

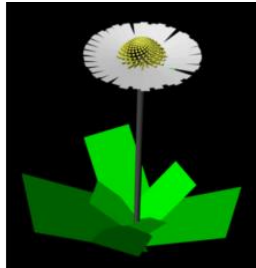
How to model plant architecture in GroIMP

Katarína Smoleňová

*CEMPS, Shanghai
October 29, 2025*



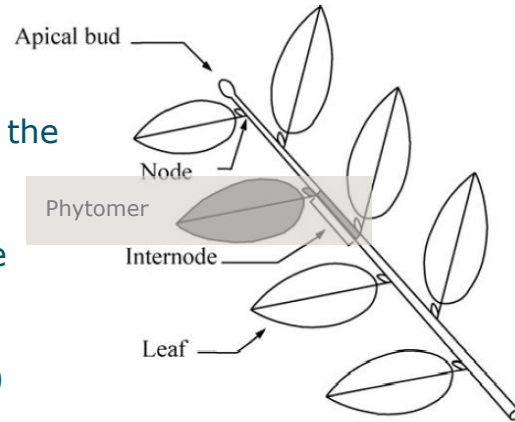
```
Axiom ==>
// create rosette of 7 leaves
for (int i:(1:7)) (
[
  RH(i * 137.5)
  M((i - 1) / 2)
  RU(LEAF_ANGLE)
  RH(90)
  { double r = 50 - i * 5; }
  Leaf(r, r * 0.5)
] ...
);
```



Plants as modular organisms

■ **Plant architecture** defined by

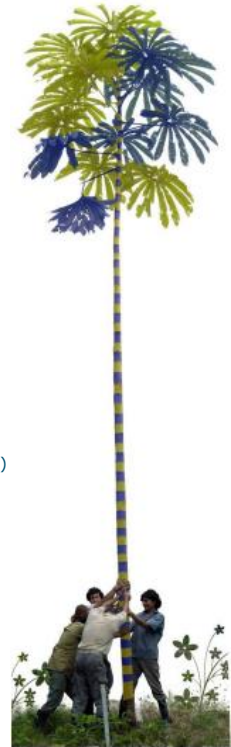
- The type of individual components making up the plant (*decomposition*),
- Their shape, location, and orientation in space (*geometry*), and
- How they are related to each other (*topology*)



(acc. Barthélémy & Caraglio, 2007)

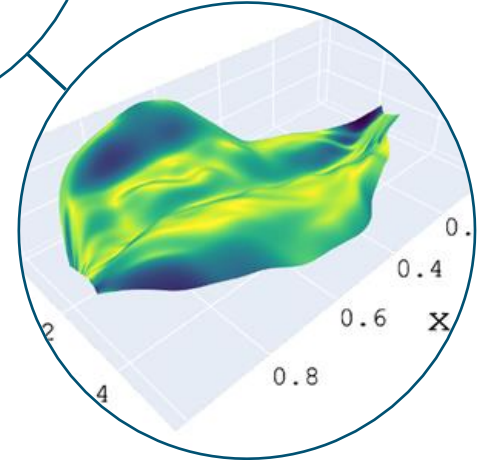
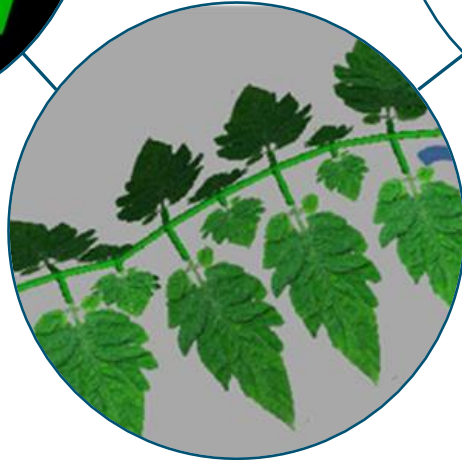
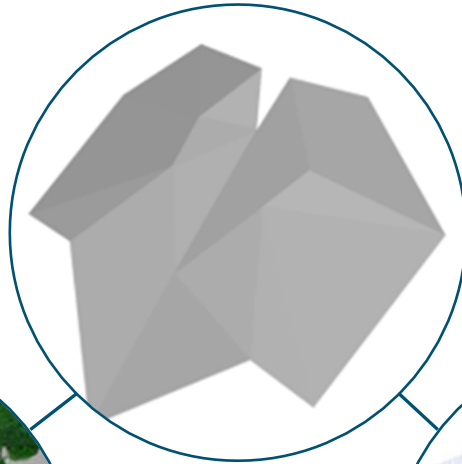
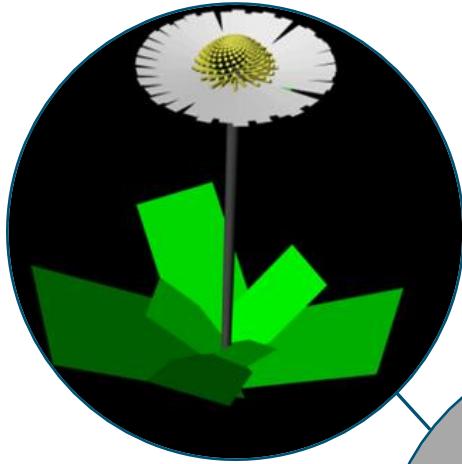
■ **Plants develop** by the *repetition* of these individual components (and/or botanical units) in time and space

