INFRARED CAMERA DETECTING PLANT HEALTH IS DESIGNED FOR CONSUMERS OR SCIENTISTS

WORK & LIFESTYLE

Infragram is a modified digital camera that uses infrared filters to detect plant health.

With more people becoming engaged in home growing projects, it's no surprise we've seen numerous consumer technologies that give them help in better understanding their plants. We recently saw Sprout It offer growing tips based on plant type and location, and now Infragram is a modified digital camera that uses infrared filters to detect plant health.

Created by the non-profit backed, 'civic science' community Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science, the camera was originally developed in order to monitor damage caused to plantlife by the BP oil spill in the wetlands of the Gulf of Mexico. Over three years, the community developed a filter system that detects the amount of infrared and regular light in any given area and highlights the regions where there are big differences in the two. Healthy plants absorb light in the visible spectrum, but reflect infrared light, so when a photograph is taken using the filter the bright spots indicate healthy plantlife. The Infragram comes in three forms. Firstly a set of filters, costing USD 10, that enable anyone to turn their camera into an infrared device. Secondly, a USD 35 webcam that can take quick images to instantly analyze on a computer. Lastly, the team want to develop a simple two-megapixel digital camera with the infrared filters built in, offering higher-quality images. The video below gives more information about the project:

The project recently reached over twice its USD 30,000 target on Kickstarter to fund the creation of the products, which it believes will be useful and affordable to both home gardeners and scientists alike – the camera could be used to show consumers where there garden could do with more care or detect larger environmental changes over time. Due to the inexpensive nature of the equipment, could this project help foster a community of citizen scientists?

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