



# The Old Texas Rose

Number 3

Summer 2004

[www.texas-rose-rustler.com](http://www.texas-rose-rustler.com)

**Summer Rookie Rustler Meeting to be held  
at Mercer Arboretum on July 24, 2004  
10:00-12:30**

This annual event is designed as an informative aid for gardening in the Gulf Coast area. The topics of discussion are usually on subjects such as: watering, fertilizing, plant survival, Gulf Coast plant selection and the do's & don'ts of gardening here in Texas. Roses??? Well of course, we will talk roses! Have you ever known the Rustlers' to gather and not talk roses? The dog days of summer are just an opportune time for the Texas Rose Rustlers to share their gardening ideas and survival tips with newcomers to this area. Now a word from our Program Chairman...Doana Fite.

Calling all Rose Rustlers, old and new! Veterans and Rookies will enjoy the program planned for the Summer Rookie Meeting.

Mercer Arboretum is a Harris County Park facility located at 22306 Aldine Westfield, 77373 in North Harris County, just a "rose throw" from Intercontinental Airport.

The program is from 10 am to 12:30pm. This year we will have a slide show presentation by Veteran Rose Rustler and Master Gardener, Ursula White.

**Part I: 10 Hardest Roses**

**Part II: Daylilies as Rose Companions**

**Part III: A Garden Tour**

Our keynote speaker this summer is Master Gardener Instructor, **Clyde Cannon**, of the Bear Creek Harris County Agricultural Extension Office who will present a talk entitled: **The Subject Was: Antique Roses**

Please feel free to bring rooted cuttings or companion plants for the lotto giveaway. Join us for a "rosy day!" Registration and hospitality begin at 9:30.



## Notes from the Editor

There's no question about it; summer has arrived. During the past couple of weeks, the temperatures have steadily been rising and the humidity is creeping back. We have to admit though, we had a great spring. The wildflowers started around here in March and the last of them are still hanging on. I decided this spring to let them grow anywhere and everywhere they popped up. Given their young age, my roses performed as well as could be expected.

This spring I decided to take the lazy approach to gardening. Instead of making raised beds and attempting to religiously keep them weeded; I just planted my roses and perennials amongst the grasses and wildflowers. I have been allowing the native grass to grow within 6-8 inches of the base of the plants and am just keeping it cut short with my weed-eater. It's an experiment, at least that's what I keep telling everyone. However, I can't fool myself; it's just plain laziness...simple as that. Here are a few simple steps:

- 1.) Dig a hole, add a few amenities, plant the rose or perennial.
- 2.) Learn to love your weeds (unwanted plants). Most of them flower if you just give them time.
- 3.) Close your eyes and let the weeds creep.
- 4.) And when you've had all that you can stand; break out the weed eater and cut them back.

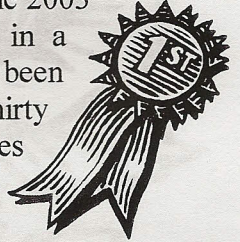
And here are my words of wisdom when it comes to my weedy way of gardening:

*Only through acceptance will one find peace.*

~Candy Fite  
OTR Editor

## Did You Know???

At a recent rose show in April, Earl and Deana Krause, long-time veteran Rustlers, won many ribbons and awards for their outstanding roses. Many of us had the pleasure of visiting the Krause's gardens last fall at the 2003 Cutting Exchange. Earl stated in a recent email to me, "We've been growing and showing roses for thirty years. We grow all kinds of roses and are able to exhibit in all classes. I love to show my antiques, as lot of people have never been introduced to them."



A couple of the awards they received were The Dowager Queen Award (roses introduced before 1867) with Sombrieul, a white Tea climber, and The Victorian Class (roses introduced after 1867 or unknown introduction dates) with Maggie, the red Bourbon. They also won the shrub climber certificate for the King of Miniatures Class with Deanna, a rose that was hybridized by Rustler, Ray Ponton.

## Mark Your Calendars

July 24, 2004	TRR Summer Rookie Meeting—Mercer Arboretum, Houston, TX
October 9, 2004	TRR Fall Cutting Exchange—Victoria, TX Look for details in the upcoming fall newsletter.

