

The Grapevine

SUMMER 2010 ♦ JOURNAL OF THE MIDWEST FRUIT EXPLORERS ♦ VOL. 34 No 2

President's Message

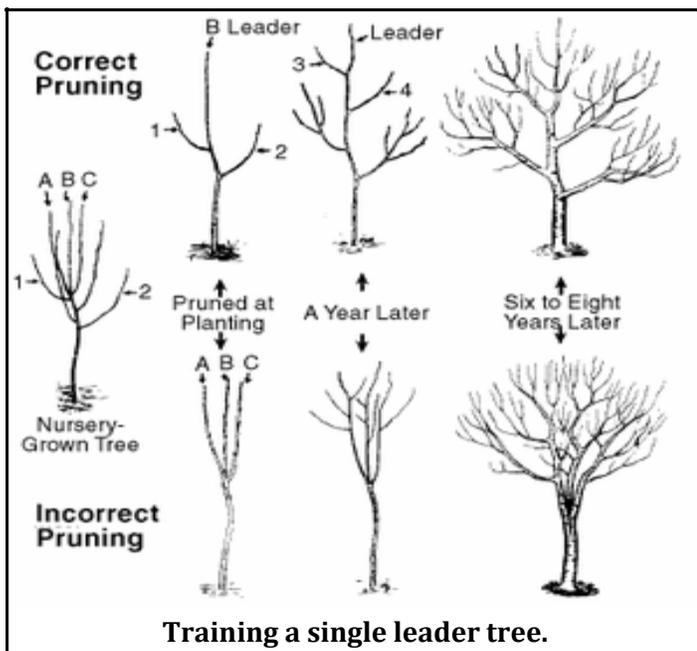
I'm not much of a history buff, but as an engineer, I can't help but think about how much our society and culture have changed in the past fifty to hundred years due to advancements in technology, science, and culture. In our current modern society, there are many things that we take for granted: i.e. running water, transportation, electricity, ease of communication, entertainment, and the abundance of food. What many people have forgotten is that the agriculture and the ability to feed people are the foundation of any society. The ability or inability to feed people has brought down governments and changed political landscapes. Today, many people don't even know how to cook for themselves, and they know even less about where the food they eat comes from and how it is grown. It is a small facet of that knowledge that we strive to learn as part of MidFEx.

Just going to the grocery store will show you how little information is provided to the consumer. Sure, stores now may carry a half a dozen or so varieties of apples and a few varieties of pears, but many other fruits are just strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, Asian pear, persimmon, etc. Just knowing that there are different varieties of strawberry, blueberry, raspberry, apple, and pear (European and Asian) beyond what is sold commercially is good information. Knowing that you can grow these varieties for yourself and how to grow them is exciting, liberating and powerful.

I believe that our club has a wealth of information and knowledge that is untapped as evidenced in the latest grafting workshop by the different varieties of scion wood that was donated. This year, we kept track of the scion donations on a spreadsheet, and we were able to generate a "Scion Bank" report. The Scion Bank shows all of the varieties of apple, pear, apricot, etc that were donated, who donated what, and we were able to merge some information about the apple varieties (taste, ripening, appearance, keeping, and some notes) into the inventory. The report provides a lot of information, but what we can do with the information is what is really exciting.

There were 182 different varieties of scion donated. 182! Who knew that MidFEx members were growing over 182 different varieties of fruit trees? And the amount of scion donated is only a fraction of the fruit trees that our members grow and does not include berries and other bush fruits. In a way looking at the wall of scion at the grafting workshop was overwhelming.

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MidFEx Picnic at Ron Makolm's, July 2009

PEAR STREUSEL PIE

Patti Hahn

Pastry for single crust

6 cups (approx) peeled, sliced pears

1/2 Cup sugar

4-6 tablespoons flour

1/4 teaspoon nutmeg

1/4 teaspoon salt

Almond streusel topping:

1 cup flour

2/3 cups brown sugar

1/2 cup butter

1/2 cup sliced almonds

Preheat oven to 375 degrees.

Roll out dough into an 11 inch circle. Fit dough into a 9 inch pie pan. Combine flour, sugar nutmeg, salt in a medium size bowl.

Peel and core pears. Cut into slices. Add pears to sugar mixture and gently toss to combine. Arrange pears in pastry shell.

