Know the Seeds

They Truly Are a Miracle Lesson 2

By BOB ABBEN, MG

Seed germination is interesting, BUT a “downer” compared to “distribution”. The latter is not the way the seed package gets to you from the seed company.

As we discussed in Lesson 1, sun, water and soil are the prime ingredients for germination, now, let’s add one more important part of this miracle, “competition”. If the seed drops from the mother plant, it will be “competing” with the mother plant for sun, water, and space (soil). If you know that a large oak tree will drink 100 gallons of water a day you will understand that non-drought tolerant plants growing in that kind of competition, under an oak, would require more care.

The distinguishing characteristics of each seed (discussed in Lesson 1) are duplicated in the method that each variety of plant uses for distribution of its seeds. Each plant is very nearly different. The “hitch-hiker” method used by “Spanish needle” and the “Beggar-weed” are similar, not the same. Both grab on to any passing object, person or animal and get carried away to another place, away from the competition. This is the Unintentional distribution. Most people know that Milorganite is a product of the Milwaukee Sewer System, processed human waste. In the early days, most users of Milorganite noticed that they had tomato plants growing in their garden, which they did not plant. In this case, the distribution of the seed was unintentional. The processing technology of Milorganite has improved. Birds are a part of this distribution, but not always helpful to our garden. Water is a distributor, for example - the Gulf Stream flows north from Central and South America. The “Stream” makes deposits of invasive and tropical plants on the shores along its route. In the Central Keys of Florida lies Bahia Honda State Park. The island is the “knuckle” of the keys (farthest island into the “Stream”) and receives a very large deposit of invasive seed from the South, so much so that the state has built a preserve on the island. It is worth a visit!

“Know The Seed” will be continued in future issues of The Green Leaf. We will talk about the many ways that plants “distribute” their seed. We all know that it takes sun, soil and water to start seed; in many instances all three are not available. We will learn of the many ways that the miracle of the seed gets around some of the obstacles to continue the life of the species.

December, 2005 Volume 5-Issue 12

God Bless You at Christmas
Good News!!

Get some classroom hours without leaving home. A series of short articles entitled “KNOW THE SEEDS” will be published monthly in The Green Leaf. The series will run possibly into March. We all understand nothing is free. With the final article will be a quiz. Take the quiz, submit your answers and enter your hours as GEUs. A generous average guideline will be available. Be amazed at one of the many wonders of nature. Seeds are truly a miracle. Learn about them.

ELECTRONIC BUTTER "FLYS" AGAIN

By BOB ABBEN, MG

Butterflies are popular and with their popularity come MYSTERIES … There is a Solution.

The Master Gardener Advanced Training "E-mail" Butterfly Course will take flight in January (date TBA). The course is divided into ten lessons. The first and last will be at "Extension" … the lessons in between will be sent to you by E-mail at 10 day intervals (snail mail is ok). There is a quiz with each lesson. Mailing dates of lessons will be provided in advance (no lessons during holidays).

THE CHRISTMAS TREE

By BOB ABBEN, MG

The most popular Christmas tree is the Fraser fir. Unless you have your own supply, chances are very good that your tree came from North Carolina. There are almost 50 square miles of tree farms on some of the worst soil in that state. Many of these farms are in the mountains and provide much of the income to almost 2000 farm families. In that the farms have trees constantly growing and replanting in areas that have been cut, they provide a very good habitat for many species of wildlife. This would be a good example of land management and is environmentally friendly.

North Carolina ships trees to almost every state and many foreign countries.

Congratulations!! MG Susan Edwards

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI

Susan Edwards works for Bud Spence, owner of Florida Native Orchids nursery in St. Petersburg. MG Angela Strain arranged a field trip for 20 of us MGs in July and we received a royal treatment from Bud and Susan. I recently learned the following from Susan:

“Earlier this year, my boss Bud Spence, owner of his orchid nursery for over forty years, named an orchid after me and registered it officially with the Royal Horticultural Society in the UK …
he made the cross about 40 years ago! It just bloomed again out on my lanai and I took this picture”.

