

Gillespie County

Horticulture Newsletter
Summer 2023



An Ode to Buffalograss

When I first started out as a county horticulture extension agent, I shadowed a more experienced agent for a month. One of the things he said then that struck me, and I can't remember the exact phrasing, but the gist was this "The county extension agent's lawn and landscape is usually one of the worst in town". As an innocent and naïve young agent who at the time rented an apartment and did not have a lawn, I considered the sentiment horrifying and inexcusable.



The county horticulture extension agent's lawn. Not perfect, but not bad either.

Fast forward to today. My lawn isn't the best but it's not the worst either, and I think it's because I choose the lowest maintenance turf, buffalograss.

I don't like to recommend buffalograss to most homeowners because of the need for a long weed-free establishment period and because everyone is used to needing to do something to their grass (water it, fertilize it, put pre-emergent on it). For busy people like me that have full sun, and don't mind a little work upfront or a weed every now and then, it's a good choice.

If you are curious about buffalograss, check out the trial on page two.

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2023 Turf Trial Update

Lack of water for irrigation purposes is a problem with strict watering regulations and will likely become worse in the future. Choosing a turfgrass now that can handle extended periods between waterings, as well as be less disease and insect pesticide susceptible, could save you money. But replacing a lawn with sod is expensive. Seed or plugs could be cheaper, but don't they take a long time to establish?

Together with three hardworking Master Gardeners, I planted a seed and plug turf trial at the Gillespie County Extension Office on June 1st. We planted two buffalograss varieties ("Sundancer" & "UC Verde"), one mix of blue grama and buffalograss ("Timeless 2 Way"), one supposed drought tolerant st. augustine turfgrass variety "Citrablue" and one bermudagrass variety "Sahara".

"Sundancer", "UC Verde" and "Citrablue" were planted as plugs.

"Sahara", "Timeless 2 Way" and additional "Sundancer" were planted as seed. Seed was planted at the rate of 4 lbs. per 1000 square foot, scaled down to a five by five foot plot and 2 lbs. per 1000 square foot for the bermudagrass. All seeds were pre-moistened and kept in plastic bags two days ahead of planting. This was to speed germination. Plugs were spaced 14 inches apart.

Each variety has three plots, which were randomized and color coded. Germination of the "Timeless 2 Way" mix was observed by 6/5/2023.

When you plant a lawn, you want fast coverage to reduce weed invasions. The speed at which plugs of grass and grass seed establish will be looked at initially with this trial. Later intent with this trial is to measure survival, so watering will be reduced to natural rainfall or once a month. Anyone is welcome to come by and see the plots. Updates will be posted on the Gillespie County AgriLife Facebook page too (<https://www.facebook.com/gillespietext/>).



Prepping the plots for planting.

Lavender Trial Update

While none of the lavenders that died following the freeze in December have resprouted from the roots, neither have the ones that survived fully died yet. Half of the "Anouk" and "Anouk Supreme" still appear poor but improving. "Sensational" and "Phenomenal" varieties are even blooming, albeit not heavy. It will be interesting to see how more rainfall affects these varieties this year.



"Phenomenal" lavender really does look phenomenal!

Variety	Type	Percent Alive
Provence	Lavandin	83.3
Dilly Dilly	Lavandin	83.3
Sensational	Lavandin	83.3
New Madrid Purple	Spanish	0
Anouk Deep Rose	Spanish	0
Phenomenal	Lavandin	100
Dentata French	French	0
Anouk Supreme	Spanish	100
Primavera (Anouk Deluxe 1225)	Spanish	0
Imperial	French	0
Anouk	Spanish	66.7
Papillon Rose	Spanish	0
New Madrid Rose	Spanish	0

Entering Vegetables in the Gillespie County Fair

The Gillespie County Fair Agricultural Show is coming up August 24th, which gives you a chance to show off your hard work!

Last year's best exhibit vegetable went to Adam Jung, who brought in 6 red slicer sized tomatoes. It was well deserved with the heat and drought last year. This year expect the competition to be greater, though it will depend on what the

weather does.

