Passing the BIG Shoes at FNGLA Annual Convention

Inside: Your 2019 Industry Award Winners

Jack Payne: Out to Save the Palm

FNGLA to Offer Irrigation Pump Training

Pictured is FNGLA’s 2018-19 President Will Womack of Southern Garden Solutions. At FNGLA’s Annual Convention this month, Will is gearing up to continue the tradition of passing the big shoes (or flip flops, as is his style).
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Will Womack

What. A. Year.
Really, what a three-year journey!
It all began with a phone call from then FNGLA Past President Sandy Stein. I can’t make this up. For those who think leadership within FNGLA is in any way steeped in secret handshakes and high ceremony – it is not! As I answered the phone on that fateful day, Sandy said, “You’re it!” and unceremoniously hung up! I kid you not. It was that simple and it was the extent of the conversation.
The last three years and, particularly, the last eleven months, have been unforgettable. Literally, unforgettable. I am certain the reel will positively replay in my mind for the rest of my life. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve our great association and remain humbled our membership entrusted me with the honor and confidence to do the right things. I hope you are pleased, as I am, with the state of our association and the direction we are heading. We have done a lot to get here. FNGLA Immediate Past President Ed Bravo and I recently guesstimated we traveled over 36,000 miles. Attended countless FNGLA Chapter meetings and events. Faced down not one, but two, hurricanes. Lobbyed legislators in both Tallahassee and D.C. Championed new directions inspired by feedback from members. And, most notably, worked closely with staff, fellow executive leaders, and the Board of Directors to tweak the programs, processes, and nuts and bolts of member leadership within FNGLA. The real “sausage-making” of our association. If not for Ed, I would not be here writing this column. Ed has been my buttress, dear friend, fellow Amigo and inspiration. We will miss you, Ed and, on behalf of our FNGLA membership, thank you for your service and all of the benevolent actions and thoughtful administration you bestowed us. Enjoy the pasture…

Though these are the folks with whom I most regularly communicate and interact, we work for you – and we never forget this. While I still I have a soapbox, I wish to close with this: If you ever get the “you’re it” phone call – say yes!!! If a neighbor and fellow FNGLA member is down – help them up. Pablo Picasso said, “The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.”
Stay engaged – you will forever be nurtured. And, give -- you will forever be blessed. I look forward with great excitement to receive you in Tampa at FNGLA’s 2019 Annual Convention.

Until then and I thank you,

Will
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Pictured is FNGLA’s Billy Deal and Amanda Thomsen of Kiss My Aster at the 2019 Florida Flower Trials
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Passing the BIG Shoes
The humble beginnings of an FNGLA tradition
By LINDA ADAMS

Once upon a time, there was an association called FNGA. FNGA was made up of many hard-working volunteers who did lots of great things for Florida’s nursery and landscape industry. These volunteers were led by a new volunteer president each year. The president had a big job, visiting members, attending chapter meetings and events around the state, meeting with politicians, solving problems and recruiting new leaders - and, that's just to name a few of the duties.

One year, in fact it was 1978, then-President Bill Adams is remembered as saying, “I wonder if future FNGA presidents realize what a big responsibility and honor it is to be president of the Florida Nurserymen and Growers Association?” A short time later, Bill came up with an idea to remind everyone of this fact. Bill went on a search and at a local thrift shop found a pair of size 16 men's dress shoes. He said they were the largest pair of shoes he had ever laid eyes upon - and perfect for his plan.

One week later at the FNGA Annual Convention, which took place at the Hyatt House in Sarasota that year, Bill stood at the podium, poised to induct FNGA's next president, Wally Gammel, into the job. When it came time to pass the president's gavel, another FNGA tradition, to Wally, Bill surprised everyone in the room by reaching down below the podium and pulling out a giant pair of black, patent leather men's dress shoes. Although no exact record of just what Bill said next exists today, here's what FNGLA archivists remember: “Wally,” Bill, began, with a pregnant pause for effect. “FNGA started in 1952 and since that day has had many dedicated people who have made FNGA the strong and relevant association it is today. Each of us as we've taken on the role of FNGA president has had big shoes to fill, following in their footsteps. I wish you well as FNGA's new president and know you will fill these shoes admirably.”

