

The Blooming Bell



January 2021



Christmas Cactus

Photo courtesy of
Tom Kowalak, Austin, TX



Karen Colwick's bumper crop
of **Satsuma Oranges** growing
in pot in her driveway.

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January 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 Happy New Year	2
3	4	5	6 Bean Day! Workday	7	8	9
10 Houseplant Appreciation Day	11	12	13 General Membership Business Meeting 10 AM Workday	14	15	16
17	18 MLK Jr. Day	19 Popcorn Day!	20 BCMGA Educational Session 9AM Workday	21	22	23
24	25	26	27 BCMGA Board Meeting 9AM Workday	28	29	30 National Seed Swap Day

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, please continue to practice social distancing, wear a mask, and as much as possible **STAY AT HOME!** We will see you all soon.

Remember to record volunteer service hours and education hours each month.



President's Corner

Glenn Melton



Happy New Year! I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays and stayed safe and well through it all. As everyone knows by now, the new Master Gardener Class will be held virtually. Orientation is scheduled for January 6th and the first official class will be held on January 13th. This is the first class to be presented virtually and I am confident all will go smoothly. Please join me in welcoming our new members when you have the opportunity.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind everyone that the educational and service hour requirements to maintain Master Gardener certification remain the same. That is, six hours of Education and twelve hours of Service annually. Some members ended 2020 with too few hours to retain certification. I urge everyone to start working on earning these hours now so as not to fall behind and find themselves unable to catch up. Keep in mind that there is always work to be done on the grounds at the Extension Office. Hours can also be earned by attending the online monthly General Membership meetings and educational sessions. Please pay close attention to announcements for educational and service hour opportunities. These announcements may be made on social media, via email, or posted in VMS on the monthly calendar.

If you are not already growing plants for the Spring Plant Sale, it is not too late to get started. Plenty of 4-inch pots are available but the 1-gallon size is in short supply. If you have any pots to donate, please drop them off at the Help Desk on Mondays or Wednesdays, and keep in mind they should be clean and free of any soil debris. Potting soil is still available at the Belton Feed Store free of charge. Just remember to show your Master Gardener badge. Please take this opportunity to support this especially important event and help make it a huge success. The plant sale will be held in Yettie Polk Park on March 20th during the Belton Market Days.

As of this writing, the COVID restrictions and guidelines remain unchanged:

- No face-to-face meetings/gatherings (this guideline was initially issued in early December and covered the period of Dec 9 thru 23 with the expectation of being extended through January and beyond).
- Help Desk staffing is reduced to one member per shift.
- No home or site visits until further notice.

I will send out an email announcing any updates to these guidelines as soon as I receive them. The annual Crops Conference and Grounds Conference scheduled in January at the Expo Center will be held virtually. No MG member participation available, and the Home & Garden Show scheduled for the end of February at the Expo Center is canceled.

I hope to see everyone at our first meeting of the new year on January 13th. Take care and thank you for all you do.

Glenn

Wayne's Page



Dr. Wayne Schirner

Thank goodness, 2020 is now behind us. Even though many of the issues that made 2020 challenging are still with us, we all need to work to make 2021 a better year for us not only as individuals, but as an association too. One of the challenges encountered by some members involved getting education hours to remain a certified Master Gardener. Even though members of the Bell County Master Gardener Association only need a total of 6 education hours annually, some members failed to obtain those hours. This article is intended to guide you to approved educational opportunities so you should have little difficulty getting education hours for 2021. The only thing you really need is a device (computer, tablet, or smart phone) that you can use to access the internet. Let's get started.

