

# THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

A PUBLICATION OF FRIENDS OF THE WILD FLOWER GARDEN, INC.

## Owls of the Garden

By Rod Miller

**I**n the cold of winter, new life begins in the nest of Great Horned Owls right in the backyard of Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. A family of owls has been observed at the Garden for many years. Many in the nearby Bryn Mawr neighborhood report hearing the owls from the Garden parking lot when walking in the woods or right outside their bedroom windows. It's most likely you will hear the four to five hoots of the male owl "hoo-h'HOO-hoo-hoo" at dawn and dusk before you see him. A higher pitched voice with a few more syllables is the female. She's also about 30% larger than the male. The owls are frequently heard and seen on the footpath surrounded by White Pine and Spruce trees just east of the Garden. Neighbors also report hearing owls near The Bryn Mawr Meadows, Bassett Creek along Chestnut and in Wirth Woods west of Xerxes. Beginning in October the owls become more vocal, defining their territory and claiming a nest. In January you'll hear their mating calls, called a duet.



Photo: Nina Hale

Although I've been hearing and seeing the owls for years, last winter I decided to observe their courtship, mating and nesting behavior. They are large owls named for the tufts of feathers on their head, which are neither horns nor ears. Great Horned Owls mate for life, nest, raise their young called broods and live in Minnesota year round. They rarely build their own nest but move into nests already built by other large birds, such as hawks and crows, in cavities of trees and sometimes in the nests of squirrels. While Great Horned Owls have one of the most diverse diets of all North American



Photo: Roy Larson

raptors, they mainly eat small rodents and mammals. An owl is not likely to hunt your small dogs or cats hanging out in your back yards but it has been reported.

**Great Horned Owls** usually lay eggs in late January or the first of February. They will hatch in about 30 days, certainly by the time you will read this article. They raise only one brood a year, usually with 2 owlets. I observed the Garden owls mating the month of January and first week of February just outside the Garden. I observed the owls mating the month of January and first week of February just outside the Garden. As of February 15, it appears the owls have chosen a nest in the pines just east of the Garden. The female assumes primary responsibility for incubating the eggs while the male brings food for her and the nestlings. If all goes according to plan, hatchlings should appear around the second week of March. By the end of March, you may hear the owlets clapping their bills or shrieking, as they beg their parents for food. Around the middle of April, they will begin climbing from the nest to nearby branches. They are called "branchers" then and you can see them sitting in the sun. After developing wing feathers in early May, they become fledglings as they clumsily learn to fly from branch to branch. They will move out of the nest by mid-June and will be moving around more as they learn to fly and hunt for food.

**You'll have to search to find them.** The adults care for the juveniles throughout the summer and fall, feeding them while teaching them to hunt until they reach sexual maturity in 1-2 years. The feeding territory established by the adults usually cannot support more owls so the juveniles are chased out of the territory by their parents usually in December before the next breeding season. Occasionally, one may hang around a bit longer still begging for food. (continued on page 2 ⇨ ⇨)





## President's Greeting

By Jennifer Olson

Spring is coming! Vaccines are arriving! I am hopeful.

The Garden will open in April when the snow and ice have disappeared. Initially masks, social distancing, and one-way trails with limited hours will continue as we did in 2020.

Researchers from the University of Vermont collected data from 3200 online surveys by Vermonters during 16 days in May 2020 at a time when their governor had placed restrictions on businesses and social gatherings to limit the impact of COVID-19. Respondents reported increased participation in outdoor activities: walking up 70%, wildlife watching up 64%, relaxing outside alone up 58% and taking photos and creating art up 54%. Nearly 60% of participants experienced improved mental health and well-being being outdoors.

A January 2021 Audubon magazine article described data. The German Center for Integrative Biodiversity connected greater bird biodiversity to increased life satisfaction in 26,000 Europeans and seeing 10% more bird species generates satisfaction on par with a comparable increase in income. Researchers from Cal Poly reported hikers who listened to birdsong had a better overall experience and felt greater joy.

I believe those who walk the trails of the Garden and witness the change of the seasons feel these rewards. The natural world is our friend, be a friend to the natural world.

