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WiFi Routers May Kill Houseplants

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The lack of a green thumb may not be the only contributing factor to the early deaths of your houseplants. A recent experiment conducted by high school students in Denmark suggests that Wi-Fi routers may be damaging to plant life.

Five ninth-grade girls at Hjallerup School in North Jutland, Denmark decided to conduct an experiment to find out why they had trouble concentrating after sleeping with their cellphones near their beds. Since the school does not have the technology to examine brain waves, they decided to conduct a simpler study.

They placed six trays of garden cress seeds in a room with a Wi-Fi router that emitted roughly the same microwave radiation as a cellphone. Six more trays were placed in a separate room without routers. The students controlled other factors between the two rooms, like temperature, sunlight and water.

After 12 days, the seeds in the room without the router had bloomed into greenery, while the seeds in the room with the router were brown, shriveled and mutated. The students performed the experiment twice with the same results.

Their teacher, Kim Horsevad, supported their results, citing the fact that the students were “painstakingly careful” in their experiment. However, she does acknowledge that this was a high school experiment and could use further study to verify the results. This may very well happen as professionals like neuroscience professor Olle Johansson at the Karolinska Institutet in Sweden and Dr. Andrew Goldsworthy at the Imperial College in London have already expressed interest in replicating the experiment in a lab environment.

While the implication of this experiment awaits further research, the findings of these high school students were intriguing enough that they were awarded for their work at the Danish National Science Fair.