- Described by *a set of rules*



(from Heuret)

Modelling leaves: From simple to complex



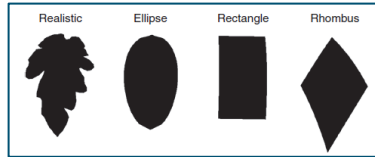
What leaf traits are most important to capture?

Effect on light distribution in the plant/canopy?

Leaf curvature, leaf position & orientation, leaflet shape, etc.?



What is the impact of leaflet shape?

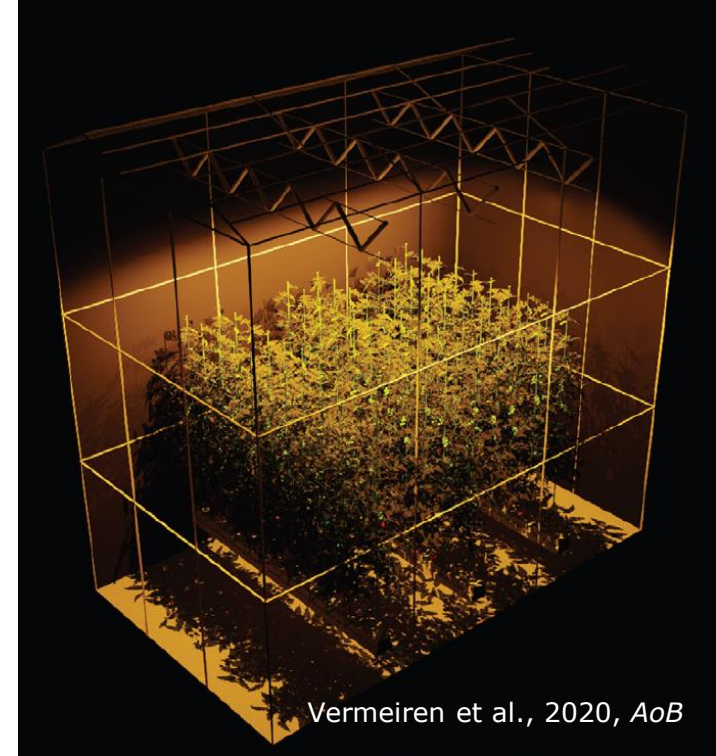


it depends...

quantified through calculated
light absorption by leaves

(small but unpredictable
error)

ellipse shape closest to the
realistic shape



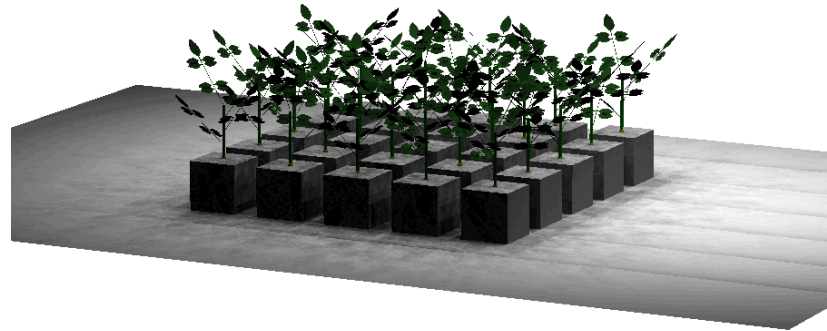
Vermeiren et al., 2020, AoB

What is the optimal architecture?