## Board Positions Available Fall 2004

<u>Chairman:</u>	MC the meetings
<u>Secretary:</u>	Takes down minutes at board meetings
<u>Treasurer/Membership:</u>	Handles money and membership lists.

If you are interested in any of these positions, please contact either Sandra Smith or Carolyn Feinstein on the nominating committee.



## Notes from Serenity Pond

by Patricia J. McCain

Is there a rose not to like?

Well there was a time I would have said that I love ALL the roses. I would never have believed I could dislike a rose. This is in spite of the fact, I remember as a child, the controversy about the large Multiflora rose hedges people were planting. The problem arose that Multiflora roses began to pop up on farms in unwanted places. The large Multiflora hedges were thought to be wonderful privacy hedges, and/or windbreaks, even to guard against the snowdrifts, due to the thick foliage. However, in a short amount of time they got loose and became a problem. I personally did not experience this problem on our horse farm, and never thought about it again until I moved to Texas.

Here in Texas there is a serious problem with the old Macartney Rose. It is a bad problem that should be taken seriously. It is now considered as much of a problem, or even more so, than the invasive Green Briar. It is invasive, difficult to kill and has not one endearing quality. It's not even attractive. There is a lot of rambling thick brush, which becomes huge, with a small single bloom here and there, very sparse blooming. This year is an exception, as in wetter areas and flooded ditches the rose has many more blooms than usual. However, it is not anything like Mermaid, or Cherokee.

One place to see the damage this rose can do is in Milican, Texas. I can see the widely spread damage as I drive through Milican to get to Hidalgo Falls for kayaking. One small bush planted in the town has now consumed thousands of acres in surrounding ranch lands. Bulldozers have to be used to keep the pasturelands open. Nothing can compete with the rose, which can choke out Pepper Vine, Green Briar and grape vines. It is dreadful.

I have refused to let anyone bring a Macartney Rose to Serenity Pond. I do not want that rose to get loose on my acreage, nor

any of the surrounding ranches. Recently I found the rose invading fence lines in an area not too far from me. PANIC! There have been acreage lots sold off from ranches, and I fear some individual thought they were getting a rose for free and transplanted one. It is shocking to see how much this rose has spread in a short amount of time. It is already a problem on the ranch lands. Mermaid and Cherokee have sizable growth, with lovely blooms, and do not spread like this so will not be found invading ranch lands

Like Green Briar, Macartney seems to have no environmental advantages. It is even too thick for the deer; there are no armadillo boroughs under it. It is an enemy to every rancher. There are now poisons put out to kill Macartney rose. I know here at Serenity Pond, a wild bird sanctuary, I have tried to take what is natural and then live in harmony with it. If Macartney ever came here, it would ruin Serenity Pond.



**Macartney Rose Invading Pasture**

## GIVE AND TAKE

Well, our first session of exchanging plants was successful on a small scale but a definite beginning of a new idea. Joy Hairston and I received starts of the Cemetery White iris from Wanda Brown, and Wanda received a yellow bulbine from Joy. I also took some of the old fashioned narcissus bulbs to Carolyn Feinstein. We have had no requests to be included in this issue, but I am open for these anytime.

This month I would like to use the column to suggest that you e-mail me what rose



cuttings you would like to have members bring to the cutting exchange in October. I will compile a list of these requests for the next newsletter, and we will see how many of these are brought.

And as your garden multiplies, be thinking of plants you can share with others and let me get the word out. Happy gardening to all of you!

Faith Bickley  
bickley@wcnet.net

## 2004 Spring Symposium was a Great Success

by V. Sissom

According to the weather forecasters, the weekend of April 24<sup>th</sup> was *not* to be a promising weekend. But neither threat of torrential rain nor hail was going to put a damper (pun intended) on my attendance of the Texas Rose Rustler 2004 Spring Symposium. I simply packed some extra gear in the form of water-loving yard clogs and a rain poncho. Heck, rain doesn't melt you, right? So with map and itinerary in hand, it was off to Paige, Texas for me!

The Paige Community Center was a quaint, welcoming refuge for us that day, as we met to hear various speakers educate us on rose growing and gardening-related topics. The crowd of rose enthusiasts was impressive, and we "old-timers", ahem, long-time members, got to visit with some veteran members whom we hadn't seen in years. It was so good that they made the trip and spent the weekend with us!