- Vegetables like okra, jalapenos and cherry tomatoes that can withstand the heat will likely have higher entries than others. Despite last year's weather, there were still eight cherry tomato entries.
- Our fair catalogue allows entries of some cool season vegetables. Carrots and beets can survive until August with afternoon shade and frequent watering. For cool season crops that store, like cauliflower or cabbage, you can wrap these in a paper towel, put in a plastic bag and store in the back of your fridge. Remove mold and discolored leaves before entering.
- Last year was a low year, so most categories had less than three entries. Those that did not included: green striped watermelons, sunflowers, eggs, red potatoes, serrano peppers, jalapenos, dried peppers, okra, bell peppers, longer sweet peppers, eggplant and beets. There were two cabbage entries but no cauliflower entries.
- Please Please Please! Make sure you have the correct number of vegetables for an entry. An entry of eleven jalapenos, when they ask for twelve, would be rejected because it's easier getting eleven perfect jalapenos than twelve perfect jalapenos.
- Enter your vegetables in the correct category.
- Big vegetables (not overripe) helps, but entries consisting of multiple vegetables that are the same size without any defects gains more favor from the judges.
- Being the only vegetable in it's category will not guarantee winning first place. It's got to be worthy.
- Unusual varieties usually do not fare very well. I know how hard it is to grow heirloom tomatoes, and to get six of them at one time, in August. Unfortunately they are up against perfect hybrids, which typically prevents them from winning.
- The best time to enter vegetables is from 1:00-2:30 pm. The busiest time is from 5:00-6:00 pm.



For all the categories and rules, please see the 2023 fair catalogue, which will be in the newspaper later this summer or can be viewed online at <https://gillespiefair.com/gillespie-county-fair>. You can also call the fair office at 830-997-2359 or email them at info@gillespiefair.com for more information.

Basic Rules for the Gillespie County Agricultural Show

- Must be grown between September 1, 2022 and August 24, 2023.
- You must be the grower of your entry.
- The fair isn't responsible for accident or loss of your entry. (For example, sunflower heads are usually missing seeds by Sunday.)
- Premiums and items must be picked up after the completion of the fair on Sunday August 27th, 2023 and will be held for a short time period. Premiums will be held for 60 days afterwards.
- Adult division is open to all ages, Junior division to kids only. You cannot enter one entry in both divisions.
- Items will be received between 11:00 am and 6:00 PM on Thursday, August 24th, 2023.
- Entries must be from Gillespie County or adjoining counties.
- No greasing, waxing or sanding of any items.



**\$15
Each**

**\$25
for the
Series**

JULY 19TH PEACHES

12:00-1:00 PM

**GILLESPIE COUNTY EXTENSION OFFICE
38 BUSINESS COURT**

Register online by scanning the QR Code
or in person with cash or check at the Gillespie County Extension Office
checks should be made payable to Gillespie ANR
Call (830) 997-3452 for more information

The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.

**TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION**

Register Online

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grow-it-cook-it-tickets-486898595807>

**TEXAS A&M
AGRI LIFE
EXTENSION**

2023 Upcoming Fruit Programs

Kendall County Backyard Fruit Production Program Series

The Kendall County AgriLife Extension Office is pleased to announce their Backyard Fruit Program Series. Each program will begin at 10:30 am and finish between 11:30-12:00 pm. Cost is ten dollars per program. Programs are located at the Kendall County EMS Station meeting room, located at 1175 North Main Street in Boerne, Texas. Call the Kendall County Extension Office at 830-331-8242 to pre-register. Payment is due at the door. No pesticide applicator CEUS will be given.