May The Garden Be With You,

*Jennifer Olson*



Our new president teaching about everything required for a Lady Slipper to grow. Photo J. Olson



Photo: Roy Larson

## Owls of the

**Garden** continued  
from page 1:

The white, speckled downy feathers on the breasts of the owlets make them easier to find than the adults. If you find an owlet, look around. An adult owl will always be nearby protecting it and more important, feeding it.

If you hear the alert calls of Blue Jays or American Crows, look around. There's a good chance they have found the owls and are harassing them. They don't get along.

When you see the Great Horned Owl and their owlets, you will be mesmerized.

Try not to stress them by making noise, making hooting calls, trying to make them fly or by getting too close. You might even consider watching owls and other birds as a hobby. Bird watching gets you out of the house into nature for some exercise and will give you something fun to talk about with your friends. Oh, you'll also see some fantastic birds that otherwise go unnoticed. To learn more about birds and observe them in the Garden, considering joining Garden Naturalist Tammy Mercer on Saturday mornings for the Early Birders program from April through October. (Special thanks to Tammy who helped with this article).❖

(Online references:

[https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great\\_Horned\\_Owl/id](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Great_Horned_Owl/id)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great\\_horned\\_owl](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Great_horned_owl)

<https://www.internationalowlcenter.org>)

Rod Miller is a neighbor of the Garden, former volunteer, and participant in its programming.





## Curator's Notes

By Susan Wilkins

We will continue to be guided by State of Minnesota and Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board practices and procedures related to the pandemic at the Garden throughout the season.

To stay up to date with Garden hours, updates and information please visit [www.minneapolisparke.org/ebwg](http://www.minneapolisparke.org/ebwg) frequently throughout the season. Another great way to keep in touch with the Garden and what's happening there is to keep in touch with the Garden's Facebook and Instagram pages.

See you at the Garden! ♦

**G**reetings and happy spring! We are looking forward to welcoming visitors to the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary this spring.

The Garden will operate under similar parameters as last season, with one-way trails, staggered entry times and social distancing requirements. We received a significant amount of positive feedback from Garden visitors in 2020, noting that the systems in place provided for a comfortable and safe visitor experience.



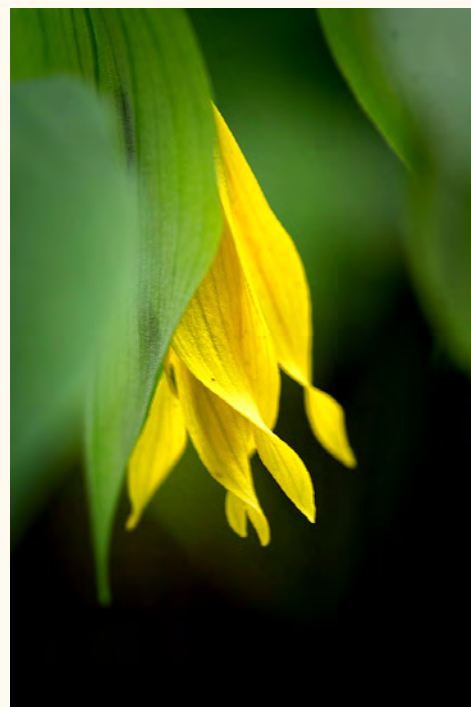
This article appears courtesy of the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. Susan Wilkins has been Curator since 2004.

Left: A fragrant harbinger of warmer days, the wild plum graces the upland garden with its delicate blooms. Photo by Bob Ambler



Mallards making the rounds of the Garden territory on a spring thaw day.  
Photo by Bob Ambler

## Reminders of Spring



Large-flowered Bellwort, a spring perennial, peeks from beneath its leaves. Photo by Bob Ambler

### Garden Facebook and Instagram pages.

[www.facebook.com/ebwgmpls](http://www.facebook.com/ebwgmpls)  
[www.instagram.com/ebwgmpls](http://www.instagram.com/ebwgmpls)



Opportunistic hepatica make the most of warmer days, even with snow still on the ground. Photo by Bob Ambler



# Our Native Dogwoods

By Gary Bebeau



**D**ogwoods add a rich texture to the landscape - with the showy flower clusters of late Spring, the colorful fruit of Summer, the leaf color of Autumn, and the variety of bark color year around. The genus is *Cornus*, from the Latin *cornu* which refers to a 'horn'.