It is called Bc. Susan Edwards (the Bc. stands for Brassocattleya - the hybrid)

Our Energizer MG volunteer dynamic gardener shares her talent

By RUTH DAVIES, MG

Mary Ellen Warner not only has a green thumb, but all 10 fingers are green - she is a gardener through and through. Over the years, her dedication has benefited the Garden Club of St. Petersburg, the Pinellas County Master Gardener program, Florida Yards and Neighborhoods and The Florida Botanical Gardens.

Although born in Georgia, at six she and her family moved to Homestead where she has memories of Florida fruit trees and a large vegetable garden. Two years later, they moved back to the Georgia countryside. In a pioneer spirit the family grew their own food, from animals to vegetables. She also picked up many hints that have evolved into a talk she gives to clubs, associations, and towns and at GardenFest on how to be a frugal Gardener.

Mary Ellen is a one-woman dynamo as Membership Chair on the board of The Florida Botanical Gardens Foundation. There isn’t a month that she doesn’t bring in more than 10 new members. The fact that she certifies residential yards for Florida Yards and Neighborhoods brings her one-on-one with people interested in horticulture. She explains the benefits, nursery discounts, reciprocal agreements with botanical gardens and arboretum countrywide and member-only events at The Florida Botanical Gardens. Invariably they want to be a member. If you have a question about gardening or the gardens, Mary Ellen will be glad to share her green thumb knowledge.

Safety Nets

By PAM BROWN Horticulture Agent

Cumulative injuries, such as tennis elbow or tendonitis can occur when people overextend themselves on a job they tackle. Stretch your upper-body muscles before heading outside. For overwhelming tasks, enlist help from others, take frequent breaks, and spread the job across several days or hire professional help. Also, pulling weeds can result in pain. To prevent strains and sprains, consider the following:

• Keep your back erect when working at ground level and when using long-handled tools, such as spades and rakes.
• Bend at your knees and hips to lift objects.
• Alternate or use both arms whenever possible.
• Keep your elbows bent.
• Don't rest your body weight on your elbows.
• Grip hand tools lightly.
• Work below shoulder level whenever possible. If you must work above shoulder level, perform the task for five minutes or less.

Source: Life Essentials by Zee at: http://www.lifeessentialsbyzee.com/
In Memory of

Lee Partridge - 1917 - 2005
Master Gardener Class of 1988

Many of you will remember Lee as a lecturer in one of your early Master Gardener training. He was an educator in his working career and an avid horticulture student throughout his life. In his more than 20 year affiliation with Master Gardeners he made many friends and always readily shared his knowledge with others.

Joseph Kostelnik  1937 - 2005
Master Gardener Class of 1994

“Joe was always friendly and available for any task at hand”, say horticulturists Allen Cordell and Bob Albanese. Joe started his MG career working with MG James Blackwell to lay out and construct the brickwork for the original herb garden. He later joined Bob’s Thursday crew and contributed many hours this MG gang. Prior to retirement, Joe was an accountant for Southern Water Contractors in Brandon, Conn.

Important Announcements!

Palm Education –
Pam has a CD produced by Drs. Monica Elliott and Tim Brochat of the University of Florida containing PowerPoint presentations on Palm Diseases, Palm Fertilization, Physiological Disorders of Palms, Palm Nutrient Deficiencies, and Palm Transplanting and Pruning. There are scripts to go with each presentation. Three of these CDs are available for MGs to check out and use for study. If you go through all five of the presentations it will equal 7 hours of continuing education units. Please see Pam if you would like to check out one of the CDs for study.

It’s here and working

You now have the ability to send your volunteer hours by e-mail. The e-mail addresses: MGEDU@co.pinellas.fl.us. Please be specific when doing this – include individual dates and hours worked just like you would in the logbook. MG Jan Curtin will be recording these hours that are sent in by this method. I appreciate those that are using this method to report their hours and hope you will continue to do so.

Pinellas County Extension & Florida Botanical Gardens

We need help in collecting all publicity related to the Extension and FBG Gardens. Please clip any articles you see that mention us in any way, including weddings and outside events. Please bring the clippings to the volunteer office.

Please remember to include the name of the publication and date published.

MG Advisory Association

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG
The Articles of Incorporation for our MGAA account was completed and notarized.