With that, Bill handed Wally the shoes, kicking off a tradition which will soon undergo its 41st incarnation as President Will Womack passes the big flip flops (his own personal take) this month in Tampa.

FNGLA Annual Convention takes place June 21-22 at the Tampa Marriott Water Street
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If you’re in the palm business, then you know what’s happening to palms. You may even know why. You just don’t know how – and neither does anyone else.

I think Dr. Brian Bahder of the University of Florida’s Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences will be among the first to know. If he is, you’ll be the second. That’s land-grant science at work – research on relevant problems and extending that knowledge to the public. In this case, that public is you.

I became familiar with Bahder’s work because he and his team were honored at the recent UF/IFAS Research Awards. UF/IFAS scientists published more than 1,600 scientific journal articles last year, but Bahder’s was singled out as one that really matters.

Bahder is out to save the palm. Bahder wasn’t a palm guy when we hired him three years ago. His pitch to us was that he could bring a tool called digital PCR, most commonly used in people and veterinary medicine, and use it in plant medicine. Digital PCR allows for a rapid and accurate search for a certain type of DNA (for example, the DNA of the bacteria which causes lethal bronzing that kills palms) among a large sample of DNA (say, from a bunch of sabal palm trunks).

FNGLA provided some of the funding for Bahder’s work. In addition, a couple of FNGLA members have participated directly in Bahder’s work. Member nurseries have provided samples Bahder has used to run his experiments.

Bahder has determined, at least in theory, digital PCR can pick out the disease needle from an otherwise healthy haystack. But each test is expensive, so Bahder is refining his use of the tool so many trees can be screened for the presence of lethal bronzing at once instead of having to run separate tests on each tree.

Early detection would be a breakthrough in the containment of the disease and allow nurseries to save trees not yet symptomatic. Early intervention can also give you a chance to stop the spread of the disease.

Due to a full plate at home and in the lab and office, Bahder wasn’t able to attend the awards ceremony.

Two members of his research team, Ph.D. student De-Fen Mou and his biological scientist Ericka Helmick, who were both essential in this study, were present to accept the award. So was Robin Giblin-Davis, director of the Fort Lauderdale Research and Education Center. Giblin-Davis had a hand in hiring Bahder as part of his plan to continue the Center’s palm work after several retirements.

Just like FNGLA did in contributing funding to Bahder’s digital PCR research, UF/IFAS sees Bahder as a great investment. It’s one which could pay dividends for decades to come.

Bahder is balancing basic research – building the science you’ll need when he someday retires – with applied research like developing a tool to spot lethal bronzing disease today while you can still do something about it. He’s also got an Extension assignment, and is the lead author of the Lethal Bronzing Fact Sheet available on the FNGLA website at www.fngla.org/lethal-bronzing.

Bahder is an ornamental insect vector ecologist, so he’s coming at lethal bronzing from the bug angle. He’s running digital PCR on a collection of the bugs who are the leading suspects for carrying the pathogen from palm to palm. If he can answer the “how” behind the disease’s spread by picking the correct insect out of his PCR lineup, we can get started on another how – how to stop the insect before it stops you. •

Jack Payne is the University of Florida’s senior vice president for agriculture and natural resources and leader of the Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.
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Spurred on by the Florida Department of Transportation’s statewide mandate that all landscape installs on roadways be done by an FNGLA Certified Landscape Technician, the number of professionals getting certified has skyrocketed this year.

“It’s nice to see, with this huge amount of landscaping being installed on our public roadways throughout the state, it’s FNGLA’s certified professionals ensuring it’s done right and lasts for years to come,” says Merry Mott, FNGLA’s director of certifications and career development. “Not to mention, it’s the public’s tax dollars funding these installs most times. It’s nice to know they’re being done right.”

Mott added the new state mandate has brought in a wave of newcomers to the Association from engineering firms.

