How is a Plant like a Snowflake?
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Is Every Plant The Same?
We often assumed that plants within a species are very similar to one another. As a result, scientists have ignored differences between individuals within a species (called *intraspecific* variation), and looked only at how species are different from one another (*interspecific* variation).

Every Plant is Unique!
I measured differences in plant traits in 10 populations of a common, weedy species (*H. radicata*). Like snowflakes, individual plants exhibit a great deal of variation within a species for all traits measured (up to a 45-fold difference).

Why Does Variation Matter?
If a species exhibits a lot of variation, they may be able to colonize a wide variety of habitats and cope with changes in environmental conditions. Properly accounting for this variation may help with restoration efforts.

Variation in plant leaves for four populations of Hairy Cat’s Ear (*Hypocharis radicata*).