That name refers to the density of the wood which was once used for loom shuttles and spindles. Six Dogwoods are considered native to Minnesota, five are indigenous to the Wildflower Garden -



**Bunchberry**

Bunchberry, Red osier, Gray, Pagoda, and Round-leaf. The missing one, Silky (or Pale), was added in 1913. Five are shrubs and one is herbaceous and less seen as it is an acidic bog dweller - *Cornus canadensis* - the Bunchberry - and it alone has

showy white bracts and inconspicuous flowers that produce red fruit. Four of the six remain in the Garden Round-leaf and Bunchberry having gone missing.

**Eloise Butler** considered then all to be bog dwellers but today one is more likely to find a few of them in a variety of habitats. Except for the herbaceous Bunchberry they grow as shrubs. The flowers of the shrubs are similar, in stalked clusters at the end of twigs. Leaves are usually longer than wide without teeth. Eloise Butler remarked that "*The dogwoods richly furnish forth the bird tables*" and it is by the fruits yea shall know them - but only during a short period until the birds eat them all. Fortunately identification is not impossible, so here is a short-course.

**Each Dogwood flower** is small, 1/4 inch wide, 4-parted with a short 4-toothed calyx, 4 spreading lance-shaped white petals, 4 stamens on long filaments with yellow anthers and a single yellow-green pistil with a single style that has a knob-like tip. Preferring marshes and other moist areas with sun are Red osier (*C. sericea*) and Silky (*C. obliqua*). Both flower clusters look similar as do the leaves but only Red-osier has reddish

bark with white spots (lenticels) in all but summertime, the leaves are deep purplish red in autumn, the drupes (fruits) are leadish-white with pale red stalks.. Silky has purplish bark with reddish undertones and dark blue drupes with unexceptional stalks. The Roundleaf (*C. rugosa*) likes moisture but with shade. The leaf is - yes - roundish, the stem is greenish, and the fruit is light blue on pale red stalks.

**Tolerating both shade and sun**, moist soils and slightly drier soils is the Pagoda (*C. alternifolia*) which is the only one of these dogwoods that can grow as a small tree instead of a multi-stemmed shrub. It will try to be a multi-stemmed shrub,

but thinning the suckers when young will produce a small tree. The names tell you a lot. It looks like a pagoda shape with the branches horizontal in tiers of decreasing width holding glossy alternate placed leaves (*alternifolia*) in tufts at the end of twigs.



Upright flower clusters of Pagoda Dogwood

All the other dogwoods have opposite leaves. The

flower clusters are a little more flat-topped and larger, the fruit is dark blue with red stalks, the bark is similar to Silky but rougher.

**Willing the leave the bogs and marshes without regret** is the Gray Dogwood (*C. racemosa*). It will handle drier upland type soils and likes sun - so much so that former Gardener Cary George considered it "*one of the woody plants that plague the prairie garden.*"



Bark of (l to r) Red Osier, Silky, Gray and Pagoda Dogwood

Again, the names tell the story - the bark is gray and flower cluster is more elongated, like a raceme (*racemosa*). The fruit is a nice white on red stalks and when set off against the purplish-red autumn leaves - it is quite a sight!❖

Gary Bebeau is a Friends board member.

Photo credits: Bunchberry flower, Robert Mohlenbrock; fruit, Steve Garske. Round leaf Dogwood, Christopher Noll. All others Gary Bebeau.