Speakers include Beth McMahon, Gillespie County Horticulture Extension Agent, Steven Zoeller, Kendall County Agriculture Agent and Brianna Hoge, Extension Viticulture Specialist, Hill Country. Programs are as follows:

June 14th, 2023. *Fruit Tree Selection*

August 9th, 2023. *Growing Backyard Grapes*

September 13th, 2023. *Growing Berries in the Hill Country*

November 8th, 2023. *Planting Fruit Trees*



Texas State Fruit Conference



This year the Texas Fruit Conference will be held at the Gillespie County Extension Office on October 18th – 20th. Program topics include “Intro to Fruit Growing Workshop”, tour of commercial Fredericksburg fruit producers, educational seminars themed around “Rethinking Texas’s Fruit Opportunities and Challenges”, “Taste of Texas” Fruit Reception Thursday evening

and a hands-on intensive training regarding orchard & vineyard irrigation. Pick and choose what you want to attend, a la carte registration available. Registration is coming soon! Pesticide applicator CEUS will likely be available.



Strange Tales of Horticulture

Get Green Grass NOW!

By Painting It.....

It's that one yard on the block that has the greenest lawn. It doesn't matter if it's the winter or under stage four watering restrictions, it's still a healthy dark green. One day you see something strange. Your neighbor is out there, spraying the yard and it gets instantly greener after he has gone by. Turns out, he has been using a turf colorant the entire time to color his dormant grass.

Turf colorants include paints, dyes, colorants and pigments. These vary in thickness and how long they last. Pigmented products are applied on turfgrass during the growing season and painted products on winter dormant turfgrass. They are used whenever the grass is brown and there is a high desirability for it to look nice. Before you use one, there are important questions to consider.



Picture by Miller & Pinnex,
<https://content.ces.ncsu.edu/guide-to-using-turf-colorants>

1. Will it kill my lawn?

While it is unknown how it will affect st. Augustine grass, it has been used on bermudagrass and buffalograss to add color during winter dormancy. No phytotoxicity was found on buffalograss during spring green up (Shearman 2005 turf.unl.edu/Presentations/2021/Colorants-2005.pdf)

In that experiment it did cause the buffalograss to green up quicker in the spring, because the temperature was warmer. Having a warmer temperature around the grass would be undesirable in the summer.

2. How long will it last?

It strongly depends on the product. Some can last two months or longer. In that experiment by Shearman on buffalograss, it appears that quality was highest for about a month before it began to decrease. As the grass regrows and the lawn gets mowed, the color will be removed. If there is heavy traffic on the area, like on a sports field, and the grass is not regrowing, the color will not last if what holds it erodes away.

3. Does it stain clothing?

In an 2017 experiment done Hoyle and McFadden on bermudagrass, they found that most turf colorants would not, but one called "Envy" did. You can read more and see a picture on <https://blogs.k-state.edu/turf/tag/colorants/>

4. Can I hire someone to do this for me?

At this time in Gillespie County you will need to apply it yourself, though you possibly could give the chemical to a willing lawn care company for them to apply. There are companies that do this in San Antonio.



Picture by <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vB-VKEjjM8E>

Chinch Bugs Killing Lawns



Can you spot the chinch bug?

This spring I noticed something unusual. Chinch bugs. Already! Chinch bugs are supposed to be a late summer problem, but no one told them that.

For the lawns that have them already, I suspect the damage started late last year, probably in the hottest part of the yard, maybe near a sidewalk or road. Irregular spots of dead grass would have appeared first, with some of the grass looking dried out, as if drought stressed. These irregular dead spots would have united to form large dead areas, leaving behind a random tuff of green grass here and there.

Chinch bugs are very small. They

like to scurry up and down the leaf blades, and are most active in the afternoons. They are least likely to be in the dead parts of your yard, because there is nothing more for them to eat there.

To check for them go to the green areas on the border of the dead, and take a coffee can with the bottom cut out. Keep filling this up with water until it drains slowly, adding soapy water for the final fill. If chinch bugs are present, they should float to the top. These bugs are tiny though. It may take a magnifying glass to see them. If your eyes are good, you may be able to see them running up and down leaf blades if you sit in the green/dead transition zone of your grass and be still for a couple of minutes, without soapy water use .



Adult chinch bugs on a leaf.

Young chinch bugs are oval with a pill-like shape, reddish tan with a white band around their middle. Mature chinch bugs are black with white wings that have a black dot on either side.



A lawn killed by chinch bugs.

