

# GROWING TOGETHER



Cobourg Horticultural Society Newsletter

Spring Edition 2021

## HOPE, HELLEBORES & HELPING MOTHER EARTH

Written by Martha Baldwin



This spring brings the kind of hope we've all been waiting for. Even as I write this we are on the verge of another province-wide shut down, but hope is on the horizon and nearly every part of my garden show signs. My weekend calendar is also starting to fill up with a longer list of outdoor to-do items and as my neighbours emerge from their houses for walks in the fresh air, I can't help but look forward to brighter days ahead.

It all started with my hellebores, which bloomed much earlier this year, in January due to the warmer temperatures. Then the seed catalogues arrived before I realized it was February, tempting me with the pages of new varieties. Even my beloved pansy pots arrived on the scene by mid-March. Most would agree that winter was a gentler one this year. Perhaps Mother Nature knew we needed a little break from the worry of snow

shoveling and slippery sidewalks.

We skipped the winter edition of our newsletter this year; however our long awaited spring edition is bursting with interesting ideas, articles and events for you to enjoy and look forward to. My job of assembling the pages was easier than ever thanks to the generous efforts of so many of you, our members, who contacted me with articles, updates and ideas.

Trish Whitney and her team of enthusiastic Native planters have shared a wheelbarrow full of well written articles about an important campaign our club has launched this year, **Planting for a Greener Future**, and show off the benefits of native plants & trees in so many ways. I especially enjoyed reading about the creation of Harriet Binkley's meadow, the large scale tree-scaping efforts of Sarah and Richard Holland, as well as a great report on whether tree size matters, by Jenny Cheng-Burke. Yvonne Michalski also reports on the tricky task of pruning hydrangeas; a passion she knows well.

In other events, the locally owned garden centers are also reopening this week. I was thrilled to recently discover new life that has been brought to the Pineridge Nurseries after its former owner, Teresa Tukendorf

left us last Fall. Her legacy will live on in Cobourg!

As we approach Earth Day (April 22), I can't help but think about the effects that COVID-19 has had on our environment. It has become all too common to see discarded and disposable face masks in the ditch along a roadside and more coffee cups and takeout containers than ever before. One day to my surprise, I even found several empty plastics bottles of sanitizer littering my sidewalk, blown from down the street on a windy day.

So perhaps fittingly, this year's Earth Day theme is **Restore Our Earth**, which focuses not only on the need to reduce our impact on the planet as we recover from the effects of the pandemic, but also how we can play a role in repairing the damage we've done. I encourage you to bring a pair of gloves, and a recycling bag on your next stroll through your neighbourhood in order to pick up some of the added trash that surfaces after the snow has melted. I find doing this also helps also get me physically back in shape for the garden!



## Planning For a Greener Five Corners

As you may know, a small group from CHS headed by Trish Whitney is hoping to entice all Cobourgers to make Cobourg a greener community by planting more native plants and trees. Doing so will encourage diversity of insects, birds and plants. In addition to our native plant sale, **we are looking for volunteers to help expand our Five Corners Pollinator Garden** to include more native plants. We need people with strong backs to help turn and amend the soil and other gardeners who would enjoy the actual planting aspect.

In helping, I am planning on meeting new members, getting some exercise and hopefully working off some of those extra COVID pounds that I seem to have added!

Join us for an opportunity to once again meet (socially distanced of course) and chat with fellow gardeners. We work for approximately two hours, once or twice a week.



### Mission Statement for Planting for a Greener Future:

Promote awareness within the Garden Club and Community of the need for native planting to encourage diversity of insect, plant and bird species.

You can email Sue Hannah at [susanhannah0950@gmail.com](mailto:susanhannah0950@gmail.com) to volunteer.

## Gardeners Go Native!



The Cobourg Horticultural Society's first sale of native plants has been a resounding success! The sale was planned by a committee of Hort. Society members including Susan Hannah, Sarah Holland, Dawn McGregor, Dilys Robertson, Janet Sedgwick, Dianne Taylor, and Trish Whitney. In March, Society members were offered a selection of 50 important native plants, shrubs and trees at prices ranging from \$3 to \$30. CHS members responded by ordering over 900 individual plants for total sales of more than \$3,600! Orders will be available for pickup in mid-May.

