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Washington County Master Gardeners Newsletter • September 2023



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Having said all that, the *Garden Thyme* may be best viewed in your browser (instead of viewing it within your email). Formatting within an email often gets messed up (sorry for the technical jargon there), which is a frustration for you and your newsletter committee as we work so hard to provide you with a newsletter lovely to behold. **So, to view the *Garden Thyme* in its full glory, just click on the link at the top of this page that says, "View this email in your browser."**

SEPTEMBER MEETING

"Permaculture Design: Edible Landscapes"
by Tas Zinck and Chase Jones



Hope to see everyone at our monthly meeting on September 5. We'll meet as usual at the Extension Office and plan to also offer a Zoom option for attending the meeting.

Tas Zinck (above left) and Chase Jones (right) with Biodesic Strategies, a local permaculture design and consulting firm, will present samples of edible landscapes.

Biodesic Strategies offers permaculture design and consulting services for projects involving regenerative agriculture, perennial production systems, food forestry, water retention landscapes, and nutrient cycling. They work with residents, homesteaders, farms, businesses, events and communities to create integrated holistic systems for sustainable living.

Tas Zinck is a life-long gardener who was exposed to sustainability, homesteading, and horticulture at a young age. Tas discovered permaculture in high school. He integrated these interests and has been practicing permaculture for more than a decade. In 2014 he co-founded and managed Living Earth Ark Food Forests, a non-profit dedicated to permaculture education and advocacy. Tas has apprenticed in Ozark herbalism and super-adobe construction and has accumulated knowledge of green infrastructure and sustainability skills from a variety of workshops, classes, and diligent self-study.

Chase Jones received his Permaculture Design Certificate in 2018 under Alan Booker and Paul Wheaton at Wheaton Labs in Montana after four years of self-study and practical permaculture experience. Chase graduated from the University of Arkansas after studying ancient sustainability practices, dendrochronology, and geographic information systems (GIS). He is fascinated with how new and old techniques from around the world can be applied to modern permaculture applications. Chase's aptitude for manual and computer-aided visual art is evident in his artistic renderings.

Taking Care of Business

Our annual business meeting will also take place at the September 5 meeting. Please attend in-person or via Zoom so we can have a quorum for the election of 2024 officers. Here's the slate:

President: Elizabeth Hale

Vice President: Alfi Anderson

Secretary: Kathy Launder

Treasurer: Glenda Patterson

Assistant Treasurer: Marilyn Misenhimer

Members at Large:

- Carole Ball
- Marty Powers
- Mariette Spidel

We will also vote on proposed revisions to our bylaws. (These amendments were first sent out by Constant Contact on August 18 to meet the requirement that they be publicized 10 days in advance of the September 5 meeting.) As a reminder, these amendments are being made to comply with state regulations and to correct inconsistencies overlooked in last year's bylaws changes.

Proposed Revision Regarding Out-of-State Transfers

A different version of the bylaw concerning out-of-state transfers was presented to you in July and discussed at the August business meeting. After that version was sent to you, we learned that the state would not allow us to accept the hours from out-of-state Master Gardeners that the board had proposed. The version presented to you here and on August 18 is in compliance with state policies, and the board recommends that it be adopted. [View "Out-of-State Transfer Proposed Bylaws Change."](#)

Proposed Revision Regarding Duties of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer

New in the August 18 message and brought to you again now are amendments to the duties of the treasurer and assistant treasurer. The current bylaws contain language pertaining to the state requirement of the peer review committee, a requirement which the state removed last year. Although we eliminated the bylaw related to the peer review committee last year, we overlooked the revision of the treasurer and assistant treasurer duties that pertained to the state-required report. The amendment attached here corrects that. [View "Proposed Changes to Duties of Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer."](#)

Please note that the assistant treasurer will continue to train with the treasurer. The amendment presented here on the assistant treasurer duties applies only to the formerly state-required peer view.

And per usual, we'll vote on the following items:

August 2023 Meeting Minutes

July 2023 Treasurer's Report

From Your President

JOANNE OLSZEWSKI

Summer's waning, school has started, and I still have green

beans coming on in spite of the heat. Though I am tired of eating, canning, freezing, and pickling them, I thank them every time I pick for being so abundant and for their determination to keep feeding me.