So what do you do if you have chinch bugs? You can use a pesticide with acephate, bifenthrin, permethrin or carbaryl in it.

These are commonly labeled as grub killers. Check the label to make sure it is labeled for your lawn and for chinch bugs. Only apply if you find chinch bugs. To help prevent chinch bugs, reduce thatch (if it's thicker than 1 inch layer), apply the appropriate amount of fertilizer, and water when the grass just starts to shrivel.

If your lawn died due to chinch bug damage or drought stress, do not replant with st. augustine carpetgrass. We don't have the water for it. Landscape with perennials or groundcovers shady areas underneath trees and plant bermudagrass turf in sunny areas. You can even try buffalograss. Check out our turf trial for options.

HILL COUNTRY HOMESTEADING

PLAN, GROW, HARVEST, ENJOY

Tips Specific to the Texas Hill Country

Raising Bees | Canning | Chickens | Permaculture

Vegetable Gardening | Small Acreage Animal Production

Registration Deadline: August 1st

\$45 / person, includes meal



Friday, August 4

**Gillespie County
Extension Office,**

**38 Business Court
Fredericksburg, TX 78624**

**Register online by scanning
the QR Code or in person at
the Gillespie County Extension
Office or
by calling
(830) 997-3452.**



Refunds will be given up until August 1st

Payment must be received for registration to be considered complete.

**TEXAS A&M
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The members of Texas A&M AgriLife will provide equal opportunities in programs and activities, education, and employment to all persons regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation or gender identity and will strive to achieve full and equal employment opportunity throughout Texas A&M AgriLife. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

Save the Dates

Gillespie County

Kolaches & Conservation

June 15th, 2023. 8:30 AM Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

An informal round table discussion for local landowners to present and discuss their conservation issues with one another and a panel of local conservation professionals. We will talk about anything natural resources related. Free. Kolaches and coffee included. No pre-registration required.



May want to consider destocking...

Native Bees & Bee Habitat Workshop

June 16th, 2023. 10:00 AM- 12:00 PM. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

Attendees will learn about our native bees, their preferred habitat, and their importance as pollinators in a healthy ecosystem. Participants will also gain information on how to promote healthy native bee populations in their own backyard and even build their own bee house. The workshop is open to all ages but geared toward adults and children 12 years of age or older. Presented by Friends of the Fredericksburg Nature Center and Molly Keck of AgriLife Extension. Approved for two hours of Texas Master Naturalist credit. Please contact the Gillespie County Extension Office at 830-997-3452 for more information. Free. You can register by contacting Gracie Waggener at gwaggener@flow-apps.com.

AgriLife Extension Teacher Workshop

June 27th, 2023. 10:00 AM. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

See what 4-H and your local extension office has to offer your classroom! Booths will be set-up so you can peruse the materials and talk to extension personnel. Brunch with homemade cinnamon rolls and other treats will be served.

Pre-registration is required. Contact Fiona at the Gillespie County Extension office at 830-997-3452 to let us know you are coming.

Grow It Cook It Peaches

July 19th, 2023. 12:00-1:00 PM. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

Learn how to grow and cook peaches. Recipe demonstrations will be performed at the program. This is the final program in a three program series, but first timers are welcome. Cost is \$15. Register by calling or coming by the Gillespie County extension office or online at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/grow-it-cook-it-tickets-486898595807>. There is an additional credit card fee to register online.



Grow BIG peaches.

Save the Dates

Gillespie County

Hill Country Homesteading

August 4th, 2023. 9:00 AM -4:00 PM. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

If you ever have been interested in raising your own food and becoming more self sustainable, join us for our homesteading program. Topics to be discussed include bees, canning, vegetable production, chickens, small acreage livestock, permaculture and more. Contact the Gillespie County to register with cash or check, or register online with card at <https://gillespie-county-horticulture.ticketleap.com/hill-country-homesteading/>. Cost is \$45 dollars and includes lunch. Must pre-register and pay by August 1st at 5 pm to attend.