1. The item that should be at the top of your list is the monthly BCMGA virtual educational presentation. These are usually given on the 3rd Wednesday of every month, starting at 10:00. You need to download the app for Go-To-Meeting on your device. Once you have done that, look for the email that comes out a few days before each presentation, and simply click on the link in that message to access the presentation. These are usually 45-60 minutes in length, so you could fulfill the annual education requirement from these alone.
2. If you are on Facebook, there are numerous options to view educational presentations that range from a few minutes in length up to roughly 30 minutes. The BCMGA has a FB page with several short videos available to be viewed, and more in the works. The Aggie Horticulture FB page has several live presentations, including Mondays with Master Gardeners every Monday at 1:00. There are also presentations every Wednesday and Thursday at 1:00. These presentations are usually about 20-30 minutes in length. You just need to set up your device to remind you to go to their FB page a few minutes before the start of each presentation. They also record them and put the presentation on their FB page for viewing after the live event.
3. Aggie Horticulture also has a YouTube channel with lots of videos on a wide variety of horticultural topics. The BCMGA YouTube channel is in its early stages of development, but it too has several short videos available to view. Just go to YouTube and search for these channels. You can subscribe to them, which makes it easier to find them in the future.
4. The last opportunity that I want to share is from the Texas Master Gardener Association on their web site (txmg.org). Once that page opens, go to resources>members only>intern online training. At that point, you will need to enter the password (liveoak). There will be two options available. "Click here for all recordings" and "click here for a copy of the presentations." The first option is for the video presentations and the second option is the PowerPoint presentations. This is the information that was used for virtual training of new classes last fall. Each presentation is 3-4 hours long, and there are a total of approximately 35 hours of education. All certified Texas Master Gardeners may access this information and use it for their education hours. These presentations are not to be shared outside the Master Gardener community, which is why it is password protected.

There are probably other online or virtual resources for education, but I know that these are all approved for us to get education hours. Hopefully there will be no members in December who haven't met the education requirement to remain certified.

That's it for this month. Happy Gardening.

Wayne

FACILITIES

Karen Colwick and Paul Carter

Happy New Year from Karen and Paul 🎉🎉

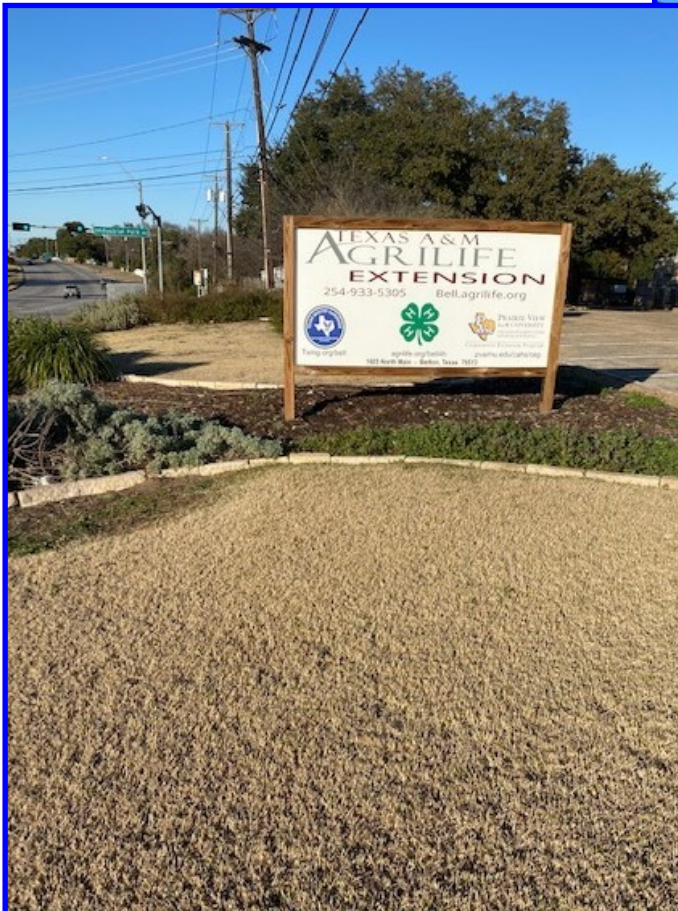
We need Master Gardeners to consider a 2021 Resolution--to put in a MINIMUM of 4 hours a month at the Extension building. Many of our members have not even been to a workday in more than a year.

We always need help keeping wintertime weeds out front under control, and a list of individual tasks are posted on the gate each week.

Members can come anytime, not just Workday Wednesdays. There is plenty of room to social distance. Get a start on the years' hours!

Gate code is 2019 and extra tools are on back of the wood shed. Just please return them when finished.