We got many great handouts and tips from each speaker. We heard from Deena Spellman of Bastrop Gardens on how and why to garden using organic methods. We were, later in the day, treated to a tour of Bastrop Gardens, which is a living testament to the benefits of organic gardening methods. The plants growing in the lovely landscaped grounds looked like botanicals on steroids!



### Rose Display

Our tour group descended upon the nursery plants like a swarm of Texas grasshoppers, which by the way, we learned can be controlled now with a biological control called Semispore. Semispore puts a virus inside a grasshopper and kills it from the inside out. I may sound sadistic, but this is a very satisfying way for an environmentally -friendly gardener to kill off a pest! Hmmmm. I wonder how it works on rampant Bermuda grass that won't give up space in my flower beds? Deena's helpful handout titled, "Herbs That Repel Pests" will appear elsewhere in this newsletter.

Our second speaker was veteran Rustler Ray Ponton, who spoke on the basics of taking a good cutting. Yes, folks, there is a science to this. Ray did us a favor and shared his tips on what part of a rose bush makes a good candidate for removing to make into a cutting to then root. He said to avoid areas of new, immature-sized stems and of twiggy growth (i.e. small stems, flowers, budeyes, offshoots from a main stem). Look instead for a stem:

- below a spent flower
- where the thorns snap off easily
- the bark is somewhat tender, yet hard.

Most of us who root cuttings only do so from around Oct. through Feb. since we have discovered the success rate for cuttings to root or strike goes *way down* during the warmer months. But what if you are out on a road trip



this summer and are offered cuttings of some special rose? Well, decline the offer no more!

To our excitement, Ray and fellow Rustler Robert Stiba made our day by bringing and setting up their much talked about Misting System for rooting roses. Ray says he initially learned of it from GardenWeb. **The beauty of this misting system, according to Ray and Robert, who both use it often, is that it allows you to successfully root cuttings in the full sun and blazing heat of our Texas summers.** We no longer have to think that a fresh cutting won't make it in the heat of summer. One can use this misting system and be highly likely to actually root those precious cuttings. Ray was kind enough to email me his parts list for his misting system. He gets his materials from Dripworks.com. It will appear, possibly with a photo, elsewhere in this newsletter. He also said one could check Home Depot or other sources for "porch misting" or "pet cooling" kits.

I would say the cemetery tours put together by area resident and hostess Rustler Linda Mieceke, were a weekend highlight for most attendees. Getting to view these old, mostly unattended, yet vibrant specimens of antique roses in old country cemeteries was a heady experience for all. Such activities are the epitome of our group's desire to search for, document, and further the lifespan of old garden or antique roses. We hope that by finding and viewing longstanding antique rosebushes such as these, it will encourage their continued use by today's gardeners either through purchase or the sharing of cuttings.

On Sunday, we got a private personal tour of "It's A Jungle" nursery in Austin. The rain ponchos & umbrellas came out, and we took the nursery by storm. It is a lovely, well-stocked nursery, and many plants found new homes that day. We then returned via Elgin to downtown Taylor, Texas for a group lunch at The Country Gourmet restaurant, followed by two private garden tours.

We got to see two different yet very beautiful landscaping styles showcased at the homes of Ray and Margaret Ponton, and of

Robert Stiba. Rose photo ops abounded at both properties.

Robert's was a vibrant cottage garden on a city lot, with loads of antique roses throughout. In part of his back yard was an artistic display of roses growing happily in his vegetable garden area. He is an avid propagator, as was evidenced by numerous baby roses growing in small containers.

The Ponton's is a country home site with acreage using antique roses on pillars, fence lines, hedges and in raised beds. Ray took time to show us his "work" area where he lovingly applies his talents at hybridizing antique roses. He showed us the steps he goes



**Ray Ponton's Garden**

through to cross-germinate roses and take the seeds from those hips and germinate them. He has numerous test garden specimens, complete with labels showing parentage, on his property. He says some are noteworthy newbie roses while others are not as much so. His Cameron Bohls rose is just one example of one that made it into commerce.

This topic of hybridizing is very intriguing and special to the Rustlers. Both Ray and Robert have put many years of time and effort into hybridizing, with beautiful results. Thanks, guys!