When I visited my relatives in Wisconsin, I took some of our garden produce since their harvest is later than ours. I took my cousin a big bag of green beans. He thanked me and said, "I picked a half bushel this morning and I'm looking for unlocked cars."



As I write this, the Washington County Fair is in full swing and earlier this week I helped register the entries in the Horticulture Building. We had a total of 1061 exhibits this year. Over the years I have noticed how many more people donate their produce. Their donations can fill several truck beds that Master Gardeners deliver to food banks where it is most welcome and very needed.

I also had a chance to discuss with the different gardeners and farmers the ways we preserve our garden bounty. One of my personal favorites is stuffed green peppers. I take out the seeds, boil them for about three minutes. When cool, I stuff them with a hamburger/spaghetti sauce mixture and a vegetarian Quinoa mix and top them both off with cheese. Once frozen, I put them in bags and drop them in the freezer. They are sure good on those days I don't want to cook. This is also the first year I made vegetable soup with my veggie surplus and froze it in canning jars. This works as long as you only fill the jar 3/4 full to give the soup room to expand as it freezes.

My latest experiment was freezing eggplant. First, I cut them into one-inch rounds, then baked them for about fifteen minutes, put them in the freezer on the sheet pan and when frozen put them in a bag. I sure hope that works as I plan to make a stir-fry this winter with the onions and garlic I stored in the barn and Thai basil and other herbs I have dried.

A big thank you to Peg for planting the garden and rewriting my article.

Joanne

To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.

—AUDREY HEPBURN

2023 Award Nominations: The Time Draws Nigh

JAN LEFLER

WCMG volunteers have the opportunity to give special recognition each year to outstanding Washington County Master Gardeners, first-year WCMGs ("rookies"), sanctioned projects, local organizations or businesses, and individuals in the community with our annual WCMG award nominations.

Nomination forms are located in the WCMG Member Resource Guide available

via the member portal on the [WCMG website](#).

Please provide photos along with captions.

Prior WCMG award winners for all categories are listed in the WCMG Member Resource Guide in the Forms section. *(This information shows those projects and/or individuals who have received awards in prior years and those who are not eligible for nominations.)*

Master Gardener award nominations are judged at the county and state level according to documentation of:

1. Involvement in all three aspects of the program: the County Master Gardener program, County Extension, and the community.
2. Leadership skills, mentorship, good conflict resolution, innovation, and amount of involvement. When involvement was reliable and consistent—such as a long-term involvement in particular projects or a large amount of involvement in a short amount of time as a Master Gardener—scoring is higher.
3. Community connections and working well with Extension Service office and employees.
4. Pictures that reflect what was in the description of involvement, such as pictures of Master Gardener or project working on the specifics mentioned. Include text to explain the context that the picture was taken in. (In some past nominations, points were counted off for images that are unclear.)
5. Inclusion of numerical descriptors for service, such as the number of hours volunteered on each project or the number of people reached with each project.

Example: *"I chose John Doe as the Master Gardener of the Year because of his relationships and involvement within his county's Master Gardener program, his involvement in the community through projects, service, the city, farmers markets to educate the public and attract new Master Gardeners, and his work as the Extension Council representative."*

The following categories are awarded at both the county and state level:

- **Excellence in Education.** An outstanding WCMG project that demonstrates significant learning of a targeted audience
- **Friend of Master Gardeners.** An individual (non-Master Gardener) who has shown outstanding support of the WCMG program. (Excludes Extension Service staff).
- **Friend of Master Gardeners.** A business or organization who has shown outstanding support of the WCMG program.
- **Master Gardener of the Year.** A WCMG who has made an outstanding contribution to the WCMG program, Extension Service, and county. (Excludes previous winners.)
- **Project of the Year.** The most outstanding WCMG project for the year. Total effort is judged as well as the scope of the project and its impact to the WCMG program, Extension Service, and county. (Excludes projects that have won the award from the previous four years. Re-nomination requires significant changes in the project to warrant a new nomination.)
- **Rookie of the Year.** A first-year WCMG who has provided outstanding volunteer

service to the WCMG program and/or Extension Service and the community. Eligible trainees are those who finished their MG classroom training and completed their first-year membership certification within the designated time frame.