Karen and Paul



Garden Myths Partner Program

Myth #92: Potting soil should not be reused

Date: Dec 2020

The standard recommendation is to use new soil when repotting houseplants or planting containers in spring. This seems to make a lot of sense. Containerized plants grow in very little soil, and giving them fresh stuff should be good for them; besides, the nutrients in the old soil have been used up, and it may contain diseases.

What is potting soil? In most cases, there is very little soil in potting soil. The main ingredients are usually peat moss, decomposed wood or coir (ground coconut husk). These materials produce a very light mix with lots of air for plant roots, contain few nutrients and tend to be weed-free.

Potted plants need to be fertilized for several reasons. The amount of soil is small and does not provide many nutrients for a crowded root system. They also dry out quickly and are watered much more often than plants growing in the ground. This extra water flushes nutrients out of the pot. The amount of nutrients in new and old soil is about the same, so replacing it will not eliminate the need for fertilizer.

Extra watering can cause a problem in old soil if you have hard water. Hard water contains a lot of calcium and magnesium, which will combine with fertilizer to turn into an insoluble material that can be seen as a white deposit on the outside of clay pots. This is very similar to the white coating you find in your kettle, which is calcium and magnesium left behind because of evaporation. Even if you can't see it in your container, it is forming over time.

Some plants, notably orchids, are very sensitive to these salt deposits. If the potting media contains too much, roots stop growing. This is one of the reasons that orchids should be repotted every two years and the old media should not be reused for orchids. Most plants are not this sensitive to salts.

Are diseases a problem? It is true that old potting soil can contain bacterial and fungal diseases. If your plant was unhealthy, these diseases can infect your new plant, but old soil from healthy plants is unlikely to transmit diseases to new plants. Replacing the soil with new uninfected soil really does not help. If the disease spores were in the old pot, they are floating around in the air and will quickly find your new soil. Healthy plants are able to fend off these types of infection.

There is also talk about soil getting old. What does this mean? In nature, soil has been around for millions of years. How old does it need to get before you need to replace it? The organic matter that makes up 99% of soilless potting soil will decompose over time. As this happens, the material is turned into nutrients and CO₂, and it contains more fine particles. There will be less of it over time, but the idea of it getting too old to grow plants has no basis.

In most cases, old potting soil can be reused for many years.

Written by Robert Pavlis, author of three books, , [Garden Myths](#) , [Soil Science for Gardeners](#) and [Building Natural Ponds](#).

Attribution:

The following attribution, without alteration, should be included when you use this article in your publication.

Written by Robert Pavlis, author of three books, , [Garden Myths](#) , [Soil Science for Gardeners](#) and [Building Natural Ponds](#).

Have a question for Robert – connect on his Facebook Group: Garden Fundamentals

MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2021

Our fourteen Interns in the 2021 Master Gardener class were asked to complete brief bios and submit a selfie. What follows are their pics and information to help us get to know them.

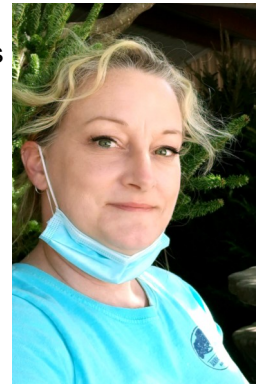
Edwin Ayala was born in Queens, NY, grew up in Patillas, PR, and after retiring from the US Army, lives in Copperas Cove. In the Army, Edwin was a Medic and an Operations Sergeant and as a Dept of the Army Civilian, worked as an Emergency Manager. He became interested in gardening as a teen and after retirement tried vegetable gardening without success. Edwin has a talent for teaching and his hobbies include gardening, woodworking, and reading the Bible.



Amy Casto, is from Central TX and lives in Copperas Cove. She has over 2 decades of graphic design & art experience & recently started working for a plant nursery.

Amy has always appreciated gardening & native plants and she loves art, getting her hands dirty, feeding hummingbirds, and native ornamental plants.

She loves being outdoors and her hobbies are camping, kayaking, hiking, and upcycling items to create art pieces.