I have heard back from Rustlers who attended the TRR Spring Symposium, and there was no single "hands down" winner for their favorite part of the symposium weekend. Many things were mentioned: the great tips



gleaned from our speakers, the cemetery and private garden tours, the nursery plant purchasing opportunities, and even just hanging out with like-minded gardeners was greatly enjoyed. Thanks to one and all that set up such a fine event!

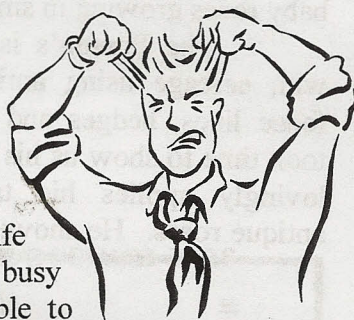
## Mail Order Madness

In today's times, the Internet and mail order catalogs make life simple for our busy schedules. We are able to buy life's necessities (food, shelter & clothing) either by way of the computer, phone or if you can wait long enough, by mail. The retailers are trying to accommodate people who live life in the fast lane. Which, might I add, pertains to about 90% of the nation's population!

Every spring the mailboxes are overflowing with gardening mail-order catalogs, with page after page of breathtaking photos with plants of every color, shape and size. I'll be honest; the rose catalogs always make my eyes pop and mouth water. I usually have to restrain myself and grit my teeth as I toss them in the trash. I'm no sucker, no siree.

Now I'm not saying you can't find nice, healthy roses by mail, net or phone. There are a few, select sources which I'd use. I would (if I didn't live only 25 miles away) purchase roses over the phone from the Antique Rose Emporium. Chamblee's Roses is another one I'd buy from. In the past, I've ordered roses from these two nurseries before and have been very satisfied with them.

When trying an unknown source, however, be sure to read the fine print, paying particular attention to the company's guarantee. Be aware when a guarantee states, "Under normal care and conditions, they will grow and flourish." Or, "We will not be held accountable for possible neglect by the gardener or other circumstances beyond our



control." These are both extremely general statements. One website I visited even stated, "We do not guarantee, *under any circumstances*, our plants after delivery."

Most mail order sources require payment in full at the time of the order. Pay attention to shipping, packaging and handling fees. Ask how long your plants will be in transit. Find out what age the plants are and what type of root systems they have developed.

I'm speaking from experience here. I've also recently heard a mail order horror story from a fellow TRR member. I will not mention any names or the rose source; but this person paid over \$20 per rose and ended up with 4-6 inch cuttings, each only having a few roots. Most of them died within days of planting, some even arrived dead!

I am requesting anyone who has had a good experience with mail order roses, to please send in your sources. We need to promote those mail order nurseries that deserve recognition. I will gladly publish their information in the upcoming newsletters.

~Candy Fite



## Rain Rustling By Doana Fite

"Quick, we better get the plants unloaded before the rain starts!" Carolyn Feinstein and I exchange a quick glance as we pull up to the Paige Community Center. Ray and Robert are already there, their plants are unloaded and set up to give away. They carefully pick their step around little puddles in the rock walkway to help us unload our plants for the upcoming lotto.

*Do you need an umbrella?*

*No, I have two.*

These words just sounded like kindness and dedication as our Spring Symposium began this April in Paige.

"Do you need an umbrella?" would be the subtitle of that weekend, the mantra, the creed, the battle cry, the theme song, but the answer was almost always the same, "No, I've got one."





Sometimes it was: here, take mine, its bigger.

As I looked at the faces huddled around the owner of It's a Jungle, I saw fine tuned attention, a thirst to hear, carefully attentive listeners seeking any news about making life better for the roses. They peered out from under rain bonnets, umbrellas and ponchos. My heart swelled with love for these people who love a thing so much, love doing a thing, love hearing about a thing and love visiting with those who are like themselves.

