobile site where the modern fetish for the new and the novel meets the modern fetish for the ancient and the original. A qualified honor that in part relies on faith; or, an unqualified honor that requires scientific validation of cambial age and cultural validation of treeness. A site of anticipatory mourning. A magnet for doom tourism. A temporal ending. A non-renewable resource for temporal services.

**future oldest tree**

An ethical being. An un-ending. An anti-millenarian hope for—and with—elderflora. Something that can exist every here and there, right now, alive.