Prepare topping:

Combine flour and brown sugar in bowl. Cut in butter until mixture resemble peas. Stir in almonds. Sprinkle topping over pears.

Bake about 30 minutes or until topping is browned and pears are bubbling up around and through the topping.

President's Message (cont. from p.1)

I mean, how do you pick what you want to grow from 182 different varieties, and what do you do if you want to grow a variety that isn't on the wall? How do you get a hold of scion for that? What about failures or varieties that never seem to do well in zone 5B? Failures are often more informative than successes, or present opportunities for other members to share how they overcame a particular issue, disease, or pest.

Imagine if we could gather all the members that grew apricots together and have a apricot tasting and discussion on what varieties do well here, and how to improve yields. Or, members interested in growing a particular variety of apple or pear could locate and contact another member who is already growing that variety in the area for scion wood and growing experience. I almost bought a honey berry plant, but I didn't know what variety does well here, if someone else is in MidFEx growing it, or if the fruit even tastes as good as the catalog description says. To this end be sure to see the article on the Orchard Management Tool. We've got a rare opportunity to provide input for a tool that will help gather this information and make it available to MidFEx members. It's true that knowledge is power. If you have any ideas on how we can improve sharing of information, please feel free to contact me. We are all fruit explorers, but if we can find new ways to share our knowledge and experience we will all benefit from it.

Dennis Wang

Silent Auction at the Picnic

Bring your surplus gardening related items to the picnic for auction. Examples include fruit trees and non-fruiting plants, along with books and gardening-related tools. Then bid on some truly unique items and take home some bargains for your garden.

Members often graft more trees than they have room for (for insurance) and donate their surplus successes to the auction. Many also take this opportunity to divide those overly crowded garden plants knowing their donations will go to good homes.

Proceeds from the auction benefit the MidFEx treasury.

The MidFEx *Grapevine*

Its important for a group such as ours to keep in touch with each other by traditional means. Email has a lot of advantages: immediacy, paper free, attachments, links, etc., but there's a good chance that when it comes to dates, events and directions...

you heard it through the Grapevine

...in your mailbox...four times a year...

Summer Picnic

This year Al Cosnow, who has been a member since 1989, has graciously opened his home and orchard for our 2010 summer picnic. Al has been in his current home some since 1975, and he began planting fruit trees shortly after he moved in. Al's orchard includes around 45 varieties of apples some multiple-grafted onto larger trees many on dwarf rootstocks many as espaliers, 6 varieties of European pears some as espaliers, 6 varieties of apricots, 2 varieties of persimmon (plus a "boy"), 6 pawpaw, 4 plum, gooseberry and other ribes, raspberry, service berry, quince (both fruiting and "flowering"), 1 cherry, 1 nectarine, 1 peach, 2 Asian pears, 1 medlar tree, and a bee hive all on a 1/2 acre lot.

Volunteers available to help setup should arrive at 11. Lunch will be served at noon. The entrée, beverage and dinnerware will be provided by MidFEx. Keeping with tradition, this is a Pot Luck meal. So please bring a side dish, salad, or desert. A brief business meeting will be held after the meal starting at 1, and after the business meeting concludes, Al will take us on an orchard tour.

Date: Sunday July 11th

Time: 11 am – 2pm

Location: 670 Longwood Ave, Glencoe, IL

Directions:

From the North: Take I-94S to the IL-43 Waukegan Rd exit heading SE. Take Waukegan Rd to Dundee Rd/Route 68. Make a left onto Dundee Rd heading E. Then follow the local directions.

From the South: Take 294 N the Lake Cook Rd exit heading E. Take Lake Cook Rd to Sheridan Rd. Make a right onto Sheridan Rd heading S. Take Sheridan Rd to Park Ave. Make a left onto Park heading E to Longwood Ave. Make a right onto Longwood Ave, and Al's house will be on the right.

From the West: take 53 N to Dundee Rd/Route 68 heading E. Then follow the local directions.

From the Chicago: Take I-90W/I-94W to exit 30B Dundee Rd/Route 68. Take Dundee Rd until it ends at Green Bay Rd. Then follow the local directions.