At the January CHS meeting Lorraine Johnson explained that native plants are critical to maintaining a diverse population of animals and insects. This project allows CHS members to take immediate action to help the environment by enhancing diversity. We are joining with dozens of other groups across the province doing the same. We must recognise that it is necessary to plant natives on private land in order to create a checkerboard of native plants to increase biodiversity.

## May we recommend...?

While **May** is planting season, **early April** is a busy time for ordering ahead your vegetable plants and there are so many options to choose from when selecting where to buy. However avoid the big box garden centers and keep it local for unusual, organic and heritage varieties of superior quality. Check out these fan favourites around Northumberland and consider pre-ordering soon as many sell out quickly:

### The Tomato Lady, Port Hope



5831 5th Line, Port Hope (also Port Hope & Newcastle Farmers Market in May 2021)

Phone: (905) 396-8853

The Tomato Lady collects heritage (heirloom) tomato seed & starts plants for 100+ varieties of heirloom tomatoes (and peppers). Her plants are available at markets near Port Hope at the beginning of each growing season and by appointment at her farm.

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/HeritageTomatoes/>

### Red Tractor Farm Market, Grafton



10282 County Rd 2, Grafton Phone: (416) 500-4201

#### PLANT SALE – Saturday May 15!

We'll be posting a pre-order catalog by mid-April for you to browse, and will be offering contactless pick up at the farm like last year. We've got a few new varieties this year that we're excited about, and all our usual favourites. Mark your calendars!

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/Red-Tractor-Farm-and-Market->

### Forager's Farms, Cobourg

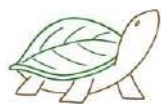


3517 Rowe Rd. Cobourg Phone: (905) 926-7478

**PLANT SALE!** Want to have a garden but don't know where to start? Let us take care of your garden plant starts all season long! We grow vegetables, herbs + flowers and have 4 successional sales planned for 2021. Looking forward to getting dirty with you this year! We also have four pickup locations available ([our farm](#), [Peterborough Regional Farmers Market](#), [Cobourg Farmers Market](#) or [Bowmanville Reko](#) for a May 27th).

More information: <http://foragersfarms.ca/contact/>

### Turtle Back Hollow, Colborne



115 King St. East Colborne (also located on Port Hope Market) Phone (289) 251-8048

#### Spring is Coming...

It's what you have all been waiting for: the Turtle Back Hollow Ecological Farm and Gardens 2021 Spring Plant Catalogue <https://drive.google.com/.../1W0z-y4aa7zK15xmGJ4nnTZSTb.../view...> See the comments for the order form!

More information: <https://www.facebook.com/turtlebackhollow/>

## Cobourg Ecology Garden is Turning 25!



Twenty-five years ago, Minnie Pennell had a dream — an ecology garden. Thanks to Minnie's dedication to the environment, the Cobourg Ecology Garden came into being. It started as a small garden just south of Legion Village's parking lot. A generation later, the Garden encompasses the area north of the West Beach boardwalk, stretching from Hibernia Street to Durham Street. To learn more about this haven for people, pollinators and small creatures, please view our commemorative video **click below:**



## Blocks and Blooms Garden Tour



**Saturday June 26, 2021**

The much anticipated tour of historic properties and magnificent gardens will take place in June 2021. Tour at your own pace the picturesque village of Millbrook: visit distinctive gardens and heritage properties, and enjoy the beauty and artistry of new and heirloom quilts on display.

**Watch for Updates on our website:**

**<https://millbrookcavanhs.org/exhibition/blocks-and-blooms-2021/>**

**Proceeds go to support**

**The Millbrook & Cavan Historical Society**

Welcome to Northumberland Arts Gallery and Shop

Current Exhibition:

**Flowers for a Lady**

**Watercolours by Jane Wicks**

**Thursday March 25<sup>th</sup> to Sunday April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021**



## Cobourg Public Library



### The Seed Library is Now Open @ Cobourg Public Library

Our Seed Library officially launched on Monday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. In celebration, we're offering a lovely green-thumb approved gift set. All you have to do to enter is comment on our Facebook and tell us why you **LOVE** the Cobourg Public Library Seed Library!