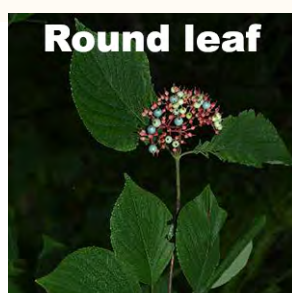
**Red Osier**



**Pagoda**



**Silky**



**Round leaf**



**Gray**



# The Art of Collecting Native Seeds

by Lauren Husting

**H**ave you ever wondered what the mechanics of seed harvesting are, or wanted to try it yourself? It can be a great way to foster your own pollinator-friendly yard, or help out a community garden. For many environmental agencies and native plant distributors, as well as hobbyists and avid gardeners, hand-collecting native seed is a year-round effort to keep native populations thriving.

**Seed collectors follow** a few important ground rules when it comes to sourcing plants. Collecting on public lands is generally frowned upon unless there are local foraging laws that may allow it, and permission to collect on private lands should be obtained. Individuals foraging should take care not to harvest more than a tenth of the seeds from the available plant population.

**A working knowledge** of what the target plant's ripe seeds look like is essential to ensure harvesting occurs at the proper time. Mature seeds are usually dark in color, and will not dent when pressed with a fingernail. Since the fluctuation of seasonal weather can give plants a head start or delay their seed cycle, plant collectors must constantly check in with their intended stock to check for readiness.

**The seed collector's toolkit** includes a good pair of boots, gloves, and pruning shears, as well as drop cloths, boxes, canvas or paper bags, and buckets/baskets. Plastic bags can be used for collection, but generally are not used for storage unless the seeds are completely cleaned and dried. Some plants can be stripped by hand; others can be threshed over containers or fabric. Seeds are taken directly from the plant or only very recently dropped pods or fruit to avoid collecting insects and mold, and plants that dehisce (burst open, like jewelweed and milkweed) can have paper bags tied over seed pods just before maturation to catch the seeds as they emerge. Savvy seed collectors label as they go, noting the specifics of each seed they collect.

**Cleaning is optional** for many seeds, but saves on storage space and discourages pests. Seed coverings that are pulpy, like most fruits, need to be removed fully in order to prevent mold. First, seeds are set to dry on fabric or racks and elevated from the ground with gentle airflow. Once dry, they can be rubbed over a screen with a bucket underneath to catch the falling crop or gently pressed with a rolling pin or block.

Once this time-intensive task is done, the seeds are finally ready to be stored until it is time to plant! Minnesota seeds usually undergo periods of cold and thaw in the winter, so keeping them in a fridge with some slight humidity is often the best approach. The best time to start germinating the hard-won seeds depends on the type of plant and its particular growing needs.

**If you want to start** collecting your own native seeds, a good place to start is the common milkweed. Easy to identify and harvest, milkweed plants provide a vibrant ecosystem for Minnesota pollinators. Starting in the early fall, don your gardening gloves and look for seed pods that are browning or gray, but not yet open. If you squeeze a closed pod and it pops open, it's ready! At home, pull the seed & fluff out of the pod and place in a paper bag with a few coins. Shake the bag vigorously, and then cut a small hole in a bottom corner to let out the now fluff-free seeds. Leave out to dry overnight on a rack or plate, and then store in the fridge for the winter. You can also plant seeds in the fall after harvest, as Mother Nature intended!



A milkweed pod at just the right moment for easy seed collection  
Photo Lauren Husting.

Whether you decide to hunt your own seeds or leave it to the pros, you can appreciate the hard work and dedication that goes into native seed collecting. Our local plant community thrives because of these efforts and we all reap the benefits.❖

Lauren Husting is a Friends board member

# Honoring Eloise Butler

Namesake of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden in Minneapolis Minnesota By Karen I. Shragg



**T**his is a love letter to a woman responsible for preserving a beautiful oasis near the home where I grew up. Eloise Butler lived at the turn of the last century, yet I have always identified with her journey. I too became a schoolteacher who stepped out of the noise of the classroom in order to work in and protect my beloved world of nature.

**In the 1980's** I found myself a burnt out teacher, so I started on a path that led me to find healing and direction for my life as a volunteer in the Martha Crone Shelter. Talking to visitors and photographing wildflowers were just what I needed. It turned out that my experiences in the Garden led to my career as a naturalist and nature center director.

To pay homage to the goals of this woman who, in spite of the unfair treatment of women seeking careers at the turn of the last century, was able to achieve so much, we owe her memory and life's accomplishments a new round of discussion.