Local Directions: Take Dundee Rd until it ends at Green Bay Rd. Make a right onto Green Bay Rd heading SE to Park Ave. Make a left onto Park heading E to Longwood Ave. Make a right onto Longwood Ave, and Al's house will be on the right.

Parking:

Al lives near a village park and the entrance to the beach, and parking can get very congested on a sunny afternoon. There is street parking, but you may have to drive around to find it.

As usual, there will be a budding demonstration at the picnic. See the Budwood Collection Guidelines on page 7.

Also as usual, there will be a silent auction. See details at left.

NAFEX ANNUAL MEETING

Lafayette, Indiana

August 18—21

This year's NAFEX meeting is just a short drive for most of us (120 miles, 2 hours from Chicago loop) and they've put together an exciting roster of speakers and tours. Below is a summary of the speakers, their topics and the planned tours. Details about registration, event times, and lodging can be found at: <http://nafex.org/meeting.htm>

Wed. Aug. 18, 2010

Registration

Wine Tasting – White Owl Winery

NAFEX Board Meeting

Thursday, Aug. 19, 2010

Welcome/Announcements – Ethan Natelson, President

Landscaping with Fruit Plants – Lee Reich

Blueberries for the pH Challenged – Pete Tallman,

Grapes for the Home Owner – Bruce Bordelon

Fruit Insect Management for the Home Orchard – Rick Foster

Fruitful at Farm Markets – Dave Doud

The Sensual Pleasures of Fruit Wine – Joy Neighbors

Fruit Wine Tasting – Joy Neighbors, White Owl Winery

Novel Horticulture Opportunities – Mark Wessell

Scab Resistance Breakdown in Apple – Janna Beckerman

Sweet and Hard Cider Apples – Tom Burford

Common Diseases of Brambles and Passive Controls – Kerik Cox

Fearless Pruning – Lee Reich

American Persimmon Culture – Martha Davis & Jerry Lehman

Culinary Experiences with Unusual Fruit – Martha Davis (and panel)

Banquet with lecture – *Insects & the World Food Crisis* – Tom Turpin

NAFEX Business Meeting – Ethan Natelson

NAFEX Auction – Adam Turtle, Auctioneer

Friday Aug. 20, 2010 (Tours via Chartered Bus)

Purdue's Research Farm has various plantings of Apple for different projects including Plum Curculio Control and rootstock evaluations, Grape, Blackberry, Raspberry, Pawpaw, Current, Elderberry, Sea Buckthorn, Gooseberry and others. Small Fruit Specialist, Bruce Bordelon will lead an extensive tour here.

Anderson's Orchard Paul Anderson (and family) own and operate one of the most interesting and novel U-Pick market operations. They offer everything from hazelnuts and chestnuts to raspberries and various tree fruits.

Saturday August 21, 2010 (Tours via car-pool or by personal auto)

Jerry Lehman's Persimmon/Pawpaw Plantation

Jerry and Barbara own one of the finest plantings of both American Persimmon and Pawpaw orchards I've seen. Jerry has been hybridizing both for a number of years and has many interesting selections in the early stages of testing. Of course Jerry has many other interesting (and productive) fruits and nuts.

White Owl Winery

Joy Neighbors (White Owl Marketing Director) will lead the tour. White Owl Winery specializes in many novel fruit wines.

Orchard Tours

One of the oldest and most fun ways for MidFEx members to share experiences are our Orchard Tours. This is where a member host opens up their gardens for all of MidFEx to visit, admire, ask questions, and learn about how someone else grows what they grow in the space that they have. All orchard tours will start a 1pm rain or shine and formally last an hour. It's up to the host if they want to allow people to linger past the hour. All we ask is that you be respectful of the host's time and home.

The following is the schedule for the Orchard Tours for 2010. We are still trying to line up a few more before the end of the growing season, so be sure to look for them in the next issue of the Grapevine. Apologizes for not having orchard descriptions, or host profiles as part of this article. They will be posted on the forum as soon as they are compiled.

Della Bezanis (Member since 2009)

Date: Sunday June 13th

Location: 815 Downing Dr
Schaumburg, IL

Gene Yale (Member since 1989)

Date: Sunday August 1st

Location: 9121 N. Keeler Ave
Skokie, IL

Ron Malcom (Member since 1992)

Date: Sunday August 28th

Location: 137 S. Barrington Rd
Inverness, IL

(East side of Barrington Road between Bradwell Road and Abbey Woods Lane.)