We have applied for 501(c) (3) IRS tax-exempt status. Members of the bylaws committee (Linda Culhane, Angela Strain, Noel Bell, Gail Robertson and I) have completed the companion By-Laws document. I presented this document to our lawyer for comments and hope to get it back soon. This committee is now feverishly working on the Policy and Procedures document, which will contain the details of how MGAA operates and is organized. Any questions about any of the documents or how and why MGAA was organized please see me.

We held our first board meeting on Friday Oct 28 to allocate monies to specific horticulture areas. I was pleased with the attendance. Remember, board meetings are open to all MGs in good standing.

Board secretary Linda Barnette’s minutes were distributed to all by e-mail. If you did not receive a copy please see me in the volunteer office.

I have scheduled a general meeting of MGAA on January 9 from 9:00 am to 10:00 am in the Magnolia room to elect new board members.
Make your interest known to: Chuck Scaffidi at 582-2117 or e-mail me at cascaffidi@juno.com or any of the committee members Linda Culhane, Angela Strain, Noel Bell, or Gail Robertson.

A budget committee (Donna Zacharczyk and Patsy Schamber) was also established to identify budgets for the coming year. They have contacted Staff and MGs to determine yearly needs. We will be meeting soon to determine allocation amounts and spending priorities for the future.

MGs participating in special events should get prior approval and a check voucher from the MG Advisory committee if they are going to expend money for any event and expect reimbursement.

Volunteers Needed!!!

For Volunteer Opportunities:
Please see or call Carol Suggs to volunteer for events (582-2124) or the contact person in the help wanted ad.

Tour Guides Needed
Tour guide season is between September and May.
Please make your interest known to Tom Roberts or Sue Richardson; visit them or call 582-2242 to make an appointment. They will brief you on what is required of a tour guide and sign you up to shadow tours. Also, you may assist during a tour to get experience - sign up!!

School Gardening Help Needed:

McMullen Booth Elementary, Clearwater
Carrol Steakley, a first grade teacher.
In 2000 we established a very large outdoor classroom (OC) for students. There are many different gardens and lots to maintain. I am looking for a Master Gardener to help train teachers, students and volunteers to take care of this large outdoor classroom. We need help identifying the good plants from the bad plants. If you would like to help with this project, please contact Carol at carrols@verizon.net or give Pam a call at 582-2112.

74th St. Elementary Gardening Initiative
They want to beautify areas of the campus using staff, parents, and students. Requesting a Master Gardener to guide them with soil preparation, design and planting. Want to include educational signage for plantings. Contact Suzanne Shirk, Media Specialist at 727-893-2120

Southern Oak Elementary
The PTA wants to redo the courtyard using parents and students. Requesting a Master Gardener to help with soil preparation, what to plant and proper planting techniques. Contact Kathy Akers at 560-0867

St. Josephs Church
2102 22rd Avenue South St. Petersburg
Help needed for one Wednesday afternoon (3 – 5:30 p.m.) children’s program in September, October or November to present a lesson on how to plant and care for tomatoes or some other easy to grow vegetable. This is a group of children gathering for Wacky Wednesday and their plan is to encourage good eating. Please contact Deborah Schechner at 488-4796 or paxsez1@tampabay.rr.com.

IFAS Award of Excellence for Master Gardener Projects
By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG
Pam Brown has approved a proposal from the MG project advisory committee (MGPAC) for the “MG Grand Herb Garden TourFest”
We feel there is a remarkable growth of interest in herbal outreach as evidenced by the HerbFest and GardenFest interest. Also, we have been in discussion with Penny Khaled, President of the Herb Society, and she has offered many suggestions for this project. She is very enthusiastic about continuing to advise and assist us. The Herb Garden TourFest will consist of three parts: a MG guided tour of the herb garden, food preparation by an accredited chef and a keynote speaker on an announced herbal subject.
Please contact Pam Brown, Chuck Scaffidi, Jack Moss or Sam Skemp to contribute to this exciting project. We will be in need of a leader for this event, herb garden tour guides, and many helpers to make this a successful award-winning project. We also respectfully welcome suggestions for this event.
The advisory committee will continue to assist MG startup projects and identify projects that have state award potential.

For all project award submissions we are in dire need of the following MG skills: creative writers, editors, reviewers, graphic artists and others willing to help. Please see me or call 582-2117 if you are interested or you feel you are working on a project we should consider.

In 2006 the Conference will be in a different location. Rumor says it may be Jacksonville. Wherever, please join us next year!