CONTEST BEGINS ON Monday, March 29th AND ENDS ON Tuesday, April 13th at 6:00 a.m. This contest is open to legal residents of Northumberland County, Ontario. Cobourg Public Library staff, board members and/or immediate family members, are not eligible to participate in this contest (refer to CPL Policy 1.13 Contest and Lotteries Policy). The winner must be able to pick up the prize at the Cobourg Public Library during curbside hours. This giveaway is not sponsored, endorsed or administered by or associated with Instagram or Facebook.

#### **How to get your free seeds:**

Our volunteers and staff have been busy packaging and labelling seeds for you - Vegetables, Flowers, Herbs and Fruit. Seed packets are available at all three Library Branches to check out in-person - or **order online** for Curbside Pick-up, or have them mailed to you!



## Tree Tales: Our Reforestation Project

- Written by Sarah Holland -

The Ganaraska Region Conservation Authority, in partnership with the County of Northumberland, has a five-year reforestation project to replace trees lost to the Emerald Ash Borer with native species. In January 2020 we applied to the program, then in its second year, the program has now achieved the planting of 24,000 trees locally. The free tree saplings offered included various types of oak, maple, pine, spruce, birch and tamarack. Northumberland County residents could request between 25 to 150 trees. We applied for 25 red oak and 20 tamarack.

On Good Friday, we staked out the distances along our driveway for the red Oaks and determined locations for the tamaracks.

The bareroot seedlings were delivered and left in large bags in our garage one day in April. They were between 12-18 inches tall, and the tamaracks looked like mini Christmas trees. We planted them as soon as possible, using the "mulch" mats provided by the Conservation Authority, and *Myke Tree and Shrub Growth Supplement*, supplied by Baltimore Valley Nurseries, to assist in the growth of the roots.

At the same time, we transplanted a white pine and three pagoda dogwood saplings, all "volunteers" which had planted themselves here and there. We transplanted them to better locations, and they appear to have survived quite well.

My husband, Richard and I, watered all 50 saplings over the next months every second day, which involved trucking water around our property behind the lawn tractor. We monitored the growth of the trees regularly. A couple of the red oaks were snapped off by a four-legged varmint, and a few more did not thrive. Sadly, half of the tamaracks had died by the late Fall, and although we mulched all of the saplings heavily before the winter, we are left with 8 tamarack surviving now, in March 2021.

We are very pleased to have the opportunity of replacing the red oak trees which did not thrive with somewhat larger saplings via our Club's **Planting for A Greener Future** project.

The Conservation Authority's application process for 2021 has now closed, and the website advises that Lower Trent Conservation is administering the Emerald Ash Borer program now since much of the ash removal work is concentrated in the eastern part of the County.

**For more information on the Ganaraska Region**

**Conservation Authority (GRCA) tree planting program:**

<https://www.grca.on.ca/2019/01/08/skip-winter-think-spring-and-tree-planting/>



## In The Garden

A Radio Program Hosted by  
Ingrid Schumacher

Check out past episodes [Here](#)



# Spring Pruning of Common Hydrangea

Written by Yvonne Michalski

Hydrangea, what's not to love, a complex family of blooming shrubs that have some special ways of maintaining their size, shape and blooms. They actually don't **need** to be pruned and will thrive if left alone but look nicer and have better flowers if clipped to divert their energy into flowers. Once you know what kind of hydrangea you've got in your garden, you can easily trim them to suit their needs. Use clean, sharp pruners and cut at an angle immediately above a large bud. Twiggy, dead branches can be pruned any time.

Hydrangea that bloom on **old** wood (last year's growth) & should **not** be pruned

- Macrophylla* or Bigleaf (Nikko Blue)
- Macrophylla* lace cap (Twist and Shout)
- Serrata* mountain hydrangea (Tough Stuff Ah Ha)
- Quercifolia* oakleaf (Ruby Slippers)

Intrepid gardeners have at some point in their careers, pruned traditional *Macrophylla*, *Serrata* and *Quercifolia* hydrangeas in spring and noticed with dismay, that there were few or no flowers that year. I know I have!