Search for **plant ideotype**

ideal combination of plant
architectural traits for
enhanced plant production

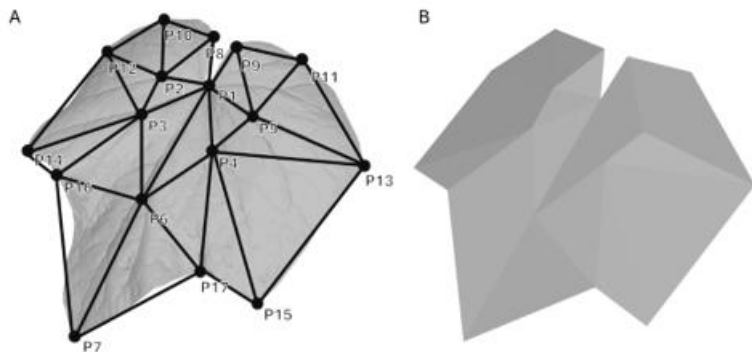
using sensitivity analysis &
optimisation



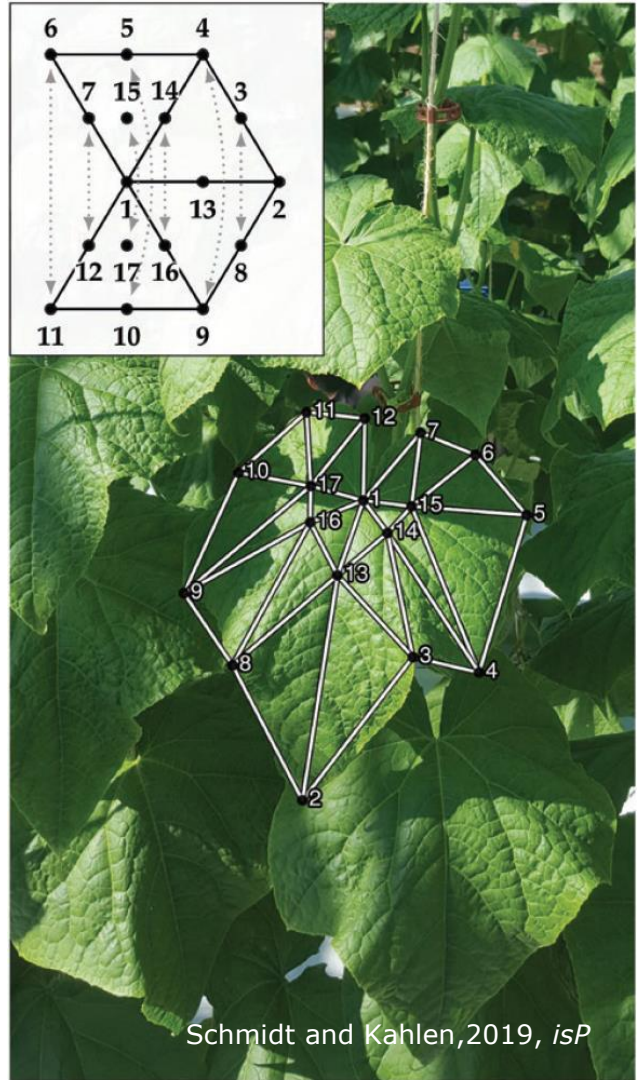
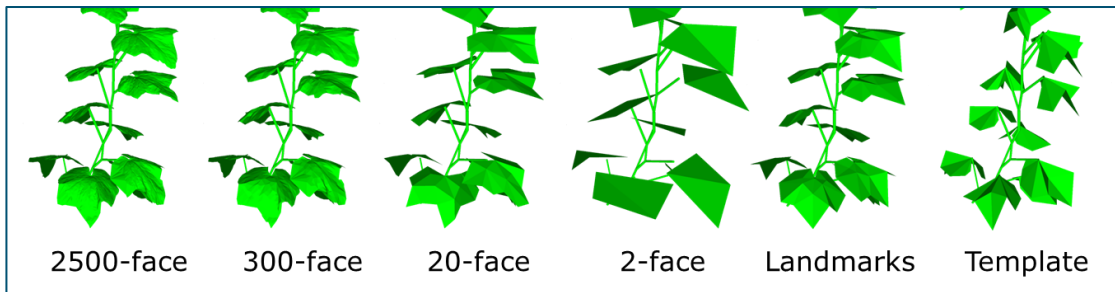
dwarf tomato in a vertical farm

Michele Butturini @PMDBA2025

How much complexity is necessary?