Gillespie County Fair

August 24th-27th. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

Vegetable show, horse races, goat roping, 42 dominoes tournament, carnival, exhibits, concerts and more! Free on Thursday. See the website for more details. <https://gillespiefair.com/gillespie-county-fair>

Junior Master Gardeners Kids Gardening Program

September 19th -November 14th, 2023. Tuesdays from 4:15-5:15 PM. Gillespie County Extension Office, 38 Business Court, Fredericksburg.

Gardening program for kids in 3rd – 6th grade or home-school age equivalent. The theme this year will be bugs. Kids will learn about bugs and grow a vegetable garden. Class is limited to ten kids. It will meet weekly on Tuesdays, except on Halloween . Kids will also get the opportunity to compete in the 4-H Entomology contest if desired. Cost is to be determined, but will be between \$10-\$25. Contact Beth McMahon at the Gillespie County Extension Office at 830-997-3452 for more information.



Tell the Government You Want Better Internet

AgriLife Extension has asked us to put out the word about a survey from the Texas Broadband Development Office which is looking at rural broadband. If you want government resources to be allocated to your area to improve your local internet access, take the survey. Take the survey at home because at the end there is a speed test. One survey should be completed per household. Contact plan4broadband@cpa.texas.gov for more details. Find the survey link here: <https://qrco.de/txpublicsurvey>

Save the Dates

Counties Near Gillespie County

Native Plant Landscaping

June 10th, 2023. 10:30 am. Butt-Holdsworth Memorial Library, 505 Water St, Kerrville, TX.

The Kerrville library is hosting a free program in partnership with the Native Plant society on landscaping at home with native plants. No pre-registration required.

Selecting Home Fruit Trees

June 14th, 2023. 10:30 AM-11:45(12:00) PM. 1175 N. Main St, Boerne

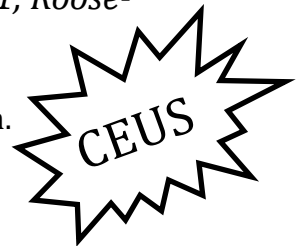
Learn how to select fruit trees for the Kendall County area. Cost is ten dollars. Show up at the door or call to pre-register 830-331-8242. Payment is due at the door.



Wildlife and Livestock Disease Meeting

June 14th, 2023. 9:00 AM. Simon Brothers Café Patio, 3861 W State Loop 291, Roosevelt, TX.

If you are interested in learning about wildlife and livestock diseases, then this program on June 14th at 9 am is for you. Featuring Dr. Jacques with Merck Animal Health. This program will offer a free lunch and it'll provide 2 CEU's (1 IPM and 1 general). Please RSVP to the Kimble County office at (325) 446-2620 or call Lyssy & Eckel in Roosevelt by June 12th.



Community Conversation: Water in Kerr County

June 15th, 2023. 4:30-6:30 PM. Riverside Nature Center, 150 Francisco Lemos St., Kerrville, Texas.

The Guadalupe River and the aquifers that sustain it are the heart of Kerr County. In the last year, Kerr County saw drought threaten the health of these resources. At the same time, growth in the county means more people will rely on those waters than ever before. Please join the Riverside Nature Center, Guadalupe Riverkeeper, and Hill Country Alliance for a community gathering to

learn about issues facing Kerr County waters and discuss how we can shape their future. Free. RSVP here: <https://riversidenaturecenter.org/2023/06/02/water-in-kerr-county-2/>



Growing Grapes at Home

August 9th, 2023. 10:30 AM-11:45(12) PM. 1175 N. Main St, Boerne

Grow grapes at home for the Kendall County area. Cost is ten dollars. Show up at the door or call the Kendall County AgriLife Extension office to pre-register 830-331-8242. Payment is due at the door.

Save the Dates

Counties Near Gillespie County

Growing Berries at Home

September 13th, 2023. 10:30 AM-11:45(12:00) PM. 1175 N. Main St, Boerne

Program will cover strawberries, blackberries, raspberries, blueberries and little known berries. Cost is ten dollars. Show up at the door or call the Kendall County AgriLife Extension office to pre-register 830-331-8242. Payment is due at the door.

Vine to Wine Viticulture Program

September 2023. Mason, Texas.