We are so very proud that we received a state award for the Plant Sale project submitted this year. To celebrate this great honor, Linda Barnette and I, with Carol Suggs assisting us, are arranging a luncheon for all MGs, the maintenance crew, and staff who work so diligently to set-up and assist in the plant sales. Catered lunch will be served on Jan 9 in the Magnolia room from 11:30am to 2:30 pm. Please RSVP by December 30 on the reservation line 582-2247.

Volunteer Opportunities and Events for December

MG Advanced Training for December

Bus Trip to Sarasota Area
  – Thursday December 8th

Meet at Extension parking lot at 8:00 am on Thursday, December 8, 2005 for the trip to Sarasota. First stop is the Florida House Learning Center then on to the Ringling Museum grounds. We will lunch at the Banyan Café. You may choose either a Strawberry Salad entrée or a Monte Cristo sandwich. You must choose only one. Indicate your choice on sign up sheet on the bulletin board. If you do not make a selection, I will choose for you. Dessert and beverage will be included. Then we will be on our way to Crowley Nursery and Gardens. See you at the bus!

Up-coming Master Gardener Update Training Topics

Mark your Calendar!

January 9th – Soil, how do we keep it alive? - Pam Brown 10:00 -11:00am-Magnolia room

February 8th – Pollination and Problems With Pollination – Outside speaker

March 8th – Let Yvonne Edmonds know if you have a speaker you would like.

April ?? – Vote yes/no for April 11-on bulletin board

May 8th – Fire Ants – Native and Exotic, Learn the difference in behavior and how to identify each species – Roy Hayden (FBG Spray Tech)

Great American Teach-in was November 16. Thanks! To all the MGs that participated.

MGs Noel Bell, Bob Abben, Sally Duggan, Sam Skemp and Chuck Scaffidi participated in the teach-ins talking about their former careers, educational programs, and current volunteer work. They were all well received by the schools and received a certificate of appreciation from the sponsor, Progress Energy.

This is a yearly event so think about it for next year - the children and teachers are so enthused about learning from your experiences. What a great way to make a positive impact on these children.
To the multitude of GardenFest Master Gardeners,
You were great! Believe me that was the toughest volunteer day you are apt to have! As you could see, GardenFest could not have happened without you. I wish I had a camera when, amazingly, that tent floated from the courtyard to the pavilion. Now, that was teamwork!

Especially pleasing was to see so many of the new class graduates pitching in. Tiring, yes, but so rewarding when the public responds so positively to learning "trade secrets" from gardeners. There's an HerbFest in February, so rest up, come on **Tuesday mornings** to work with Allen Cordell and crew, and we'll sell herbs and share knowledge again!

Thank you very, very much,
Ruth Davies

🌟 MG Plant Sale Meetings

By CHUCK SCAFFIDI, MG

The plant sale committee, starting with the April 2006 sale, is planning to expand items for sale by adding specialty plant varieties.

The specialty plant group leaders are: native plants, Maureen Crawford; flowering vines, Elsa Soto; and tropical & exotic, Linda Culhane.

Lists will be posted on the bulletin board that suggests the plant types that we desire to add to our stock. It would be greatly appreciated if you would help us in this endeavor by offering cuttings or volunteering to propagate these at home. If you are able to help, please peruse the lists and sign your name next to the desired plant.

This will assist in our offering a greater variety at the plant sale. Also if you have any of the plants in these categories that have not previously been for sale, please contact us to see if we would like to use it. The lists are not confined to those named. It’s just that we couldn’t think of other plants.

If you would like, please contact me at **hpw163@aol.com** Thanks, Linda Culhane.

We are also excited about starting a "flowering vine" line of sales. If you have a flowering vine on your property we would like to obtain cuttings so we can get started on preparing plants for the next sale. Please call Elsa Soto at **726-6159** and she will make arrangements to take cuttings.

Please contact Maureen Crawford at 392-2206 for native plants.

Here are some we did think of: Native: pentas. Flowering vines: petra (queen's wreath or sandpaper vine), maypop, jasmin, marriage vine, divorce vine, and black-eyed susan vine. Tropical: gingers (not shell or yellow dancing lady, we have plenty), halococnia, ground orchids, and bird-of-paradise

Thank you for your help in making this one of the greatest plant sales in the county. We’re working on it being the best in the state, and with your help we can succeed The Plant Sales require an extraordinary amount of MG hours to make it a special and successful event. Your continued support is encouraged and we would like a goal of having the most MGs involved.