**This new discussion I propose** is about the forces that work against conservation. Often framed as a fight between greedy developers and conservationists, there is one more player involved. This player is best introduced by looking at the world in 1907 when Eloise was fighting for the Garden. The United States had just reached the 87 million mark in population and the global population was 1.75 billion. In Minneapolis where the Garden is located, just next to the suburb of Golden Valley where I grew up, the population was just over 200,000. The state of Minnesota had not yet reached 2 million. If those numbers had stayed the same, life would be so different, and conservationists would be on easy street. Instead conservation principles are increasingly under attack by developers. The very fact that Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden still exists in a world of 429,000+ Minneapolis

residents, 5.68 million Minnesotans, 331 million Americans and nearly 8 billion people globally can only be considered a game changer worth examining.

**The first lessons** we learn and teach as naturalists are all about the food chain and how the plants as producers are the foundations for life. As one travels up the food chain those dependent on these food and oxygen

makers must be limited in numbers for life to remain in balance. Much of what we are experiencing in our failures to protect the natural world can surely be attributable to greed and lack of land ethics, but we cannot keep ignoring the sheer force of our ever increasing numbers. We act as if adding over 6 billion people to the earth since this visionary Eloise Butler lived has had little impact on wildflowers and wildlife. Even worse we view overpopulation as an overseas problem, when our growth in the US is also out of control and fueling the justification for why development is more important than preserving our flora and fauna. This is a shortsighted approach.

**Those who might consider** conservation often choose to focus on encouraging people to use cloth bags, avoid pesticides, and ride bicycles. Those are all good suggestions, but remember we are apex predators so just our water demand, our use of sanitation and energy, and our need for food and shelter act as a giant bulldozer locally and globally. Even a 1000 Eloise Butlers could not stop this stampede.

I doubt whether the destructive force of overpopulation was on Eloise Butler's mind in her day, but she was smart and courageous, so I would bet, if she were alive today, she would be taking up the reins on this issue like so many of my colleagues have been doing. Nothing would honor her legacy more than to find ways to bring this critically important topic back to the conservation table before it's too late. ❖

Karen I Shragg is an author, poet, retired naturalist, nature center director and overpopulation activist. She has spoken around the world about overpopulation and authored the book, "Move Upstream a Call to Solve Overpopulation" in 2015.



Eloise Butler as a young teacher, ca. 1890.  
Blanch's Studio, Minneapolis.  
Photo courtesy MN Historical Society.



Wildflower Garden office designed in 1915 by Eloise Butler.  
Photo ca 1935, courtesy Martha Crone Collection, MN Historical Society



## Membership - Memorials - Donations

Memorials and donations to the Friends are tax deductible and are an important part of keeping the Garden a special place for generations of people to enjoy. In 2021 donations will be used to fund the Student Transportation Grant Program and plant purchases for the Garden. Project information is on our website. An acknowledgment of donation will be provided to all donors.

### Donations Received

Anonymous; Emily Anderson; Dan & Vi LaBelle  
Susan Elsner; Meg Forney; Ellen Lipschultz;  
Ruth Miller; Win & Binky Rockwell;  
Pam Weiner & James Wittenberg.

### Memorials/In-Honor-Of Received

for Natalie Tittrington Quinn from:  
John and Carol Quinn.  
for Harriet Betzold from: Pam Weiner; Shufica Fund.  
In-honor-of The Webbs from: Ellen Lipschultz.

New Member - Betsy Kerr

### The Student Transportation Grant Program

This program makes it possible for Minneapolis Area school children to come to the Garden for a learning experience and for a rare opportunity to experience the natural world. Many of these children may never have that experience as they simply do not have the funds to make a school trip. This grant to a school covers bus transportation fees for eligible groups.

Since the inception of this program in 2009, 4,665 students have been able to visit the Garden with their class transportation subsidized. The Friends have provided over \$15,400 in funding for this program. You can help keep this program going. \$5 will pay for a student's transportation cost. Use the form below or the donations page on our website to donate.