- **Mimi Cox Mentor of the Year**. A mentor who has made outstanding efforts helping their assigned first-year WCMG, MG transfer, or reinstated WCMG member through their first year.

Exclusive to Washington County Master Gardeners:

- **Joyce Mendenhall "Yes, I Can" Award**. WCMGs and first-year WCMGs who clearly demonstrate a "can do" attitude in all things. They go beyond assigned tasks to help fellow WCMGs and to ensure the success of the organization and its projects.

Please submit a digital copy along with digital photos in jpg format to Washington County Extension Office, Attention Awards Committee, at cmassey@uada.edu no later than November 15, 2023.

SANCTIONED PROJECT SPOTLIGHT

Arkansas Bounty at BGO

STACY LAKE



The Botanical Garden of the Ozarks vegetable garden in its summer growing season glory!
Photo by Stacy Lake.

Soon after retiring from a demanding career, I started volunteering at the [Botanical Garden of](#)

[the Ozarks](#) (BGO). I thought there would be no better way to decompress and ease my way into retirement than getting my hands dirty and learning something new. I volunteered with the horticulture team learning about different plants (wanted and unwanted) and how to care for them. I soon found a way to marry my passion for helping people and my new love of gardening . . . in the vegetable garden.

What can I say about the vegetable garden at the Botanical Garden of the Ozarks? It's an Arkansas bounty from about March through November. The riches include cold and warm weather veggies and herbs: cabbage, kohlrabi, tomatoes, onions, okra, lemongrass, basil, and thyme, just to name a few. In 2022, 760 pounds of food was harvested and donated to [Seeds That Feed](#) . As of July 20, 2023, the total year-to-date harvest is 791.5 pounds. Benton County Master Gardener Susan Esche has been the mastermind behind the vegetable garden for the past two years. She volunteers many hours in the garden and partners closely with Berni Kurz, BGO's director of horticulture.

The vegetable garden underwent a makeover last year. The old raised beds that had been there for many years were retired and new ones were put together by a team of volunteers and BGO staff. Susan did soil testing prior to planting and that has helped tailor the fertilization schedule. She plans to test again after frost. The new beds are not only producing more vegetables but look great too! We averaged 27 pounds of produce per week last year and are averaging 53 pounds per week this year. Signs now include botanical and common names of the vegetables in each bed, date transplanted, and days to maturity. I'm in the vegetable garden often and people really appreciate the information! The [Little Sprouts and Garden Buds](#) get in on the fun with the vegetable and flower garden outside of the children's garden, where they get to see tomatoes, squash, sunflowers, and long beans growing and ripening together!



A recent harvest at the BGO vegetable garden. *Photo by Susan Esche.*

The planning and maintenance of a vegetable garden of this size takes a lot of thought and wo/man hours. There's a seed chart so the greenhouse staff know what seeds to sow in flats for the next rounds of planting based on important dates like when potatoes were harvested and replaced by eggplant. When there are the inevitable adjustments needed, whether watering quantity, fertilization, or unwanted bugs/critters, Susan and Berni put their heads together for the best ways to adjust and/or deter pests. Neem oil for spider mites on tomatoes; water then squish the squash bugs while finding the little clusters of red eggs and squishing them as well; laying soaker hoses in the new raised beds; or fertilizing with Urea. It's a labor of love for all involved!

If you haven't seen the BGO vegetable garden, stop by soon. Better yet, sign up to volunteer!

Changes to Advanced Training

1. Each Master Gardener will enter hours on their personal, county webpage. There will be a dropdown for STATE ADVANCED TRAINING HOURS, exactly like sanctioned projects and education hours.