NEW ORCHARD MANAGEMENT TOOL AVAILABLE FOR MIDFEX MEMBERS

Sherwin Dubren

There is a new tool available free for Midfex members. It is found at the following website:

www.orchardguide.net

The program was written by Randy Suvada, a Midfex member with extensive professional experience in designing data bases.

This tool offers two ways to help you manage your orchard. The first of which is an inventory tool, where you can enter your own orchard data and also look at what other club members are growing and their comments about them. It covers all kinds of fruit and allows you to add new cultivars to an ever expanding list. You can evaluate what you grow or look at what others think about their growing experiences. There is a nice summary table showing useful data about each fruit. You are encouraged to add your own data, as it can help other members learn about other varieties. It can also put you in touch with who is growing what and their opinions plus or minus on what you are interested in.

The second tool is for IPM (Integrated Pest Management). There is information on what pests are emerging and when to expect them to appear. This information is particular to your location, so the program asks you to select a weather station nearby. The program does all the calculations for you to give you a heads up on what and when to take action.

This program is something club members have been asking for in the past, and now we have a free workable tool maintained by one of our own members. Randy has been using this program for several years for his own orchard and has found it to be valuable. I'm sure you will also find it to be so. Just go to the web page and enter your name, password, zip code and nearest weather station from a displayed list. You will then see the main page with various selections on a large sign. You may want to select 'Community' first and then select 'Cultivar Info' from the smaller sign to see the summary chart of all the cultivars in the data base. You can click on the green box next to any cultivar for more detailed info. You can check on 'Conditions' and 'Scab' to see the latest on that pest. You can click on 'My Orchard' to enter your own orchard information.

This program is very useful now, but it is still in development. More pest information and task suggestions can be added. It is up to the club members to support this project by adding their orchard data and checking the IPM to see if this tool is effective for them.

2010 Grafting Workshop Recap

Dennis Wang

Congratulations to the Grafting Workshop committee, volunteers and scion donors. As usual, the Grafting Workshop committee executed great events at Cantigny on March 14th and at the Chicago Botanic Garden on March 21st. Both workshops were very well attended, and we are faced with the welcome problem of figuring out how to accommodate more people with limited space.

The sign-in sheets provided the following attendance report:

| | Cantigny | CBG |
|-------------|----------|-----|
| Members | 56 | 49 |
| Non-Members | 8 | 21 |
| Total | 64 | 70 |

We had sixteen members attend both workshops (most likely the committee and workshop volunteers), and we had members come in from Indiana, northern Wisconsin, and Minnesota to attend. Several people joined MidFEx at the workshops, and they were counted as Members in the above report.

This year, we kept track of the scion donations on a spreadsheet, and we were able to generate a "Scion Bank" report. The following is a summary of the Scion Bank Report:

| | Cantigny | New @ CBG | Totals |
|----------------|----------|-----------|--------|
| Scion Donors | 17 | 4 | 21 |
| Apple | 75 | 30 | 105 |
| Apple, Crab | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| Apricot | 10 | 2 | 12 |
| Cherry | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Grape | | 2 | 2 |
| Mulberry | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Nectarine | | 1 | 3 |
| Paw Paw | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Peach | 3 | 2 | 5 |
| Pear, European | 15 | 6 | 21 |
| Pear, Asian | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Plum | 4 | 4 | 8 |
| Quince | 3 | 0 | 3 |

If you would like a copy of the full "Scion Bank" report, please send me (Dennis) a message, and I'll send you a copy of the Excel spreadsheet.

If you have any feedback on the Grafting Workshop, please contact Dennis Wang.

Growing Fruit In Pots!

Michael Zost

Container gardening is becoming more and more popular. Many of us want to grow fruit and vegetables but don't have space for a garden. Others simply want the convenience and beauty of fruit on their deck or patio. A wide variety of dwarf fruit trees and soft fruit such as strawberries and blueberries can be grown in containers. Abundant harvests are easy by following a few basic principles. Most important is to realize that plants in containers depend on you for their care. They don't have access to the soil moisture and fertility that nature provides to plants growing in the ground. Following some basic guidelines will help ensure success in growing fruit in pots.