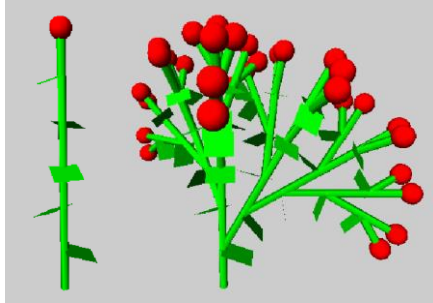
Landmarks approach



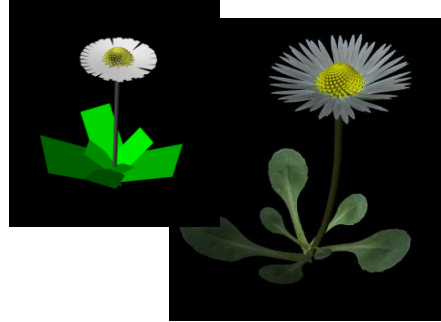
Schmidt and Kahlen, 2019, *isP*

Hands-on examples

- Specification of plant architecture in GroIMP/XL language
- Simple development with rewriting rules
- Linking geometry to organ modules, texture mapping
- Variation in leaf representation



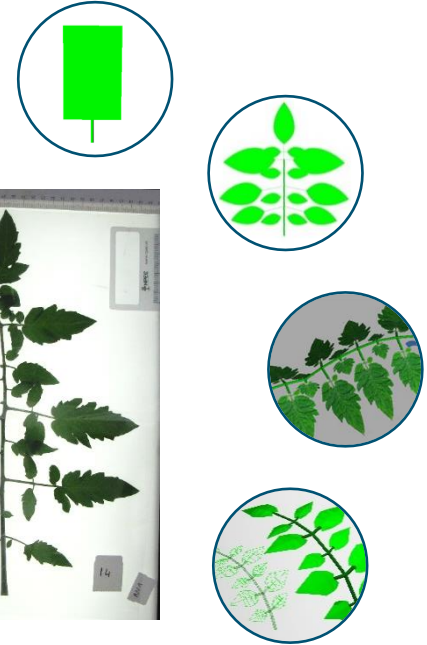
Topology & geometry



Texturing



Leaf representation



Specifying development with rewriting rules

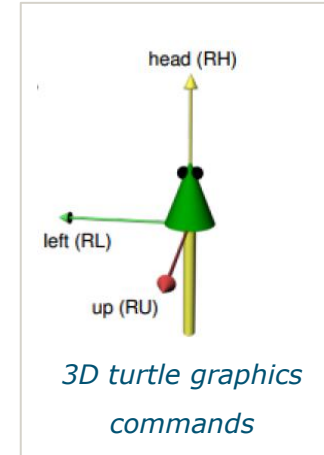
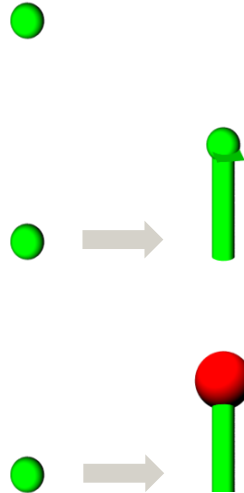
Modules: Bud, Internode, Leaf, Flower

Axiom: Bud
(initial structure)

Rules: Bud ==>
Internode
[RL(110) Leaf]
RH(137.51) Bud
;

time == 6

Bud ==>
Internode Flower
;



Specifying development with rewriting rules

Modules: Bud, Internode, Leaf, Flower

Axiom: Bud
(initial structure)

Rules:

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Bud ==>
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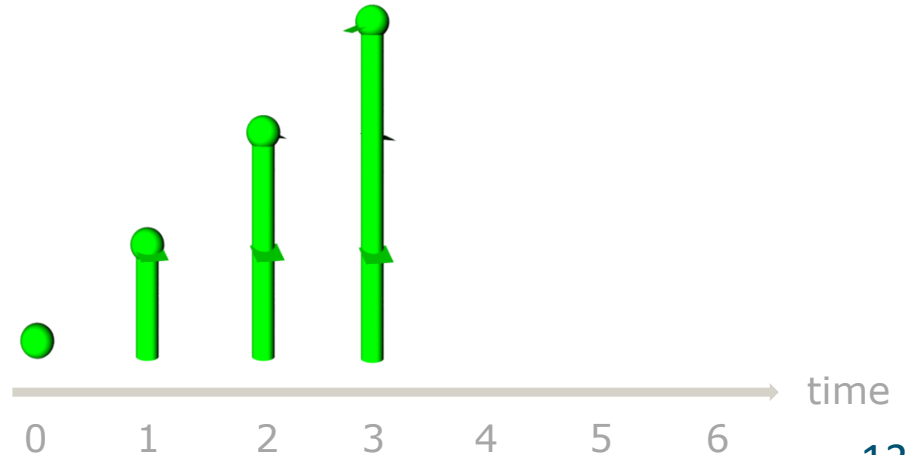
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Specifying development with rewriting rules