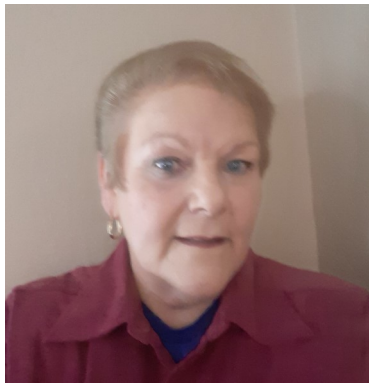
Lindsay Bounds, from Belton, is originally from Seattle, WA. She does Agricultural sales for John Deere with United Ag & Turf. Lindsay was introduced to gardening at the age of 5 yr. by her Grandpa and she recounts spending hours in the garden picking and planting fruits and vegetables.

She reads music and plays the piano and violin. Her hobbies include Aquascaping & Aquaculture, keeps saltwater & fresh-



water fish tanks, and loves to cook, bake, and is an avid reader.

Susan Burchfield, originally from Waco, lives in Temple. She is retired from Baylor Scott & White and was recently a Community Health Educator at the Central TX Area Agency on Aging. She became interested in gardening after retirement. Susan can install a child's car-seat safely and loves to ride horses. She loves being "Aunt Susie", reading, and collecting unique Nativity sets.



Ann Beauchamp, retired from the US Army, is originally from Trinidad and Tobago and now lives in Killeen.

She became interested in gardening recently as a hobby.

Ann has a talent for logistics and her hobby is travelling.

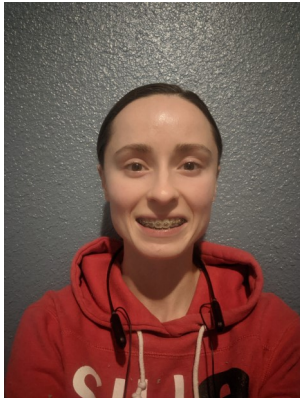


MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2021

Our fourteen Interns *continued...*

Tasha Clark, originally from Columbia, IL (near St. Louis, MO), lives in Killeen and is a massage therapist. She plans to someday teach massage therapy technique.

When she and her husband purchased their home, she realized that she would need to learn about gardening and landscaping. She really enjoys fresh veggies from a backyard garden.



Tasha's skill is in being a good home chef and she is very strong for her size. She enjoys walking her dog and caring for her house.

Julian Hancock, originally from England, lives in Belton and owns various businesses.

He first became interested in gardening while still in England. His talents lie in AutoCAD/Photoshop, design, and construction.

Julian's hobbies are walking, being creative, and gardening.



Marie Hill, originally from NJ, lives outside Belton near the lake. She is a retired teacher and was an educational diagnostician the past 16 years. She became interested in gardening almost 35 years ago as an activity she could do while keeping an eye on her children.

Marie's hobbies are reading, gardening, traveling, home improvements, hiking, yoga, crafts,

beginning photography, and cooking.



Devi Mikkilineni, lives in Temple and is originally from India. She spent most of her life in Iowa.

Devi is a part time staff psychiatrist at the VA. Gardening is her hobby and she has been growing tropical flowers & vegetables in her home garden for the past 30 years. She is a good listener and learner.



In addition to gardening, her hobbies are traveling, cooking, and reading.

Ann Munroe, lives in Temple and is originally from Enid, OK. She was an Occupational Therapist specializing in rehab and hand therapy. Ann does not remember a time that she was not interested in plants and she was influenced by her grandparents who were farmers/gardeners.

Ann is learning to play the bass guitar and enjoys hiking, gardening, and most recently, birding. Practicing & performing with her band brings her joy.



MASTER GARDENER CLASS OF 2021

Our fourteen Interns *continued...*

Darrell Reamer, lives in Harker Heights and is originally from Maryland. As for his career, he reports that he “is still undecided”.

He became interested in gardening with the onset of the pandemic.



Darrell’s skill is photography and his hobby is Zymurgy.

Diana Reamer, lives in Harker Heights and is originally from Philadelphia. She is a linguist, an RN, and currently an MBA student.

Her “mom grew beautiful roses and fat tomatoes when I was a child. I love seeing things grow & bloom, especially when I have a hand in the process.” She states that she can drive



a stick-shift, make awesome gingerbread cookies, and is a bit of a linguaphile.

Diana’s hobbies are travel (especially international), reading, and volunteer work.