Choose the right size pot. The pot is the vessel in which your plant's roots will grow. It should be large enough to contain several years of root growth and should have large drainage holes in the bottom. For most plants, a 7 gallon pot is big enough for 3 to 4 years of growth and a 15 gallon pot should be big enough for 7-8 years. Eventually, no matter how big the pot, it will fill with roots. When that occurs, the plant will be difficult to water and growth will become weaker. Remediating this situation means removing the plant from its pot and severely pruning the roots and top.

Choose the right kind of potting soil. Use of a well drained soil is important for virtually all plants. You can use a fine propagation mix for starting seeds, but for trees, shrubs and vines, a coarser mix containing bark and pumice will drain better and help prevent root rot. Another consideration is soil acidity. While most plants are happy in regular potting soil, blueberries like a more acid soil. Look for potting soil made for blueberries and more acid loving plants like rhododendron and camellia.

Water sparingly. Over-watering is more often a cause of plant failure than under-watering. Once you have potted your new plant, water it in well and wait. Unless you are

planting in the heat of summer, it will take some time before your new plant needs another watering. If your plant is not root bound, a deep watering once a week is usually enough even in hot weather.

Apples and other tree fruits need cold temperatures to fruit their best. For those of us living in Zone 5, you will need to either heel you pots in the ground and put a cage around the small tree to prevent ravaging by hungry bunnies in the winter or bring your well watered pots into an unheated garage for the winter. Mid-winter you can shovel a scoop of clean snow and put in top the pot to allow a slow melt of moisture to keep the soil sufficiently moist until spring. When your garage warms a bit in the late winter / early spring, you might begin to see a bud or two break open. This is the time to begin transferring you pots back outside. Just like a regular tree, your container fruit trees and bushes need to be pruned. Remove foliage from the inside branches to promote fruit set on the outer branches and a more open habit for better fruit exposure and maximum ripening.

While almost any plant can be grown in a container, you will be more successful and happier choosing a low vigor, more compact variety. Growing your favorite variety of apples on dwarf rootstock such as M27 / EMLA 27 is a great container choice to begin with. Some MidFEx members have had some success through ordering dwarf fruit trees from Stark Brothers Nursery (www.starkbros.com). They offer a number of dwarf tree fruit options including apples, pears, apricots, and cherries. Another option is to consider are columnar varieties of apples. Fig varieties suitable for containers include Negronne, Lattarulla, and Peter's Honey. Pineapple Guava, Citrus, Blueberries, Honeyberries, and Strawberries are also attractive, easy to grow fruiting plants for container culture. Whatever you choose, and whatever space you have available, give at least one variety of fruit a try in a pot this year. Best of luck.

Useful Websites

Michael Zost

Garden Helper – Online guide to plant selection, site preparation, weed/pest control and more at www.thegardenhelper.com.

Native Plant Database – Find out which wildflowers and other native plants will thrive under growing conditions in your area. From the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center at www.Wildflower.org/explore.

Mulch Calculator – Trying to figure out how much mulch to buy for your flowerbeds and yard? Visit <http://www.daytonnursery.com/tips/Mulch%20Calculator.htm>

More Garden Tips – This website has great links for all gardening questions with links to The Ohio State University Extension Program. Go to http://www.daytonnursery.com/Garden_Tips.htm

HELP WANTED

Desktop Publishing: MidFEx Wants YOU!

Have a computer? Have a sense of graphic order? Know how to type?

Answer yes to the first two and you qualify to learn to assemble this newsletter on screen right before your very own eyes. Should you choose to accept, you will receive via email, four times per year, the relatively complete text files for an eight page issue of the Grapevine Newsletter. Call Phil at 708-333-2679 for further information. Receive free training that is guaranteed to put you on the wonderful-friends-list of numerous small non-profit volunteer organizations. Emphasis on volunteer.

Event Photographer(s)

Many of us carry digital cameras in our pockets these days. At any given MidFEx sponsored event we'd like to have a few representative photographs for documentation purposes and from which to draw for the Grapevine. At each event this year we will ask for a person-with-obvious-camera-in-pocket to take a few purposeful shots suitable for recordkeeping and publication. IDEALLY, at some time in the future, a member will step forward to be our Photo Collector/Editor, responsible for maintaining a digital archive of events, places and peoples. That person need not be present at events, but will be known to all members as the designated recipient of event photos. All you'll need is a computer and internet access. Sounds like a fun job, actually.