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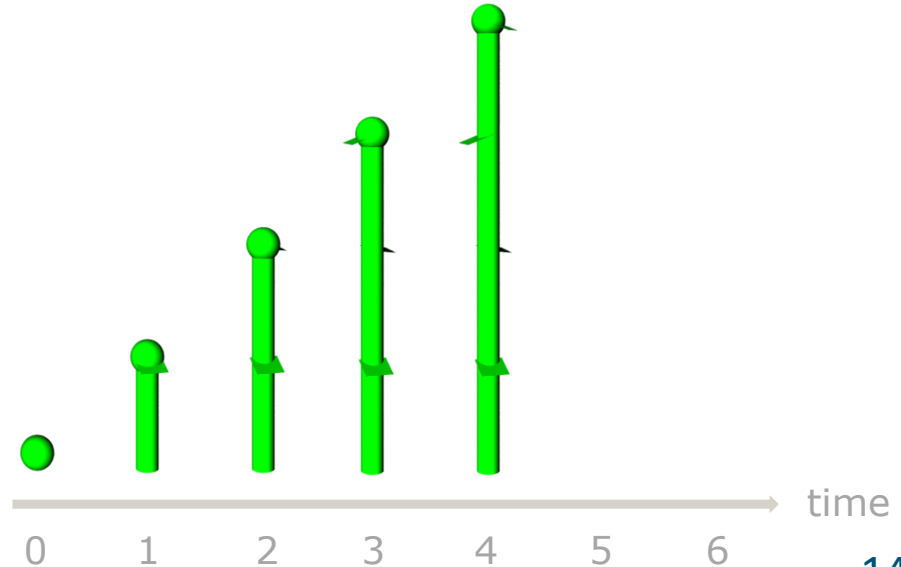
Axiom: Bud
(initial structure)

Rules:

```
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  Internode
  [RL(110) Leaf]
  RH(137.51) Bud
;
```

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Bud ==>
  Internode Flower
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```



Specifying development with rewriting rules

Modules: Bud, Internode, Leaf, Flower

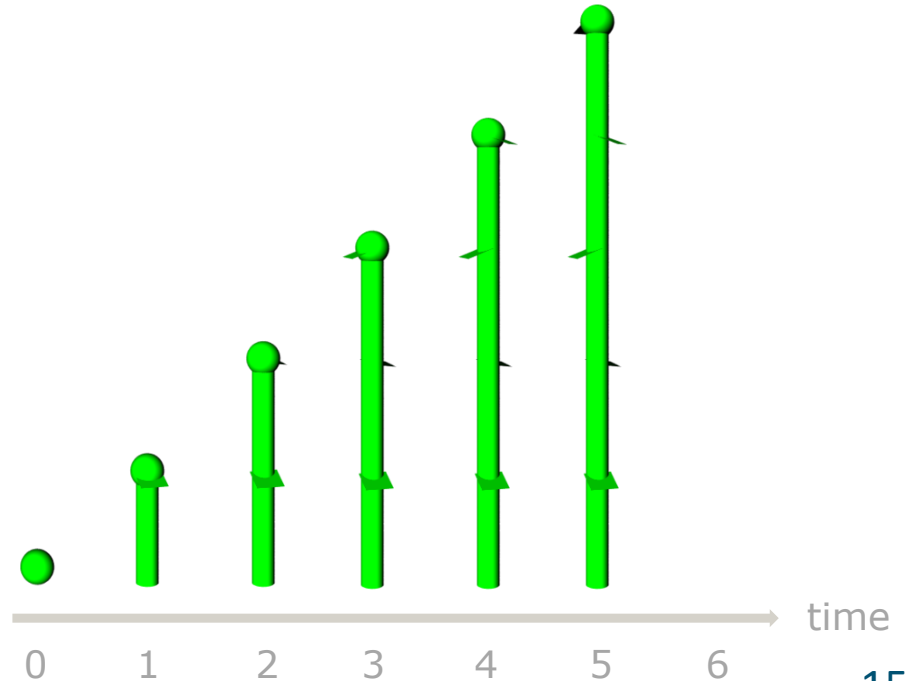
Axiom: Bud
(initial structure)

Rules:

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Bud ==>
  Internode
  [RL(110) Leaf]
  RH(137.51) Bud
;
```

time == 6