“It’s been a whole new world for us with this new partnership,” Mott says. “We’re making new connections, and bringing professionals together from construction and landscape industries.”

Between July 1, 2018 and June 2019, 110 industry professionals took the FCLT exam at one of the seven exams given at FNGLA’s four test sites across the state - a record!

“Thanks to Bonnie in Pinellas, Gary who graciously hosted a test site at SeaWorld Horticulture in Orlando, and Robert Shoelson of Getting Green who made his South Florida business available for not one, but two Saturdays – my hat’s off to you. I couldn't have done it without these guys and gals.”

For more information on FNGLA’s Certified Landscape Technician certification, please visit www.fngla.org/fclt •
FNGLA is excited to announce an enhanced and expanded manual for FNGLA’s Certified Horticulture Professional exam.

The new FCHP Manual is now titled, *The Horticulture Professional* and, for the first time, can be used as a reference guide as it includes a mix of full color photographs, diagrams and sidebars on every page. There’s also a glossary and pronunciation guide at the end of the text.

Author Gale Allbritton, known by many in the industry for her long-time involvement in the FCHP program, utilized input from a number of industry professionals in her writing process.

“The Horticulture Professional was created using instructional strategies proven to help the reader learn and retain complex subjects,” says Allbritton. “Individuals who seek to broaden their knowledge and gain expertise as certified horticulture and landscape professionals will find this a superb resource to accomplish their goal.”

*The Horticulture Professional* is available for sale now through FNGLA’s website. A newly-retooled exam to coincide with the new manual will be available in the fall of 2019. But, for those currently studying from the current FCHP Manual, testing is still being conducted based on the first edition of the manual.

In addition to an updated plants list, the textbook now includes chapters on plant propagation and production, as well as interior plant maintenance. “We’re proud to say this manual will even better-fit the training needs of nursery and greenhouse growers, while continuing to be the go-to manual for landscape professionals,” says Merry Mott, director of certifications and career development. For more information, or to purchase *The Horticulture Professional* textbook, please visit www.fngla.org/fchp.
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And, the winners are...

FNGLA Announces its 2019 Industry Award Winners

By KATE CLARY

It could be said that giving of one’s self is the truest, most virtuous form of giving. Seven exemplary individuals from various ends of Florida’s nursery and landscape industry (and one friend of the industry!) have taken this adage to new heights. In recognition of their selflessness and leadership, each was chosen as FNGLA’s 2019 Industry Award Winners.

The Industry Awards will be presented during FNGLA’s Annual Meeting on Saturday morning, June 22 at the Tampa Water Street Marriott in Tampa, Florida.

And, this year’s winners are:

Friend of the Industry Award - Michael Dukes, Ph.D

A nationally recognized expert in irrigation and water conservation, Michael Dukes, Ph.D., serves on FNGLA’s Landscape Irrigation Committee.

The director of the UF/IFAS Center for Landscape Conservation and Ecology, and professor of Agricultural and Biological Engineering, Dukes was also recently selected to head up the newly established UF/IFAS Center for Land Use Efficiency.

The prestigious FNGLA Friend of the Industry Award honors an individual who has contributed immensely to the advancement and improvement of Florida’s nursery and landscape industry.
Farm Credit/FNGLA Young Nursery Professional - Autumn Schwab White

With her infectious spirit, Autumn Schwab White is a passionate springboard for the industry. As president of FNGLA’s Tampa Bay Chapter, Autumn has infused new and vibrant energy into a host of local events and FNGLA projects.

You may remember Autumn from an episode of “Flip My Florida Yard,” where, as project supervisor, she commanded a pack of more than 40 as they sought to bring a brand-new landscape to the backyard of a wheelchair-bound veteran. Keeping the crew on task, they delivered in less than one day.

Autumn also serves FNGLA as Tampa Bay Chapter’s state board representative and served as this year’s Convention Committee Chair, helping to organize events at FNGLA’s Annual Convention.