The Paige Community Center had been just the beginning of the rain rustling. Next we had rustled out to the cemeteries of Bastrop County. "Do you need an umbrella?" "No, I've got my slicker." "Watch for the mud, it's slippery." "Oh, thanks, I will go around this way, there's a rose over here I haven't seen yet anyway." "Watch that high grass, it'll get you wet." "That's okay, it'll dry." "There may be poison ivy back there." "I don't care, it's worth it to see the flowers at these graves, I'll be careful." "Did you see the red rose in the middle along the back fence? It's all by itself, among the weeds, loaded in blooms, maybe the prettiest blooms you've ever seen." "Go see." "Do we ever bring back roses to plant for these long dead souls who left them for us?" "*Maybe we could plant a rose here in this lonely place where someone has none.*" *We pruned a little. We shaped. We loved.*

As we meandered through the resting places of early Texans, we marveled at who cared so much to plant the rose that stood beside them. We smelled the blossoms and fulfilled that caution that we hear so often, "Stop, and smell the roses." We guessed at names of roses, looked at leaf shapes, studied flower petals, thorns and canes, amazed at abundant blooms and silently thanked the God of all Creation for the mystery of these fascinating plants.

By the next morning we had already spent our hours of learning, laughing and sharing roses at the Paige Community Center,

added new friends, toured Bastrop County cemeteries, shopped at Bastrop Gardens, visited over a lovely evening meal, slept with visions of rosebuds dancing in our heads, and gathered again, ponchos near, umbrellas ready, and windshield wipers flapping, ready for whatever roses were ahead.

The love of roses calls, and as we are baptized yet again in the gentle rain of a Sunday morning, we marvel at God's lovely creations, the roses.

"I have room in my trunk, someone offers." "I think I can fit one or two on my back floorboard. You can pick them up from me when we get back to Paige." "Would you like a one gallon of 'Deanna'?" "The blue ribbon winner, you bet!" "They only have Old Blush in five gallon." "Not a problem, I can make room. I will hold it in my lap."

"So, what do you think? Are we crazy?" one newbie was asked at lunchtime. "These people share many qualities which I myself have. I do not think they are crazy," she carefully replied. We all roared with laughter at how quickly she became one of us.

As we rounded the corner and glimpsed the roses at Robert Stiba's Tribute Garden, the sunshine was coming out, the sky was brilliant blue and we knew the trip was worth it. As we looked up to see the glorious cascade of gorgeous blooms at the arched entrance, we suddenly saw our beloved Phyllis tumble backward, as if stunned by the beauty.



**Robert Stiba's Garden**



Soon, uninjured, she joined the backyard tour, arm in arm, first with Johnny, then Allison, then Audrey, then me, then Virginia, enjoying the beauty of Robert's loving tribute to his mother and his sister, who loved gardening and inspired his love of roses.

Stepping over a fire ant mound that had cropped up after the downpours, Candy asked if the rose cane lying through it meant that Robert was trying a new propagation method. We all strained to see, in case it might work. "We better hurry before the rain comes back! We've got to get to Ray's."

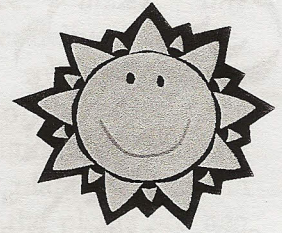
This referred to Ray Ponton's seven acre garden home. The drops had really thinned out by now. The clouds had given all they had and the Rose Rustlers were still rustling. "Boy, the roses really needed that rain; I'll bet the blooms will be popping open now that the sun is coming out! Let's go see!"

Ray and Margaret's home sits in the middle of their seven acres. Ray planted roses on the terraces built during the great depression by the CCC, the back to work corp, which was started by Franklin Roosevelt to get the country economy "jump started" back in the 1930's. Now, these have become Ray's gracefully curved raised beds. Full of wonder and delight, they are almost a memorial tribute to what the hard labor of some now nameless Texans built under the Civilian Conservation Corp. Fascinated and inspired, we move from flower to flower like large, colorful bees. We sniff, we touch, we ooh and ahh. Ray is patient as we admire his babies and his beauties. He teaches us more. He gives us tips. His love of the roses takes root in us.

We headed homeward after visiting Ray's garden, every nook and cranny of our vehicles filled with the promise of flowers. We had splashed through puddles, under sunny skies with contentment in our hearts. We had been with some of the finest people on the planet, enjoying the camaraderie of our love of roses. Awed by the wonder of God's benevolent creation, we loved every minute of it. Crazy? No...we had been rain rustling.

## Summer Rose Tips

For a mid-summer rose pick-me-up, try sprinkling left-over tea leaves at the base of your bushes. The tea leaves are slightly acidic. Or better yet, fix them a strong brewed glass of iced tea, it'll probably quench their thirst!