## Member Notes

Last Summer we noted who our 50+ year members are. Now we want to highlight our 40+ year members.

John & Joan Haldeman- 48 years  
Jeremy Nichols & Evelyn Turner- 42 years  
Susan & Robert Warde- 41 years  
Many thanks for your continuing long term support of our program.

### Want to honor someone?

Make a gift to the Garden in their honor. We will notify them of your gift and of how they can receive our newsletter and other communications for the year ahead. This will introduce them to the Friends and to the Garden. Use the form below or go to our website memorials page.

### Shelter Volunteers - 50 years of service

When the new Martha E. Crone Shelter was planned Friends President Cay Faragher wanted to have a group of "hosts" available to greet visitors. Mildred Olson organized the program in 1970, then Dr. Marian Grimes took it over and ran it for the next 10 years. Now we name them "shelter docents" but they do the same service. Our current coordinator for the program is Melissa Hansen who has been at it for 8 years.

Special thanks to our longest serving shelter docents:  
Ann Godfrey, Pam Weiner, Phoebe Waugh, Connie Pepin, Susan Dean.

## Membership - Donation - Memorial Form

Membership, donation, memorial and in-honor-of payments can be placed online at [www.friendsofeloisebutler.org](http://www.friendsofeloisebutler.org) or mailed with a check payable to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden  
P. O.Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

If a payment is for an in-honor-of gift, list that persons name and address. That person will receive a notification from the Friends. For a memorial donation please give us the name and address of the family or person to be notified.

Thank you for helping to sustain the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary. All gifts are tax-deductible and are used to support our program. Thank you notes will be sent for all gifts and your name will be listed in our next newsletter.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Information

Levels: ☐ Individual \$15 ☐ Duo/Family \$25  
☐ Sponsor \$100 ☐ Sustainer \$200 ☐ Life \$500  
Newsletter by ☐ Email OR ☐ Postal

Donations Amount:\$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Memorials and Gifts In-Honor of \$

This is a ☐ memorial for: ☐ gift in-honor-of:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Please notify: \_\_\_\_\_

### About Us

The Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc. is a non-profit organization of private citizens whose purpose is to protect, preserve, and promote the interests of the Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary for its unique beauty and as a sanctuary for native flora and fauna of Minnesota, and to educate and inspire people of all ages in relating to the natural world.

The *Fringed Gentian*<sup>TM</sup> is published for members and supporters of the Friends. For changes to your mailing address or email address, please email:

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Christi Bystedt at:

[membership@friendsofeloisebutler.org](mailto:membership@friendsofeloisebutler.org)  
or mail to:

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc.  
Membership  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis, MN 55403-0793

## THE FRINGED GENTIAN™

Friends of the Wild Flower Garden, Inc  
P.O. Box 3793  
Minneapolis MN 55403-0793  
[www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org](http://www.friendsofthewildflowergarden.org)



The Eloise Butler Wildflower Garden and Bird Sanctuary comprises cultivated but naturalistic woodland, wetland and prairie environments, 2/3 mile of mulch covered pathways and a rustic shelter where educational programming and guide materials can be found. It is the oldest public wildflower

garden in the United States, established in 1907. The 15 acre site is located within the city of Minneapolis on traditional Dakota homelands and is owned and operated by the Minneapolis Park & Recreation Board. The Garden is open from April 1 through October 15 from 7:30 A.M. to one hour before sunset. Weekends only October 15 to October 31.

*The Fringed Gentian™ Staff*

Colin Bartol, editor

Lauren Husting, assistant editor

Bob Ambler, staff photographer

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The mysterious ice man Zug Zug was found near Theodore Wirth parkway. Hopefully you saw him before the snow melted. Photo by Kelli Bartol.

"As we all know, a garden is never done. This incompleteness, this imperfection is really the secret to the Wildflower Garden's beauty." Cary George, Gardener 1987-2003

### Can you identify this plant?



It flowers in the wetland in early May and grows 1 to 3 feet high. The answer is on pg. 128 of the Plant Identification Book, 3rd Ed. Or pg. 75 2nd Ed. Or on website home page.

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