This is a very rewarding learning experience personally. Knowing that plant sale profits, by far our biggest source of income, benefit Master Gardener programs from education to supporting charitable organizations is an added bonus.

Get involved!!! Start by coming to our plant sale meetings and/or talk to the plant sale team leaders.

Miss Emily’s Greenhouse/ Shade House Etiquette Part II

By Mike Petay

A number of MG’s have approached me to suggest that it might be helpful to have some kind of chart, posted out in the Greenhouse, delineating what routine maintenance needs to be done and how often.

I’ve come up with one, using that modern, technological miracle, the Dry Erase Board. This will live somewhere in the potting area of the Greenhouse, as soon as we figure out where it can be both visible and not in someone’s way.
Basically, I’ve charted maintenance stuff that should be done daily (after each day’s use) weekly, periodically and monthly. We have four regular crews: Monday, Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, and smaller, occasional crews on other days. Monday and Friday crews will continue to do the weekly chores, but I would greatly appreciate it if all crews would make sure that the daily tasks get done, on those days that they are out there, and that all crews would rotate through the monthly pressure washing the floor thing. This is a safety issue that must be done! The Monday crew and I will pressure wash the floor for November.

Thanks everyone! I know everyone works very hard out there and sometimes it’s easy to overlook little things until they pile up and bite somebody. This way we can all see at a glance what needs to be done and when it was done last.

Seasonal Sensation’s Holiday Lights

Have you been looking for that special opportunity for a pleasant evening under the stars, with a few hundred of your new friends? If so, Seasonal Sensation's Holiday Lights may be for you. Since Lake Seminole Park cancelled the Lights under the Stars show, we are the sole Pinellas County promoted holiday light event. While you will see some changes, Holiday Lights will maintain the lighted wonderland theme that made our location so popular as a family-stroll through the month of December. We have selected 9 evenings during which we will greet and count the Holiday Lights visitors from 6-9 p.m. We plan to have 4 ambassadors around the Garden entrances each evening, so please consider bringing friends and colleagues to assist. Non-MGs and non-Pinellas County Volunteers are certainly welcome. At press time, we had openings for all the evenings. Available December dates are: Saturday, 3rd.; Sunday, 4th; Saturday, 10th; Friday, 16th; Saturday, 17th; Sunday, 18th; Wednesday, 21st; Thursday, 22nd; and Friday, 23rd. Please contact me ASAP, as the spaces are limited. For questions or to sign-up, please call Tom Robers (727) 582-2016

Mark Your Calendars Now!

In June of 2006, Chattanooga will host the 2006 Southeast Regional Master Gardener Conference. They are expecting between 500--1,000 Master Gardeners from 16 states for the 4-day event. (June 8 to 11). I would personally like to invite all Master Gardeners to attend what we think will be one of the best regional conferences that will be held in the southeast.

We will have a very special project for all Masters Gardeners to get their hands a little dirty while they are attending the Conference. The project will be located between the two Tennessee Aquarium buildings along the banks of the Tennessee River. Once the project is completed it will be used as an educational tool for the schools and aquarium groups. Once completed, we feel the project will be one that all Master Gardeners can be proud to have been a participant.

We will also be hosting an open Informational Day to the public. On Saturday the 10th, we will have national and regional speakers starting at 10:00am till 5:00pm in the evening, and a large vendor area open to everyone to view and buy products and crafts for the lawn and garden.

Below is a link to the Conference Webpage: The Southern Region Master Gardener Conference, A Blending of the Waters, June
to each of you and your families. If you will be traveling, have a safe journey and come back to us safe and sound. I will be off for a couple of weeks during the season to spend some time with my husband and two daughters.

You have until January 10th to record your volunteer hours for 2005. Be sure to get all of your hours recorded. These are important numbers that we must report to both the state and county.

Remember "Seasonal Sensations", our big celebration here at the gardens, happens on December 3rd from 10 a.m. until about 10 p.m. There will be programs, activities and fun all day culminating with the ceremonial lighting of the gardens. Plan to join us for the day of festivities.