Photograph Your Own Orchard Too!!

Consider this as your quarterly reminder to take more pictures in your own back yard.. Pick, say, one day a week (or a month) to walk outside with your camera (digital makes it easy) and find something interesting in your orchard that might be interesting to others. Time-lapse shots have always fascinated me. The 'lapse' can be days: (flower bud to full bloom), weeks: (full bloom to marble size fruit), months: (dormant to full leaf), or years: (little tree to big tree). Make a plan and put it in your daily planner. Phil H.

Budwood Collection Guidelines

Jeff Postlewaite

The budding demonstration at the MidFEx picnic has fostered an informal budwood exchange between members. Most tree fruit can be successfully budded in summer but budding is particularly useful for propagating stone fruit (plums, apricots, peaches, cherries) that need warmer temperatures to callous and hence are difficult to graft when dormant.

To assure the most viable budwood:

- Collect the most mature wood from this year's growth – at least 3/16th or ¼ inch thick.
- Remove the soft top growth and leaves but leave the petioles (leaf stems).
- Either label each piece or label a ziploc type bag with the variety name.
- Wrap the budwood in a dampened paper towel, seal in the plastic bag, and refrigerate.
- The budwood is fragile and has a short shelf life so collect it as close to the time of distribution as possible and keep it as cool as possible during transport.

To get a preview of the budding demo, check out Chuck Heisinger's excellent video of Al Cosnow's summer budding techniques that is linked to our web page (www.MidFEx.org). The MidFEx forum is a good place to request budwood from other members.

Your membership may be expiring! Check your Grapevine address label for your membership expiration date. If it says "6/30/10" or earlier, then it is time to renew.

MidFEx Membership Application

New Member

Renewing Member

Name (please print)

Address

City

State

Zip

Telephone

E-Mail

Amount Enclosed: \$15 (1 Year) \$25 (2 Years) \$30 (3 Years)

Mail to: MidFEx Membership
P.O. Box 93
Markham, IL 60428-0093

The above information (name, address and phone only) will appear in our Members' Only Directory (June issue)

2010 MidFEx Calendar

| | |
|---|---|
| June 13 th (Sun), 1:00 – 2:00 pm | Orchard Tour, Della Bezanis's in Schaumburg, IL |
| July 11 (Sun), setup 11 am, picnic noon | Summer picnic at Al Cosnow's in Glencoe, IL |
| August 1 st (Sun), 1:00 – 2:00 pm | Orchard Tour, Gene Yale's in Skokie, IL |
| August 12 | Grapevine submissions due for September issue |
| August 18—21 | NAFEX Annual Meeting, LaFayette, IN (Purdue University) See p 5 |
| August 28 th (Sun), 1:00 – 2:00 pm | Orchard Tour, Ron Malcom's in Inverness, IL |
| October 16 & 17, 2010 | Fall Harvest Festival at Chicago Botanic Garden |
| | |

MidFEx Officers and Contacts

| | |
|---|---|
| President: Dennis Wang Secretary: Chuck Heisinger | Vice-President: Michael Zost Treasurer/Membership: Jeff Postlewaite |
| MidFEx Online Forum Members are invited to join the MidFEx forum. Get advice and share your fruit growing experiences with other members. Subscribe to the forum at: http://lists.ibiblio.org/mailman/listinfo/midfex Forum administrator: Sherwin Dubren (sherwindu@comcast.net) | MidFEx Web Site: http://www.midfex.org Send anything of interest (links, photographs, fruit info, etc.) to Brad Platt for consideration for web site posting. Email Brad at: midfexweb@buildabetersite.com |
| Grapevine articles wanted! Deadline for articles to Robin Guy for next Grapevine: 8/12/10. Please e-mail articles to Robin and type "GRAPEVINE" in the subject header. Gathering Editor: Robin Guy (rguy@ameritech.net) | Membership: Use enclosed application, see web site, email membership@midfex.org , or write: MidFEx Membership P.O. Box 93 Markham, IL 60428-0093 |

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