A Central Florida native, Autumn, with her husband, Chuck, have owned and operated Dragonfly Landscape and Water Gardens, for the past 10 years.

FNGLA Hall of Fame - Jerry Frye

Over the course of his career which has spanned more than four decades in Florida’s nursery and landscape industry, Jerry Frye has served in nearly every conceivable capacity.

In fact, one would be hard-pressed to locate an area where this North Georgia native has not made an indelible impact.

Jerry has been a galvanizing, positive force for both FNGLA and the industry.

He and loving wife and business partner, Beth Ann, or ‘Pep’ as most lovingly refer to her, have made their indelible mark on this industry through their family business, Frye Farms in Homestead, which specialized in tree production.

These days, Jerry serves as horticulture director of the Fruit & Spice Park, a 37-acre botanical garden and park in South Florida.

Outstanding Volunteer - Gary Weitermann, FCHP, FCLMT

A familiar face at many FNGLA Certification testing events, Gary Weitermann gives most unselfishly of his time to help others advance their careers.

The horticulturist in charge of pots and baskets at SeaWorld Horticulture, Gary takes the lead in hosting both FNGLA Certified Landscape Technician and Landscape Maintenance Technician exams onsite at the park’s nursery facilities twice per year.

As chairman for FNGLA’s Certification Committee, Gary utilizes his years of industry experience and expertise to help enhance and promote each of FNGLA’s six certifications.

Gary also lends his time and talents at FNGLA trade shows, creating FNGLA’s Certification Showcase, where he sets up a variety of landscape exam test sections. Gary also created FNGLA’s plant identification garden, which helps attract show attendees to the booth, and even provides an opportunity for certified pros to earn CEUs.
Wendell E. Butler Award -
Lloyd Singleton, FCHP

With an innate ability to assess and pair one’s talents with available opportunities, Lloyd Singleton has helped generate many successful partnerships within both FNGLA and the industry.

Lloyd is known as an innovator who reaches outside the box to find new solutions, a creative resource to bounce ideas around with -- and a force which maintains an incredible follow-through.

Lloyd has also shared his ability to be forward-thinking as an FNGLA volunteer leader over the years, to the benefit of people throughout the industry.

Lloyd has also, through the years, helped forge new partnerships between FNGLA and UF/IFAS – notably with his work developing and advocating for FCHP certification education training as the architect of a horticulture vocational training program for incarcerated individuals at Coleman - Low, a federal correctional institution in Sumter County, Florida.

Outstanding Chapter Leader -
Stefan Liopoulos, FWS

A true advocate for growing Florida’s nursery and landscape industry, Stefan Liopoulos is referred to as FNGLA’s unofficial education ‘czar.’

A landscape designer who got his start in horticulture back in his native northern Virginia by loading plants and mulch into customers’ cars on weekends, Stefan and his high school sweetheart, Wendy, relocated to Florida after marrying 20 years ago.

An active member of FNGLA’s Frontrunners Chapter, Stefan is an encourager whose communication skills, dedication and can-do attitude make him a true leader.

Outstanding Educator -
John Conroy

A believer in the notion, “a rising tide lifts all ships,” John Conroy maintains that sharing information seldom has a down side.

Prior to his start in horticulture more than 30 years ago, John taught middle schoolers for three years before the call of the outdoors brought him out of the classroom and into the tree-growing business.

This fifth generation Floridian founded Fish Branch Tree Farm on property in Zolfo Springs which has been handed down through his family’s generations.