## Remontant Hydrangea

Until recently, all *macrophylla*, "mop head" hydrangea only set flower buds on previous year's growth, old wood produced the previous year. It was not safe, for the developing flower buds, to prune much after July or August. If you pruned in the fall, you would get few or no flowers in the spring. As well, last year's buds, unprotected, often do not survive our Cobourg winters. The game changer came with the recent development of *remontant hydrangea* that bloomed on **old and new** wood. This extended the blooming season and was forgiving if you accidentally pruned incorrectly or the winter froze the old growth or a late frost killed any new growth. Endless Summer is the parent remontant hydrangea of them all, the first of its kind and many other hydrangea have been bred from this plant. So now, with the remontant varieties, you prune only in May, if at all, once you can see the new buds and to prevent clipping of last years potential flowers. Do not clip any new growth either as it will provide flowers later on in the summer. These gems require very little maintenance, just a tidying up of dead growth and twiggy bits. In our town of cold winds, also some protection.

*Serrata*, or Mountain Hydrangea, as in "Tiny Tough Stuff", only blooms on old growth. I have two *Serrata* "Spreading Beauty" that need no care except a trimming of last year's dead flower heads. Just be careful to only trim to the buds, as they are this year's flowers.

*Quercifolia*, or Oakleaf hydrangea can be lightly pruned after flowering. Needs little other attention except straggly bits and crossed over branches. "Ruby Slippers" is a lovely dwarf version that thrives in my garden unprotected.

Depending on where you live, *Macrophylla hydrangea* would benefit from some form of winter protection and/or should be sited out of the wind. Zone 5 isn't always an accurate zone for these plants, when unprotected. Yet my neighbour has what looks like a *Nikko Blue*, zone 6, up against the side of her house, receives morning sun, protected from punishing Cobourg winds (and our house!) and Wendy has never had to "gift wrap" the darned thing. She sited her hydrangea correctly.

Hydrangea that bloom on **new** wood, the current year's growth

- H *paniculata* or Panicle hydrangea, (Limelight)
- H *arborescens* or Smooth hydrangea (Incrediball, Annabelle)
- H *petiolaris* or Climbing hydrangea

Hydrangea *paniculata* (Limelight) blooms on new wood, is pruned in **early** spring, cleaning up last year's winter kill and twiggy bits. Prune just above a large bud. You can reduce the plant by 1/3 to 1/2. Hydrangea *arborescens* or smooth hydrangea (Incrediball) can be treated as above, blooms on new wood. As in Annabelle, some people take Annabelle right back but that prevents the stems from developing thickness to hold up the large flowers, a common problem with Annabelle types. The more recent Incrediball is less "floppy" after wind and rain.

Hydrangea *petiolaris*, climbing hydrangea, I just let mine grow, on a solid arbour, if you prune, you can cut the flower buds. It is sited out of the west wind. There doesn't appear to be a common name.

Despite our winds and lack of snow some winters here in Cobourg, we continue to find ways to maintain these lovely shrubs. It is worth the effort. Nonetheless, I am off to find an Endless Summer hydrangea...!



## Do you know an Eligible Student?



### \$1,000 Scholarship

To be awarded to a Cobourg high school graduate for further study in Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Landscape Architecture, Horticulture, Food & Agriculture Business & Resource Management

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Applications must be received by **May 25, 2021**.

For application details go to: [www.cobourggardenclub.org/activities](http://www.cobourggardenclub.org/activities)

## COBOURG HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY ANNUAL "Driveway" PLANT SALE 2021



Our annual plant sale this year will be held on **Saturday, May 22 & Sunday, May 23, 2021**.

A few members have graciously offered the use of their Cobourg driveways for this outdoor only sale. We now need the help of all club members to donate plants from their gardens. Members can also start planting seeds now indoors and then as your gardens start to grow, divide and share your perennials for the sale! Arrangements can be made to pick up plants if not able to deliver, and flower pots are available if anyone needs them.

**For more information, please contact Marion Castleton or Gloria Harrison:**

Please e-mail or phone: [marion.castleton@gmail.com](mailto:marion.castleton@gmail.com) 905-342-3813;

or [gloria.harrison@hotmail.com](mailto:gloria.harrison@hotmail.com) 905-373-2671

## When planting trees does size matter?

- Written by Jenny Cheng-Burke -

My husband and I moved into a new house on 18.5 acres 13 years ago. The property was formerly a cornfield so tree shopping and planting was one of our first projects.