A reporter/writer for the AP Wire service will be here on December 12th to talk with me about garden rooms. I will need some garden rooms to visit – so, if you have areas in your gardens where you have created outdoor rooms and would not mind it being photographed – please let me know. Call me at 582-2112 and leave a message if I am not in my office.

The Volunteer Recognition luncheon will be held on February 15, 2005. Mark your calendars now and save the date. We are moving this celebration back to February from our experiment with April last year. It was way too hectic and many of our part-year MGs had already returned to the north. February seems to be a better time.

I am looking for help from a Master Gardener in north county to help with a Horticulture Help Desk at the Brooker Creek Nature Preserve Environmental Education Center one day per month. I will be staffing this day and will need help with taking in soil samples for testing and printing fact sheets from the UF web site. The dates that I have set so far are January 12, February 23, March 16, April 13, May 25 and June 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Please let me know if you will be able to help me with this project. After several months I will assess whether two days per month are warranted.

In April 2006, the MG update training date is the same date as our EarthFest celebration here at FBG. I need to know if you want to have the up-date training on a different date for April. There will be a sheet on the back bulletin board for you to indicate yes or no for having the update on April 11th. Please be sure to indicate your preference by January 10th.

Season’s Greetings,
♥ Pam

Kwanzaa: Dec. 26 - Jan. 1

Founded in 1966 by Dr. Mauland Karenga, Kwanzaa is based on the first harvest celebrations of various African cultures. Its name is derived from the Kiswahili phrase "matunda ya kwanza," or "the first fruit of the harvest."

In addition to reaffirming rootedness in African culture and celebrating the bonds between Black people, Dr. Karenga wished to introduce and reinforce the Nguzo Saba, or Seven Principles: Umoja (unity), Kugichagulia (self-determination), Ujima (collective work and responsibility), Ujamaa (cooperative economics), Nia (purpose), Kuumba (creativity), and Imani (faith). Each day of the holiday celebrates one principle.

Hanukkah: 25th day of Kislev (first day)

In 168 B.C. the Syrians seized the Jews' holy Temple, and King Antiochus IV ordered the Jews to worship Greek gods. He decreed that anyone caught practicing Jewish rites would be put to death. In response, the Jews waged the first rebellion in recorded history for religious freedom.

Exactly three years after the temple was defiled, Judah Maccabee and his followers reclaimed, cleaned and rededicated it. When they were ready to light the menorah that was always to be kept burning, they could find only one small flask of oil -enough for
eight days the amount of time they needed to get more.

To commemorate this miracle, Jews everywhere celebrate Hanukkah (Hebrew for dedication) by lighting menorah candles for eight nights. The celebration begins on the 25th of Kislev.

Christmas: December 25

Christmas has its roots not only in Christianity, but also in traditional winter solstice celebrations. In northern Europe, people brought live evergreens into their homes to remind themselves that the growing season was approaching. On Yule, the shortest day of the year, they lit the Yule log to welcome the sun back into their lives. Other celebrations similarly revolved around fire, the return of light, and revelry in general.

In the fourth century AD, Pope Julius I declared that Christmas would be observed on December 25. His choice of date made it easier for pagan converts to commemorate the birth of their lord without entirely giving up their own traditions.

Today, Christians all over the world regard Christmas as one of the holiest days of the year, celebrating by attending church services, exchanging cards and gifts, and spending time with families.

We are especially appreciative of staff, MGs, and others who contribute articles, events, and other items of interest to the Green Leaf each month. Please submit your input by the 20th of each month. This will help us assemble and publish the newsletter in a timely manner. Also, to save mailing costs, please limit your articles to about 700-800 words or less.

Limited newsletter space does not allow for full photograph viewing. If you would like a copy of any photograph presented in the newsletters, please contact me @ 727-582-2117.

Chuck Scaffidi, MG Editor

The Green Leaf is published by Pinellas County Extension Service for the County Master Gardeners and depends on submission of articles.

Managing Editor: Pam Brown, Extension Agent II
Production Editor: Chuck Scaffidi, Master Gardener

Please send articles to Pam Brown or e-mail directly to Chuck cascaffidi@juno.com or Pam at pwbrown@co.pinellas.fl.us

Chuck Scaffidi, MG Editor

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