```
Bud ==>
  Internode Flower
;
```



Specifying development with rewriting rules

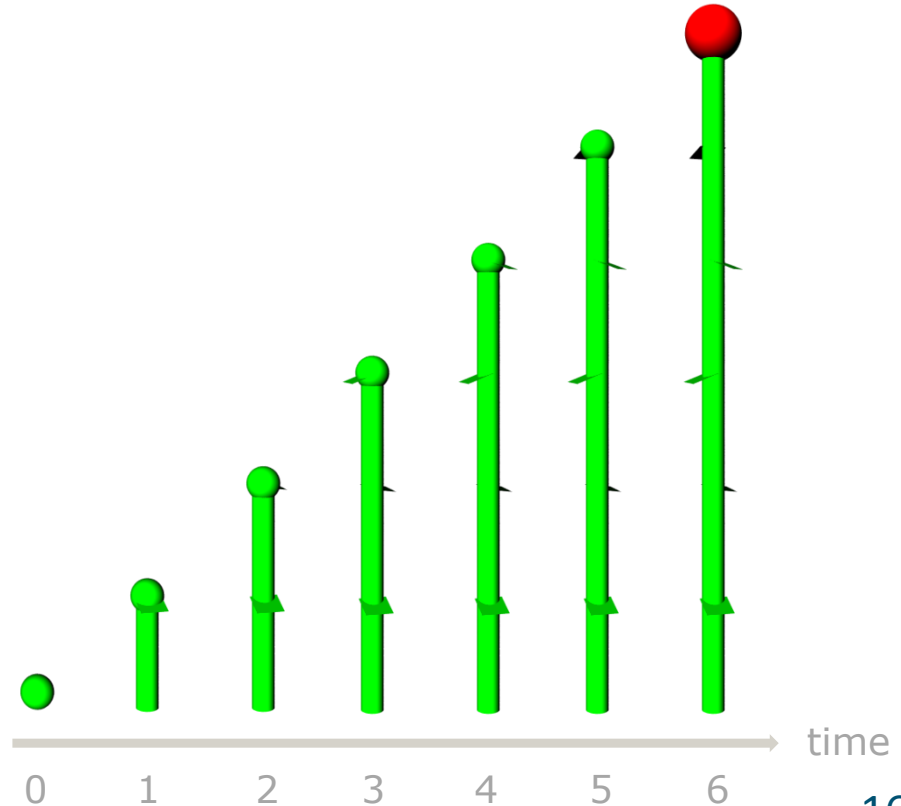
Modules: Bud, Internode, Leaf, Flower

Axiom: Bud
(initial structure)

Rules: Bud ==>
Internode
[RL(110) Leaf]
RH(137.51) Bud
;

time == 6

Bud ==>
Internode Flower
;



Execution rules

```
I:Leaf ::> { I.calcPhotosynthesis(); }
```

- Used to **update attribute values** of searched organs or **execute imperative statements** without changes in the (graph) structure

Rewriting (L-system) rule:

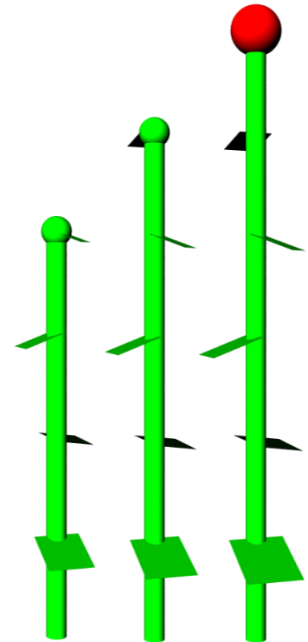
```
Leaf(length, width) ==>  
  Leaf(length+0.015, width+0.005)  
;
```

Execution rule:

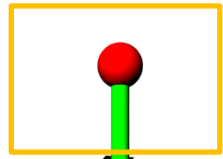
```
I:Leaf ::> {  
  I[length] += 0.015;  
  I[width] += 0.005;  
}
```