Jamie Reid, from Temple, and now lives in Troy. She is a 14 year Navy veteran. Her interest in gardening began when she was little and her neighbors had a strawberry garden that she loved to help with. After the Navy, she wanted to start her own garden. Her skill is in hands on learning and she is “loyal & dedicated to growing & creating.”



Jamie’s hobbies are reading, crafting, gardening, and finding or discovering homesteading techniques.

Joanne Stuckey, lives in Salado and is originally from Madison, WI., and grew up in NM. She has a BA and MS from NMSU, Las Cruces, and a PhD from UT Austin. For the past 12 yrs., she has been on the Walden University College of Education online faculty as an instructor and doctoral student mentor. She is a retired TX Secondary and high school teacher and Instructional Specialist. As a child, her paternal grandmother had a huge garden on the family farm in WI and her maternal grandmother grew flowers, bulbs, pomegranates and more.

Her hobbies include gardening, rainwater harvesting, cacti succulent propagation, blackberries,

pomegranates, native TX plants such as Pride of Barbados and lantana, and loves to grow herbs and strawberries.



What's Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden

December 10, 2020

Photos and reporting by Randy Brown



“With new restrictions Kathy and I will harvest, water trees and deliver produce on Thursdays; perhaps until all the winter produce is completed.

We harvested 82 lbs of cabbage, beets, and kohlrabi and delivered to Friends and Families in Crisis.”

Kathleen Brown pictured with harvest of cabbage and turnips.

Turnips



What's Happening...

Killeen Municipal Court Community Garden

January 1 and 7, 2021

Photos and reporting by Randy Brown

82 lb harvest January 1

Broccoli	3.5 lb
Carrots	1 lb
Kohlrabi	9.5 lb
Red Cabbage	8 lb
Cauliflower	9 lb
Turnips	33 lb
Green Cabbage	18 lb



Randy holding a 4 pound turnip!



100 lb harvest January 7

Turnips	26 lb
Kohlrabi	18 lb
Red Cabbage	17 lb
Green Cabbage	38 lb
Broccoli	1 lb



Volunteer Crew put in four rows of onions.

What's Happening...

Educational Videos

[New YouTube shorts](#) is the link to the Master Gardener YouTube channel.

This channel is connected to the BCMGA gmail account and will include short videos as well as some longer educational videos which are being worked on.

These are considered educational videos and can be used towards your education hours. If you have any questions about how to log these hours to VMS, please contact Teri Marceau at terimmarceau@gmail.com.

Everyone,

If you would like to own one of the new Master Gardener coffee mugs, they are available at the Help Desk on Monday and Wednesday from 9am to noon and 1-4pm. We are accepting donations in whatever amount you feel is right. Thank you.

Glenn



Announcements...

January General Membership Business Meeting

When: January 13, 2021

Where: [Via Online Meeting](#)

Time: 10:00 AM

January General Membership Educational Session

When: January 20, 2021

Where: [Via Online Meeting](#)

Time: 10:00 AM

Topic: To Be Announced

Board of Directors Meeting

The Board of Directors Meeting will be held on **Wednesday, January 27, at 9 a.m. via teleconference.**

Members are welcome to join the call.

Please submit your agenda items to Sylvia Maedgen, Recording Secretary, by **Wednesday, January 20.**

Grounds Work Days

Karen Colwick and Paul Carter

List of individual tasks are posted on the gate each week. Gate code is 2019 and extra tools may be found on back of the wood shed.



In the event of rain, there will be no work day.

Communications

While restrictions are in place, please send photos of your garden with a note about your photos to TeriMMarceau@gmail.com or to [Bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu](mailto:bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu) and Teri will post them on Facebook.

If you know of someone in our organization who is ill, scheduled to have surgery, or has lost a loved one (including fur babies) please email Teri Marceau at bell.mg@agnet.tamu.edu, or our correspondence secretary, Debbi Harris, at dcharris99@yahoo.com.

An appropriate card will be sent.