With all this rain we've been experiencing lately, it seems absurd, but make sure they are getting at least an inch of water a week.



Near the end of August/first of September, you can begin to prune and fertilize to increase fall blooms.



Look there, we're celebrities!!!

### Is this your last newsletter?

Take a moment to look at your label. In the lower right-hand corner of your mailing label is the last newsletter issue you will receive with your current membership. Don't forget to renew your membership so you will continue to receive this informative and fun newsletter! Mail your \$10 to Gladys Cronquist at 9730 Harrowgate, Houston, TX 77031.



## Crystal Beach Plant Farm, Crystal Beach, TX and a Request for Salt-Tolerant Roses

I enjoyed a visit the other day with Roger Welch, the owner of the Crystal Beach Plant Farm, on Hwy. 87 in Crystal Beach, TX, a community of beach homes on the Bolivar Peninsula. My sister, Brenda, and her family have had a house there for nearly thirty years and for the last six years, every time I've come for a visit, I've stopped by to see what was new at the nursery.

I always find at least one plant I've never seen before or even varieties of old favorites that I have never seen before. I remember I once had a question about a plant – Cat's Whiskers, I believe – and the ever-present Fay McClain invited me to sit at the work table so we could search their reference books together for the answer. You can't help but feel at home there.

On this visit, though, I was happy to meet the owner, Roger Welch, as well. We sat at that same work table as he explained how a long, long time ago, the soil of the peninsula was rich in topsoil all over, on both sides of a train track that ran the length of the land. But the great storm of 1900, and subsequent storms as well, changed the ecosystem. Most of the topsoil on the Gulf side of the tracks washed to the Bay side and when the waters receded, the topsoil stayed, blocked by those very tracks.

Today, there is still a difference between the ecosystem of the south (gulf) side and the north (bay) side of the peninsula. On the south side, the soil is mostly sand and the plants are subjected to constant wind, and even salty spray nearer to the water. Few plants can withstand salt spray, even those that are supposedly "salt tolerant". He challenged me to look at the oleanders and palms that are everywhere down there – the side that gets hit with the gulf spray is withered and looks burned. Sis and I drove around and looked. It was true. How is it we had never noticed?

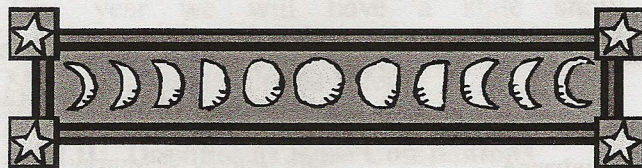
By contrast, the north side of the peninsula has soil and wind conditions that are more plant friendly. I thought of Rita Mosley's garden, located closer to the bay. Brenda and I had

dropped in on her earlier that day so I could meet her. Rita was sweet enough to show us her collection of plants and like the Crystal Beach Plant Farm, she had things I had never before seen. It was a fun garden that reflected the fun personality of its owner. Gardens on the gulf side would never have been as plush, no matter how much soil the owner had brought in

At the end of my conversation with Roger, we turned to the subject of erosion, a problem with so many of our Texas beaches. Roger has a stretch of sand dune that would be perfect for a trial of different plants that might help curb erosion. Naturally I suggested trying antique roses as well. How salt tolerant would they be and would their roots be extensive enough to be effective? Fay suggested the rugosas – definitely a good start. How about some of the more aggressive roses, like Mermaid and the banksias?

I told Roger I'd put out the word for rooted cuttings for the hardiest of the hardy, the peskier and harder to kill the better! We'll stop short of kudzu, of course, (and I won't even mention that M-word, Pat) but we're talking roses, right? He's ready to give them a try if we can provide some rooted cuttings. So let me know if you can help him out. My email address is [jamac80@yahoo.com](mailto:jamac80@yahoo.com). Thanks!

-Audrey McMurray



### **Planting by the Moon**

(Source: The Old Farmer's Almanac)

#### To strike cuttings:

July: 6-7, 15-16

August: 2-3

#### To plant roses in the ground:

July: 20-21, 25-26

August: 21-22, 30-31

#### To prune to encourage growth:

July: 18-19

August: 23-24





**The Texas Rose Rustlers**  
**C/O Mrs. Candy Fite**  
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**Brenham, TX 77833**

**First Class Mail**

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