2. Awards will be presented each year at the State Master Gardener Conference.
 3. Advanced training can begin as soon as new members complete their required 40 hours of volunteer work on sanctioned projects their first year.
 4. In order to move to a higher level, a fee of \$25 will be paid by the Master Gardener to County 76. Present members enrolled into advanced training will be grandfathered in until they reach the next advanced level. The \$5 fee formerly paid to County 76 by each attendee will no longer be charged. This fee previously was included in the total paid to attend each class.
 5. An eight-hour credit will be given to each previously completed advanced training course.
 6. There will be an expanded menu of choices to acquire advanced training hours. These include, but are not limited to, Zoom, webinars, videos, and classes. These classes will be approved in advance by the Master Gardener State Coordinator and members of the Advanced Training Committee.
 7. Criteria for the classes determined by the Advanced Training Committee are horticultural subjects based in scientific research, subjects not covered in the basic Master Gardener training, and speakers who have experience or extensive knowledge in the subject.
 8. Each level will require 30 hours of advanced training classes with Level 3, Level 4, and Level 5 having an additional requirement involving research and/or community outreach.
 9. Class lengths can vary depending on the location, subject, cost, and the pleasure of the planners. Hopefully, shorter days will help accommodate travel and increase attendance.
 10. Mentors from AT will be assigned to help in the planning of classes.
-

August Photo of the Month

"Flowering Perennials"



FIRST PLACE
"Before the Storm" by Delcina Cunico



SECOND PLACE
"Delicate Beauty" by Kathryn Birkhead



THIRD PLACE
"Give Peas a Chance" by Sarah Teague

Woo Hoo! You All Are Getting It Done!



Photo by [Jonathan Sebastiao](#) on [Unsplash](#)

A growing number of trainees have 40 or more volunteer hours and others are SO close. Remember to record your work on non-sanctioned projects as well, since up to half of your required hours can be in work you've done on other projects.

The following trainees have recorded 40 hours or more in 2023: Carole Ball, Patricia Brown, Robert Callier, Matt Cooper, Susan Donnangelo, Jess Friedel, Roxanne Gallup, Carrie Gamble, Gari James, Stacy Lake, Bob Pate, Sally Schoen, Jennifer Stewart, and Laura Underwood.

Congratulations, and THANK YOU! You make our world a more beautiful and welcoming place.

Natives Naturally

TALYA TATE BOERNER



Northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*).

Maya Angelou said, " Do the best you can until you know better. Then, when you know better, do better." I try to apply these wise words to all areas of my life, *including gardening*. Now that I understand the ecological benefits of native plants, I strive to make better choices about the plants I grow. After all, I live on a regular-sized city lot in Fayetteville, and every square foot of my garden area matters.

One of my gardening goals is to maximize my precious real estate by growing plants that benefit nature and provide interest during all four seasons.

The northern spicebush (*Lindera benzoin*) checks all the boxes for me.

Northern spicebush provides food for various woodland creatures, its medicinal uses are plentiful, and it provides year-round interest in my native pollinator garden. It might be one of the most interesting native plants I've come to know.

Ten Truths about the Northern Spicebush

1. This shrub is one of the first bloomers in spring, making it important for early pollinators.
2. Spicebush is dioecious, meaning male and female flowers develop on separate plants. Its yellow flowers appear in clusters along the plant's naked stems in March–April.
3. The shrub's elliptical leaves, arranged alternatively on branches, release a pleasant, spicy aroma when crushed.
4. The spicebush forms bright red, oval, berry-like drupes; each drupe is filled with one large seed that provides high-energy food for migrating birds, chipmunks, squirrels, raccoons, and opossums.
5. During the Revolutionary War, the fruit of the spicebush was used as a substitute for allspice.
6. Spicebush is the host plant for the spicebush swallowtail butterfly and promethea

silkmoth.

7. Nicknames for the northern spicebush include common spicebush, wild allspice, feverbush, wild spice, Appalachian spice, Forsythia of the forest, and spicewood.
8. In autumn, the leaves of the spicebush shrub turn bright yellow.
9. Spicebush can be propagated via seed, cuttings, or sprouts.
10. All parts of the spicebush contain essential oils—fresh twigs can be used to tenderize the meat of gamebirds; berry oil can be used for the treatment of arthritis; a poultice of bark, leaves, and berries has been known to treat skin irritations; and spicebush tea is not only tasty, but it also helps relieve a cough.