John, alongside his wife, Linda, grow several varieties of date palms and shade trees on the 325-acre property.
FNGLA Welcomes New Members

Association gains 113 new member companies between January and June 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTION</th>
<th>WELCOME TO THE FAMILY! • Member News</th>
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| COASTAL SPRINGS | Sunshine Textures, Pompano Beach  
| | West Coast Installers LLC, Fort Lauderdale |
| MANASOTA | Sunshine Services, Port Richey |
| | Nuleaf Pest Control and Horticulture Services, Inc., Port Richey |
| NORTHEAST | St. Vincent de Paul, Spring Hill |
| | Miami-Dade |
| | J I C Enterprises, Inc., Miami |
| | Tony Tractors Florida Inc Coral Gables |
| | Florida Maintenance, Miami |
| | Gosha Greens, Homestead |
| | Rabbit Nursery, Homestead |
| | Atelier Temenos LLC, Miami |
| | Esmeraldas Landscape Co Hialeah |
| | Greenscape Management and Consulting, Inc., Miami |
| | Reed TMS Logistics, Doral |
| | Frontrunners Facility Resources, Summerfield |
| | Therese Spurling-Wood Gainesville |
| | Marion County BoCC, Ft. McCoy |
| | University of Florida, Gainesville |
| | The Sod Lot, Gainesville |
| | United Advantage Agency, The Villages |
| BIG BEND | Highlands Heartland |
| | Lakeshore Lawn Service Lake Placid |
| PALM BEACH | Prescott Lawn & Pest Control Sebring |
| | Florida Central Growers, Sebring |
| | Nualin Pest Control and Horticulture Services, Inc., Port Richey |
| | TriYield LLC, Arcadia |
| | McGriff Insurance Services Lakewood Ranch |
| | Top Quality Concrete, Inc. Fernandina Beach |
| | Out of Country|
| | Nassau Airport Development Company Limited Nassau, Bahamas |
| | Out of State |
| | Benchmark Payment Networks, Cold Spring Harbor, NY |
| | Lebron, Kissimmee |
| | LW Development, Ardmore, PA |
| | Tree Stake Solutions LLC, Rosharon, TX |
| | Profile Products/HydraFiber, Buffalo Cove, NC |
| | New England Ladder Co., LLC, Kings Park, NY |
| | Smart Guided Systems Indianapolis, IN |
| | Palm Beach Gardens |
| | Greenscape Design, Lake Worth |
| | KWD Landscape Architecture, Delray Beach |
| | Seaglass Landscaping Company, Boynton Beach |
| | A-Team Landscape, LLC, Royal Palm Beach |
| | Ramirez Landscape Maintenance, Inc., Jupiter |
| | Liz Dunn, Tequesta |
| | Bates Services Incorporated, Jupiter |
| | Sun Electric Works Inc, Deerfield Beach |
| | Business Management Consultants, Inc., Boca Raton |
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| | J & J Steel Products, Avon Park |

| Association | Sunshine Textures, Pompano Beach  
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| | Therese Spurling-Wood Gainesville |
| | Marion County BoCC, Ft. McCoy |
| | University of Florida, Gainesville |
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| | Honest Plumbing, St. Cloud |
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| | Kustom US, Longwood |
| | Level 1 Furniture, Orlando |
| | BMP Electric, Orlando |
| | Florida State University Nils Jefferson, Tallahassee |
| | Troy Belt, LLC, Weston |
| | P&A Landscaping Parkland |
| | County Welding Pompano Beach |
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Joe Masters LLC, Clearwater
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Yau’s Garden, Fort Myers
Cueva Lawn Care LLC, Naples
Fred Warner, Naples
Tony’s Lawn and Tree, Cape Coral
McLaughlin’s Garden City Nursery Inc., Fort Myers
Rosemary Hamtil, Naples
Scott’s Landscape Nursery North Ft Myers
Payne Lawn Service, Cape Coral
Everglades Native Designs Naples
City of Naples, Parks and Parkways, Naples
Graber & Associates LLC North Naples
Enduring Business Solutions North Fort Myers
Jose Pineda Lawn Service, Inc., Naples
SPACE COAST
Extreme Grounds Management, Merritt Island
TAMPA
Victory Cuts Landscaping & Design, LLC, Tampa
Hillsborough County Aviation Authority, Tampa
US Green Tex, Tampa
Bonnie Edwards, Lutz
Florida Sabal Land Service Plant City
TREASURE COAST
Nunez Lawncare & Landscaping Inc, Okeechobee
Kimley-Horn & Associates, Inc. Vero Beach
Greengold Tree Service LLC Port St Lucie
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Big Lake Lawn Service LLC Okeechobee

The National Horticulture Foundation (NHF) is a non-profit foundation established in 1987 for the exclusive purpose of supporting industry research and education. NHF understands the importance of having sound science to properly defend and/or protect the nursery and landscape industry against damaging issues. Throughout the years, over $500,000 has been given to the industry to support projects in production, marketing, utilization and distribution.