~~Refreshment Committee General Membership Meeting~~

~~A minimum of 7 volunteers are needed for each meeting. Future meetings are on hold until further notice.~~



Upcoming Events

No Upcoming Advanced Training

Online Courses

Ongoing

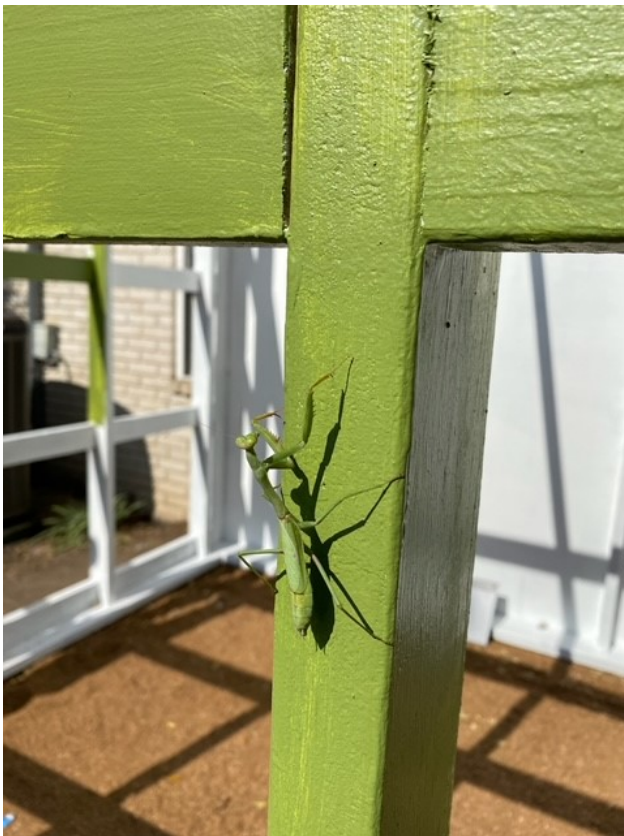
Earth-Kind®
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Gardener
Training modules

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earthkind/
training/](https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/training/)

Extension Events



There are no upcoming Bell County
Extension events at this time.
Stay tuned!



Visitor in Camouflage

Submitted by Karen Colwick

Directors

Communications	Teri Marceau	2020-2022
Facilities	Paul Carter & Karen Colwick	2019-2022
Membership	Sherry Oermann	2020-2022
KMCCG	Larry Moehnke	2021-2021
Outreach	Crystal Mears & Rebekah Lackey	2021-2022
New Class	Gary Slanga / Gail Koontz	2019-2022
Projects	Wayne Schirner & Stacye Parry	2020-2022
Youth	Janice Smith	2020-2022

Executive Board

President	Glenn Melton	2019-2022
1 st Vice President	Jan Upchurch	2020-2022
2 nd Vice President	Bill Walker	2019-2022
Recording Secretary	Sylvia Maedgen	2020-2022
Treasurer	Barbara Ishikawa	2020-2022

AgriLife Agent Lyle Zoeller

Contributing Writers and Photographers

Glenn Melton	Lindsay Bounds	Ann Munroe
Wayne Schirner	Amy Casto	Darrell Reamer
Randy Brown	Susan Burchfield	Diana Reamer
Karen Colwick	Tasha Clark	Jamie Reid
Paul Carter	Julian Hancock	Joanne Stuckey
Edwin Ayala	Marie Hill	
Ann Beauchamp	Devi Mikkilineni	

Editor: Virginia Bargas

Please submit articles of less than 500 words as Word documents. Photos should be sent separately in a folder through a link using OneDrive, Dropbox, Google Photos, or in a zipped file. **Photos must be in the JPEG format.** Do not text your photos. *(If texting is preferred, please let me know in advance.)* Email your documents and pictures to Virginia at bargasv@hotmail.com.

Please do not send PDF documents. I will send them back to you!

BCMGA Webmaster: Rachel Glass - glass.rachel@gmail.com

Please send your updates for the BCMG website to Rachel.

CHECK OUT BCMGA FACEBOOK PAGE! GO TO

<https://www.facebook.com/BCMGA>

Texas Master Gardener website

<https://txmg.org>

Bell County Master Gardener website

<https://txmg.org/bell/>

Texas Master Gardener Volunteer Management System

<https://texas.volunteersystem.org/UniversalLogin.cfm?logout=1>



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