Interested in growing wine grapes? Mason County AgriLife Extension will be holding a Vine to Wine program in September. Contact the Mason County AgriLife Extension Office at (325) 347-6459 for more information.

Statewide & Webinars

Fish Management Webinar

June 20th, 2023. 6:00 PM – 7:00(7:30) PM. Webinar.

The program will cover topics such as pond food chains, fertilization programs, fish feeds and feeding techniques, fish population sampling, common issues that can affect fish populations and strategies for growing high volumes of fish, trophy fish or individual species management. Q&A session at end. Cost is \$35 dollars. Hosted by Dr. Todd Sink. Register online at <https://tamu.estore.flywire.com/products/fish-management-strategies-june-2023-87391>.

Southern Family Farmers & Food Systems Conference

August 7th-8th, 2023. Texas State University Campus, San Marcos.

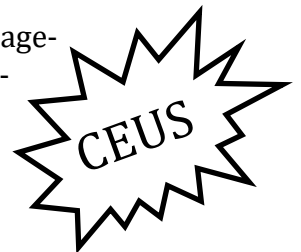
Pre-conference workshops available on August 5th & 6th. Register online. Full conference fee is \$295 (\$245 early registration). Monday and Tuesday day session options available for \$100. Topics include grant writing, USDA programs for producers, crop planning strategies, urban farming and community building, wholesale journey notes from small and mid sized farmers, regenerative grazing, pastured poultry, small scale hydroponics and more. Keynote speaker is Gary Nabhan. Register online at <https://secure.everyaction.com/UCkfyBHRKk6tAfsjmb1kfw2>.

White-tailed Deer Management Symposium

August 25th, 2023. 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM. La Vernia Chamber of Commerce, 12201 U.S. Hwy 87 W, La Vernia, TX 78121

Topics include herd dynamics, deer nutrition and supplemental feeding, habitat management and food plots, integrating deer and livestock, antler aging, chronic wasting disease, feral hog management and wildlife management property tax valuation. Two pesticide applicator CEUS. Program begins at 8:30 am. Payment will be accepted in advance or at door. Contact Kennedy Green at 210-631-0400 for questions.

Cost is \$50. Vendors present. Lunch included. Register at https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8q6pf7gSpNe4SuW



Lawn & Landscape Calendar

June

- Water lawn as needed. Watch for chinch bugs in St. Augustine turfgrass.
- Plant heat tolerant annual bedding plants.
- Move houseplants outdoors into appropriate light amounts.
- Divide and dig any spring bulbs.
- Plant cowpeas (southern peas) and sweet potatoes in garden.
- Start tomato transplants for fall tomatoes.

July

- Plant heat tolerant annual plants.
- Prune back chrysanthemums to allow for a shorter, more compact plant.
- Remove spent flower stalks from perennial salvias.
- Fertilize roses every 4-6 weeks.
- If practical, trim (not lop) off spent blooms on crape myrtles. This may allow for reflowering.
- Mow lawn higher to allow for cooler soil surface.

August

- Fall bulbs are usually lower priced this month. Buy early to get what you want. For bulbs like tulips and hyacinths request early shipment so you can pre-chill the bulbs to get them to grow.
- Replant squash and tomatoes for fall garden.
- Plant brussels sprouts for fall production.
- Mow lawn higher to allow for cooler soil surface.

Extension Office Closures

We will be closed on July 4th, August 25th, & September 4th.

Name That Plant!



What is the name of this plant? First person to respond with the correct answer will get their names featured in next quarter's newsletter.

Last Newsletter's Plant



Last quarter's plant was Fern-leaf Asparagus, correctly identified by David Naumann.

Picture policy-Unless specifically cited, all pictures were taken by the author of this newsletter. This newsletter is a publication that comes out seasonally. If you would like to stop receiving this newsletter, please contact me at elizabeth.mcmahon@ag.tamu.edu.

*For other questions, comments, and concerns, please contact us at:
Gillespie County Extension office
38 Business Court
Fredericksburg, TX 78624
830-997-3452*

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