We planted trees of many varieties and sizes...from 2 to 3 year old bareroot seedlings to trees sold in manageable pots to large mature trees that had to be professionally planted. Prices ranged from \$2 to \$600.

In 5 years we found that most of the bareroot seedlings had caught up to the trees that were sold in manageable pots but the costly mature trees were still struggling and needed a lot more care!

As we look around now after 13 years, we are convinced that when it comes to planting trees, bigger is not necessarily better. Most of the little \$2 seedlings have caught up to the \$500 trees. All our trees are well established but the ones planted as seedlings actually look a lot healthier!

My conclusion, based strictly on personal experience (I am no expert!), suggests planting seedlings is a viable and less expensive means to planting trees. That said, if the objective is to create an immediate impact on the landscape, size will matter.

Last year we planted in excess of 10,000 two and three year old native tree seedlings in our field as a reforestation project. It is an ambitious and long term plan to create a forest of healthy trees.



## The Changing role of our Gardens:

*“For the past century we have created our gardens with one thing in mind: aesthetics. We have selected plants for landscaping based only on their beauty and their fit into our artistic designs. Yet if we designed our buildings the way we design our gardens, with only aesthetics in mind, they would fall down. Just as buildings need support structures –girders, I-beams and headers—to hold the graceful arches and beautiful lines of fine architecture in place, our gardens need native plants to support a diverse and balanced food web essential to all sustainable ecosystems.”*

**Douglas Tallamy: Bringing Nature Home, pg 286.**



## Recommended Reads:

(Submitted by Trish Whitney)

**These books have been ordered and will be available at our local Cobourg Library. Why not check them out!**

- Douglas Tallamy: **Bringing Nature Home: How You can sustain Wildlife with Native Plants**
- Douglas Tallamy: **Nature’s Best Hope**
- Lorraine Johnson: **100 Easy to Grow Native Plants for Canadian Gardens.**

Available for free download **Online:**  
**Grow me instead: A Guide for Southern Ontario – Beautiful Non-Invasive Plants for Your Garden**



**Free** for your pond - **goldfish.**

Bring your own container.

Please contact **Janet Sedgwick @ 416-525-2570**



## Creating a Meadow: A Brief Account of the Creation of our Front Garden Meadow:

- Written By Harriet Binkley -

About 6 years ago, when we finished building our cottage near Roseneath, on Rice Lake, we duly installed the typical front lawn of grass. We are in the black oak savannah ecosystem, and the building site was extremely sandy and bereft of shade. It was a hot July, desert like in precipitation, so after spreading imported topsoil (bad idea as it contained vetch and other invasive weeds) we seeded the area with enviroturf, in the hopes of reducing mowing (limited height) and watering (drought resistant) and covered it with straw blanket, which is typically used on highways to minimize erosion and moisture loss.

To my chagrin the resulting blasted heath was in constant need of watering, the look not at all in keeping with the natural surroundings, and lacked a welcoming approach to the cottage. Stone or wood paths would be expensive and not simpatico. That's when I had the brainwave to plant a meadow with native flowers, and carve pathways through the growth. So simple, I thought, just sprinkle some wild flower seeds and let it look after itself. In that first year as well as throwing seeds with abandon, we transplanted goldenrod (another bad idea!) and a variety of asters from the adjoining meadows, and purchased Echinacea and Black eyed Susan.

We also had the benefit of our neighbour, who had actually created an enormous prairie meadow in Oak Ridges, in the true traditional style of first burning the field to rid it of invasive species. While a burn by the newly built house was not an option, he was extremely generous with ideas, seeds and specimens. Some species took and others did not. Friends were kind, and one provided a large stock of rudebeckia. Coreopsis thrives - at least as of last summer, as do many types of yellow flowers, and a small number of vervaine and obedience flowers. Every year I harvest the seeds and distribute them around the property. In the fall, the stalks are left to stand, although we pull out and cut back the goldenrod. Thanks to this meadow, birds flock year round, foraging for seeds and bugs, a variety of bees visit, frogs and fireflies abound and this past Labour Day we had a roosting of 400 to 500 monarchs in the tall pines nearby.