It also continues to establish pathways for students who seek to gain experience and expertise, earn degrees in horticulture and become leaders in the nursery and landscape industry.

CHOOSE NOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!
HELP NHF REACH $220,000 in new funds by 2020.

For more information about contributing to the National Horticulture Foundation, contact Linda Reindl, lreindl@fngla.org.

NATIONAL HORTICULTURE FOUNDATION

$220,000 BY THE YEAR 2020
As FNGLA continues to put the finishing touches on its new Irrigation Certification and as momentum builds, it is proud to offer a series of irrigation education opportunities through Education on the Go!!

Coming in August, Irrigation Pumps on the Go provides two different times for landscape professionals to learn the basic operating principles of irrigation pumps and the mechanical and performance differences among pump varieties.

“Don’t miss the opportunity to learn the importance of collecting accurate job site information critical to selecting the correct pump for the right irrigation application and understand what you should expect from pumps,” says Linda Reindl, FNGLA’s Director of Education.

Special consideration for pump site conditions, installation and maintenance will also be presented. Also covered will be:

- Types of Industry pumps applications
- Why Use Pumps?
- Performance Expectations
- Variable Frequency Drives vs Across the Line Start
- Filtration basics
- Basic Trouble-shooting

Two class will be given at two separate locations, from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Tues., Aug 6 at Orange County Extension Services, 6021 S. Conway Rd., and from 9 a.m. to 2:30 Thurs., Aug. 8 at the Gulf Coast Research and Education Center, 14625 County Rd. 672, Wimauma, FL 33598. The cost to attend is $99 for FNGLA members and $129 for nonmembers.

To register, visit FNGLA’s website at www.fngla.org/irrigation •

“You’ll learn the importance of collecting accurate job site information, which is critical to selecting the correct irrigation pump.”

Meet the instructor:
James Nelson

James Nelson is a Pump and Filtration Product Sales Manager with The Rain Bird Corporation.

ON HIS INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

James has spent 30 years in the irrigation industry, starting out as a laborer on a residential irrigation crew, moving to a commercial installation crew, then to foreman, supervisor, and then manager over the course of 5 years. He then became a licensed contractor and started his own company where he focused on large community maintenance and repair.

ON HIS FAVORITE JOB

James is a father to three, and step-father to four. He considers being a dad his greatest accomplishment.
The Irrigation Association continues its Smart Irrigation Month initiative this July in an effort to promote efficient irrigation practices.

Now in its 15th year, Smart Irrigation Month, ‘serves as the showcase month for the irrigation industry and the public to recognize and promote the benefits associated with smart and efficient irrigation,’ according to the IA’s website.

The theme for 2019 is ‘Smart Irrigation in Action,’ according to IA officials who added the national association will in June and July be encouraging irrigation industry insiders to share in real time how they are employing smart irrigation practices.

The IA is calling for photos and videos which showcase these practices as part of their online contest, which is slated to begin June 10.

Supporters of this initiative are also encouraged to wear blue on Tuesday, July 9, the kick-off date of the campaign.

That day, dubbed, Technology Tuesday, serves to raise awareness on the people and technologies which are working together to produce smarter and more efficient water use in agricultural fields, landscapes and turfgrasses, the site states.

“July continues to serve as our month to not only celebrate everything our industry has to offer but also educate the public on the importance of smart irrigation,” says IA Government and Public Affairs Director John Farner.

“It’s our month to talk about the importance of water, the importance of smart and efficient irrigation, and the importance of our industry to the growth and success of our society.”

For more information and resources about Smart Irrigation Month, please visit www.smartirrigationmonth.org.

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