```
I:Leaf ::> {  
  I[length] :+= 0.015;  
  I[width] :+= 0.005;  
}
```

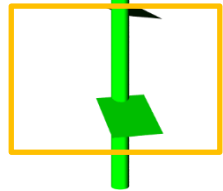
deferred assignment
(parallel execution of assignments)



Improving geometrical representation



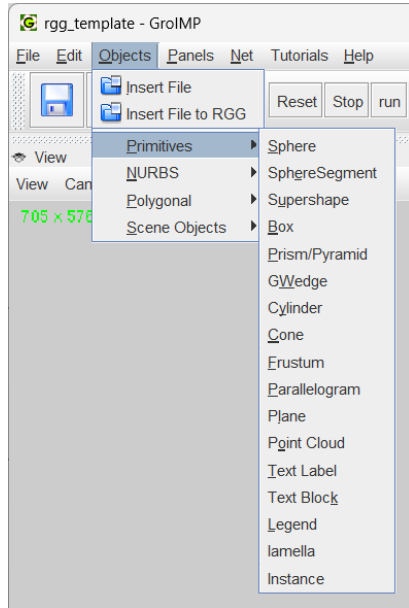
flower



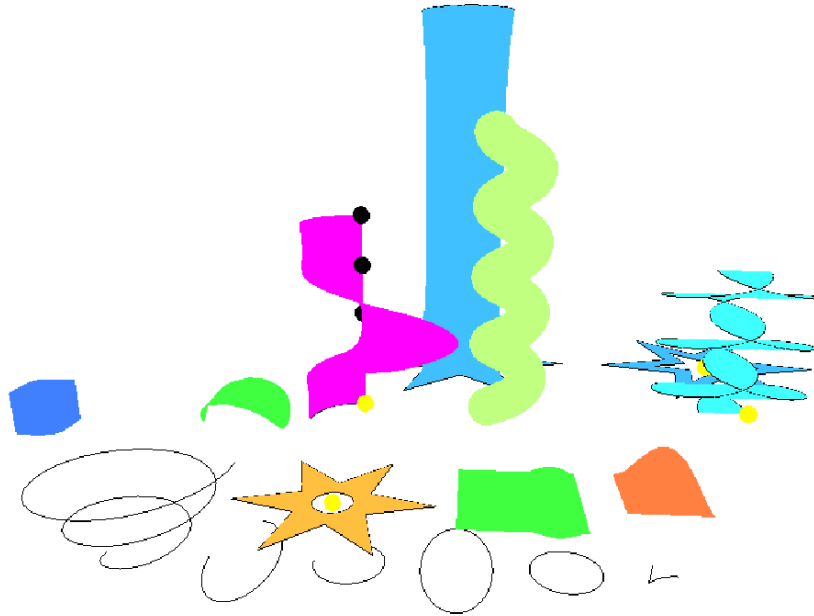
leaf



Supported objects in GroIMP



Primitives



Parametric curves & surfaces



Mesh

How to assign geometry to modules

- Derivation from an existing geometric object (Menu: Objects):

```
module Internode extends Cylinder(1, 0.1);
```

```
module Internode(super.length, super.radius) extends Cylinder(length, radius);
```

```
module Internode(super.length, float diameter) extends Cylinder(length, diameter/2);
```

- Using *instantiation* rules:

```
module Internode(float length, float diameter)
```

```
==> Cylinder(length, diameter/2);
```

Inside a rule:

→ Internode

→ Internode(1, 0.05)

→ Internode(1, 0.1)

→ Internode(1, 0.1)

Putting it all together in XL

```
// modules
module Bud extends Sphere(0.03).(setShader(GREEN));

module Internode extends Cylinder(0.2, 0.2).(setShader(GREEN));

module Leaf(double length, double width)
==> leaf(length, width); // Leaf is a green parallelogram

module Flower extends Sphere(0.05).(setShader(RED));
```

```
// model variables & parameters
int time;
const double LEAF_ANGLE = 110;
const double PHYLLOTAXIS_ANGLE = 137.51;
```

```
// axiom (initial structure)
protected void init() [

    { time = 0; }

    Axiom ==>
        Bud
    ;

]
```

Putting it all together

```
// modules
module Bud extends Sphere(0.03).(setShader(GREEN));

module Internode extends Cylinder(0.2, 0.2).(setShader(GREEN));

module Leaf(double length, double width)
==> leaf(length, width); // Leaf is a green parallelogram

module Flower extends Sphere(0.05).(setShader(RED));

// model variables & parameters
int time;
const double LEAF_ANGLE = 110;
const double PHYLLOTAXIS_ANGLE = 137.51;

// axiom (initial structure)
protected void init() [

    { time = 0; }

    Axiom ==>
        Bud
    ;

]
```

```
public void run() [

    // rewriting rule
    b:Bud ==>
        if (time < 5) (
            Internode
            [RL(LEAF_ANGLE) Leaf(0.1, 0.1)]
            RH(PHYLLOTAXIS_ANGLE) b
        ) else (
            Internode Flower
        )
    ;

