

# THE WASTE LAND: AN ANCIENT FUTURE MEMORIAL FOR EXTINCT PLANTS

*April is the cruelest month, breeding  
Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing  
Memory and desire, stirring  
Dull roots with spring rain.  
Winter kept us warm, covering  
Earth in forgetful snow, feeding  
A little life with dried tubers.*

–*The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot

In “The Waste Land: An Ancient Future Memorial for Extinct Plants,” themes of archive, memory, extinction, and habitat are addressed by exploring machine perception and systems of information loss. This a memorial for extinct plants; a wasteland is constructed using metal rods that hold contemporary morphed plant-fossils.

In the installation, plant-fossils are generated by the algorithms and abstracted by translation errors between digital programs. They are then suspended by metal rods in the garden. In proximity to living trees nearby, mimicking the artificial roots. The installation mimics a fake forest, creating a new form of contemporary fossils, and forming a new habitat at a different spatial and temporal scale for the more-than-human. These translation failures mimic “intergenerational forgetting”– “forgetting” the past of nature. This type of forgetting results in a lack of awareness of extinction.

I research the translation of plant archives to explore the collective memory of extinct plants. I document, digitize, and manipulate plant specimens and fossils to sculpt a monument for the speculative futures of extinct plants. How can we commemorate the extinction of plants in this digital era? How can we access stories that are coalesced in fragments around relics, which remain hidden in the folds of materials and memory?

## Suggested Plants:

Any existing trees nearby the installation.  
Probably: maples, oaks, hickory, poplar, and sycamore.