As you add plants to your pollinator garden, keep the northern spicebush on your short list of well-behaved natives. This beautiful understory shrub has been known to live up to twenty years in the wild. It thrives in the shade, tolerates partial sun, and has few pests.

Meet the Trainees

OLIVIA HARRINGTON and LYNETTE TERRELL

Roxanne Gallup

Growing up, our yard in southern California was a child's best playground. Blissful days were spent running barefoot outside, chasing butterflies, and consuming fresh fruit from the garden. To this day, I have found nothing so sweet as sitting under a tree on a hot summer day eating a warm peach plucked from a low branch. My dad, a botany professor, grew fruits and vegetables, and always had something weird and wonderful growing in the garden. My mom grew flowers: they are "food for the soul."



Later, after a long path of intriguing majors in college, I found my passion in teaching, and met my husband. Together, we have enjoyed living, gardening, and learning in California, Montana, North Carolina, Florida, and now Arkansas.

The garden is where I go to be present in the moment. No matter how I am feeling, digging in the dirt makes me feel better. I have always wanted to participate in a Master Gardener program and feel blessed to have the opportunity to be a part of one now. I learn something new every day and enjoy the camaraderie and laughter I share with my fellow volunteers.

Danna Grear

I have been interested in gardening for my entire life. My grandma's yard was full of flowers—peonies, roses, and irises, to name a few. She and my grandpa had a bountiful vegetable garden, growing green beans, sweet corn, tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers. My mom and I spent many summer hours in my grandma's kitchen, snapping and stringing green beans for canning and blanching corn for the freezer. My mother continued these traditions in her garden and as she aged, I tried



to carry on these same traditions in a garden of my own. My children helped with the process and in later years, when my mother-in-law moved in with us, she was tickled to help, having never had the experience of growing her own food. She snapped green beans and loved to pick and eat the cherry tomatoes growing in a container right outside her door.

I grew up in Southwest Missouri and attended college, medical school, and my radiology residency in Texas. Upon completion of my training in 1989, my husband and I moved to Northwest Arkansas to start our medical careers. Along with two children, my career kept me quite busy. Over the years I continued to find joy working in the vegetable garden and in our yard, nurturing an assortment of perennials. Time spent in my yard and working in the soil provided a needed escape from my busy career. Arranging cut flowers from our yard and sharing them with friends and neighbors always made me happy!

With time, I became acquainted with the Master Gardeners program and knew that it was something that I wanted to pursue when I had more free time. Following my retirement in late 2022, one of the first things I did was apply for the 2023 WCMG training program. I was very excited to be selected.

The past few weeks have reinforced my decision. I am learning the science of gardening and absorbing the experience of countless individuals, and I enjoy sharing my love of gardening with all of you. I look forward to learning more about native plants, composting and pollinators.

Obviously, I am personally benefiting from this program, and in turn I hope that I will be able to mentor other budding gardeners. I believe my involvement with the Master Gardeners program will provide me with the opportunity to contribute to the health and visual beauty of our community.

Gari James

My early memories of gardening are those of my dad's vegetable gardens. We moved every three or four years and the first thing he'd do in a new place was till space for a garden. I remember the joys: picking and eating the ripe tomatoes and strawberries, and the woes: weeding, watering, and in one place, picking bag worms off the evergreen shrubs.



My grandparents also gardened. They lived in Meridian, Mississippi, and we only visited every other summer, but the memories of cobbler made from freshly picked peaches still makes my mouth water.

As a young adult I tried gardening several times, but raising four kids, working full time, and having few skills kept each garden from being fruitful. One of my sons became a Master Gardener a few years ago in southeast Arkansas and encouraged me to look into it. Now that my children are grown and I'm retired, I have more free time and I'm enjoying the many gardens I am visiting.

What has impressed me most is not the effect I have on the gardens but the effect the gardens

have on me. As a retired teacher, I love to learn, and I have yet to work in a garden and not learn something new about the plants. And I have never found a group of people who are so enjoyable and knowledgeable to work with.