**Harriet's Meadow in the Summer:**



**Harriet's Meadow in the Fall:**



Coneflowers and rudbeckias wear two hats in the butterfly garden: along with attractive floral display and nectar, rudbeckias support the reproduction of dozens of species of Lepidoptera (butterflies & moths)

Quoted from the Book *Bringing Nature Home* - Written by Douglas W. Tallamy

The following article was published in the March, 2021, issue of the Ottawa Horticultural Society.  
**We have permission to reproduce.**

## An Underused Tree: The Bitternut Hickory

Written by Eric Jones

The North lookout in the Arboretum is one of the best views in town. It's on the circle loop road in the Arboretum, looking over Dow's Lake and across to the Glebe and beyond. As you take in the view, you'll notice a woodland on your right. The closest large tree in that woodland is a bur oak, but a taller tree stands further to the right: a bitternut hickory, *Carya cordiformis*.

The Arboretum is where you can find many species and varieties brought from afar and planted here to show how they do in our climate and conditions. But the woodland section of the Arboretum shows us native trees that grew here without any help. Bitternut hickory grows well in the Ottawa area and is an underused tree in the city itself.

This tree in the woodland area is particularly impressive. It was likely planted by squirrels many decades ago. Another specimen at the foot of the hill was planted by the Central Experimental Farm 60 years ago but isn't as impressive. Hickories tend to be hard to transplant due to their tap roots. Like all trees, its shape comes from the way it grew. The higher limbs rise above nearby trees and fill all of the available space up there with twigs, since hickory is intolerant of shade. If it was drawn on a map, the crown would look like a river delta. A few of the lower limbs have been retained where they can still hold leaves up to the light, and the main stem of the tree is balanced and straight.

The buds of the bitternut hickory are yellow, a good way to identify it. The leaves are compound and turn yellow in the fall. But the leaves are slow to come out in the spring because the vessels in a hickory are large and vulnerable to frost. If they leaf out too early, these vessels can be blocked by embolisms. So they wait until the threat of frost has passed.

The nuts are indeed bitter, hence the name, but only to us. Some city residents don't want the messiness of any kind of debris from trees. Wilder residents of the city (squirrels, birds) have a different opinion. Now that iconic native ash trees can no longer be planted here due to the Emerald Ash Borer, and the beautiful native elm trees are no longer planted due to Dutch Elm Disease, we need trees of similar stature and form to take their place.

**Such as this one:**







## Don't Miss Out on the Fun! Our Upcoming Zoom Meetings/Speaker Series:

### **Wednesday April 7 @ 7:30pm Jim Lounsbery - Little Known Garden Gems**

This lecture comprises slides of ornamental and native deciduous plants not often found in the landscape trade. What you will see is many smaller type trees and shrubs good for use in small urban landscapes.

### **Wednesday May 5 @ 7:30pm Ewa Bednarczuk - Miyawaki Forests**

Ewa Bednarczuk completed her BSc in ecology and MSc in conservation biology at the University of Guelph. Ewa works as an ecologist at Lower Trent Conservation, where she has been discovering the watershed for nearly 10 years. She provides support for the planning and regulations department on matters related to natural heritage and offers stewardship advice to landowners. She also leads guided outings and delivers a variety of environmental outreach programs. Prior to her current position, Ewa worked on conservation projects across Ontario as well as abroad including: studying reintroduced flying squirrels at Point Pelee National Park, eradicating invasive sparrows on a remote island, and managing a population of endangered parrots on Mauritius in the Indian Ocean (home of the extinct Dodo bird). Her goal is to make you fall in love with the beautiful Lower Trent watershed and help you care for our lands and streams.

### **Wednesday June 2 @ 7:30pm Tara Nolan - Gardening your Front Lawn**

Tara will give you ideas to transform your front yard from a bland grass-scape to a vital living space. Her topics include using sustainable ideas like rain gardens, eco-friendly grass options, planting for pollinators, and sneaking veggies into your front perennial garden. She is an experienced presenter, and most recently presented to the Toronto Botanical Garden. She has written 2 books, and has a very informative newsletter, called Savvygardening.com

**Watch your email for a Zoom meeting invitation email approximately two weeks before each session!**

If you would like to join our Society and participate in these upcoming webinars, please complete this [Membership Form](#) and mail it along with your annual \$15/person or \$20/family membership due to:

**Cobourg Horticultural Society**  
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