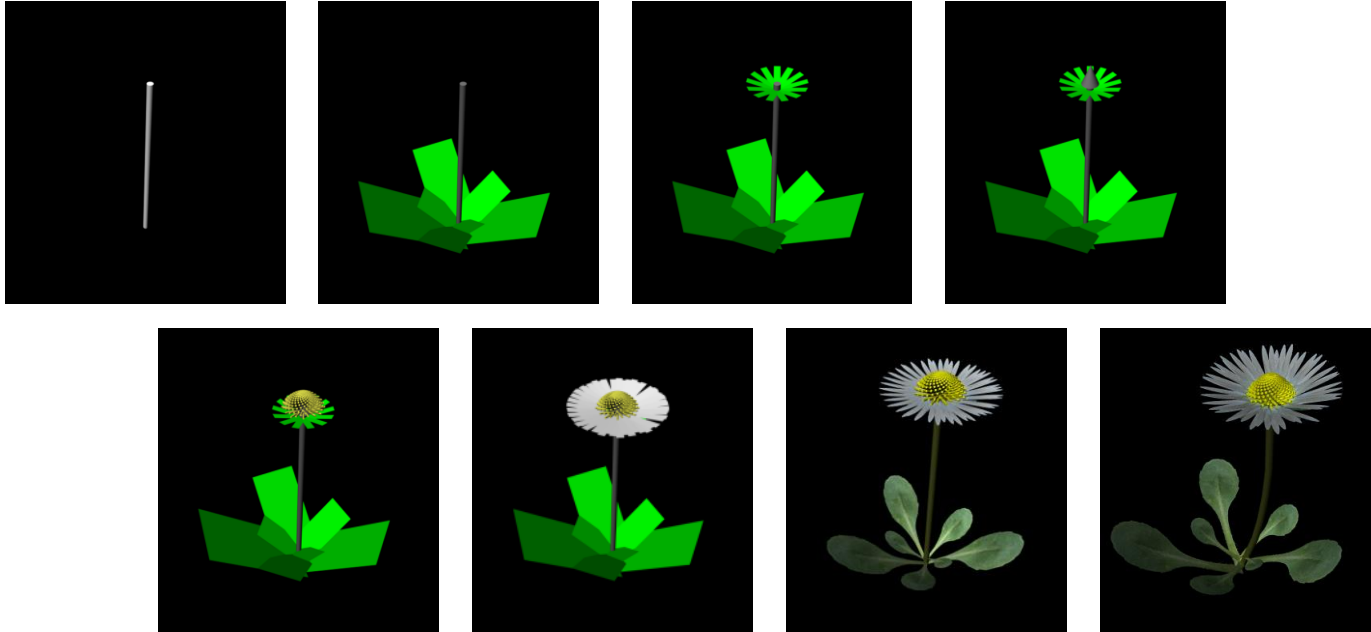
    // execution rule
    l:Leaf ::> {
        l[length] += 0.01;
        l[width] += 0.01;
    }

    { time += 1; }

]
```


Model example: Daisy

- Plant architecture reconstruction



Texture mapping

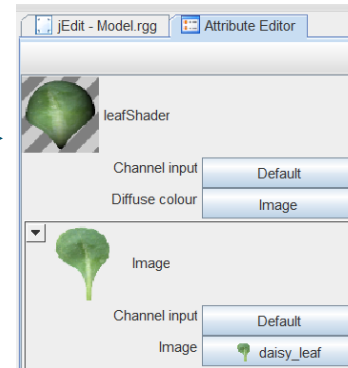
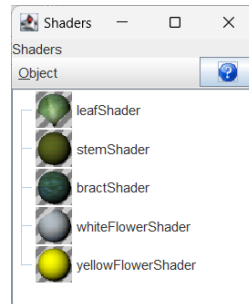
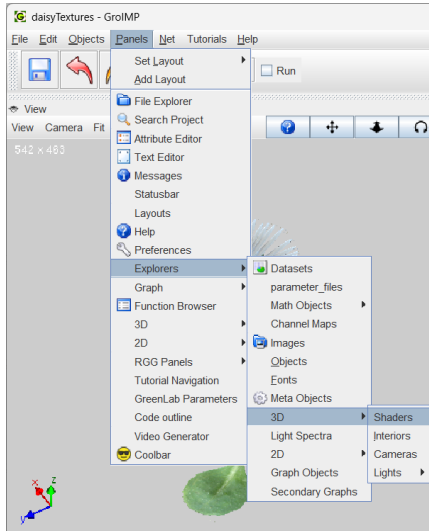
Menu: Panels > Explorers > 3D > Shaders

Shaders: Object > New > Lambert (2 clicks or F2 to rename)

Attribute Editor: Diffuse colour > Surface Maps > Image; Image > From File



Photographs with removed background
(with alpha channel, png file format)



[gimp.org](https://www.gimp.org)

```
const ShaderRef leafSh =  
    shader("leafShader");
```

Model example: Tomato

- Plant architecture with simplified development
- Leaf reconstruction options





wiki.grogra.de



fspm.discourse.group



Try yourself

- **Materials:** [wiki.grogra.de > Workshops](https://wiki.grogra.de/doku.php?id=workshops:summer_school_sh_25) https://wiki.grogra.de/doku.php?id=workshops:summer_school_sh_25
- Simple plant architecture (example from slides)
 - > add branching
- Daisy
 - > modify model parameters/textures to create a different flower/plant
- Simple tomato plant
 - > added branching & different leaf shapes
 - > modify to another plant
(by changing internode length, #leaflets, etc.)