Just Us

A compendium of news curated by JUDY SMITH

COUNTY FAIR WCMGS FEATURED ON OZARKS AT LARGE

KUAF's "Ozarks at Large" news producer Matthew Moore paid a visit to Doris Cassidy and crew as they worked at the Washington County Fair sanctioned project recently. It's a great interview! [Give it a listen here](#).

WHAT COUNTS AS WORK ON NON-SANCTIONED PROJECTS?

Submitted by Kathryn Birkhead

Unsanctioned volunteer work can include these activities and others like them:

- Volunteer gardening work at a church or other public space;
- Giving garden-related presentations to a garden club or youth program, such as Scouts;
- Helping with a school garden;
- Giving advice or creating garden plans for a nonprofit that is not a sanctioned project.
-

There are lots of possibilities for making our world a prettier, healthier, more productive place beyond the sanctioned projects, so get out there and spread your knowledge! And don't forget to record your hours!

iPHONE TIP FOR PLANT LOVERS

Submitted by Nancy Sloan

Here is a tip I learned from a total stranger when two other MGs and I stopped to admire a flower in a planter. This tip is for iPhones and does not require one of the plant identification apps. (Mine is an iPhone 11 and I don't know how many models have this feature, but I assume anything newer will have it.)

1. Take a picture of the flower.
2. Tap on the picture to open it.
3. Select the "i" icon for information.
4. Select "Look up plant."

It gives you the plant name, both common and Latin, plus other information. All the MGs I've shown this to have been so excited to learn about it, as was I!

Gardening and Community Events

PAM BUTLER

SEPTEMBER 9, 11:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m. . TOUR OF AUDUBON’S NATIVE SEED FARM. With Jennifer Ogle, collections manager at the UA Herbarium. Hosted by Wild Ones Ozark Chapter, Fayetteville. Free. No registration. [More information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 12, 12:00–1:00 p.m. GROW YOUR OWN GROCERIES: GARLIC. Zoom program with UADA extension agents. Free. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 16 and 30, 9:00–11:00 a.m. BEGINNER MUSHROOM IDENTIFICATION+NATURE WALK. Osher Lifelong Learner Institute (OLLI). Instructor Myles Hartman. Drake Field, Fayetteville. \$45 members/\$60 non-members. Call 479-575-4545 to register.

SEPTEMBER 16, 12:00–4:00 p.m. MONARCH FLIGHT FESTIVAL . Walter Turnbow Park, Springdale. Free. No registration. [More information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 17, 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. BOTANICAL SKETCHERS OF THE OZARKS . Fun fact: this sketching group was founded by WCMGs Karla Caraway and Caite Ramos! Botanical Garden of the Ozarks (BGO). Free for members/\$5 non-members. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 17, 1:00–4:00 p.m. BUILD A SCARECROW. White River Nursery, Fayetteville. \$75. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 18, 12:00–1:00 p.m. MASTER GARDENER MONDAY. Zoom. Gardening presentation plus MG event updates with Randy Forst, UADA consumer horticulture/Master Gardener coordinator. Free. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 21, 6:00–8:00 p.m. LANDOWNER RESOURCES FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT ASSISTANCE. Janet Huckabee Arkansas River Nature Center, Fort Smith. Free. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 22. ADVANCED MG CLASS. Info coming soon.

SEPTEMBER 23, 10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. BUILD A SCARECROW. White River Nursery, Fayetteville. \$75. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 28, 5:30– 7:30 p.m. FOREST THERAPY WALK. BGO. \$20 members/\$30 non-members. [Registration information.](#)

SEPTEMBER 28–29, 7:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m. and SEPTEMBER 30, 7:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. DR. COMPTON NATIVE TREE AND PLANT SALE. Compton Gardens, Bentonville. [More information.](#)

Contact Information

The *Garden Thyme* email address is wcmgnewsletter@gmail.com. Please use this address for submissions and for questions and comments specific to the

newsletter. For other needs, please contact the appropriate officer or chairperson listed in your WCMG Member Resource Guide.

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Banner photo of thyme courtesy [Lucy Meskill/Flickr.com](#).



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WCMG Facebook Group (private)



WCMG website



Washington County Extension Service website

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