

DECEMBER 2024

WATERSHED WISE

Mason Conservation District



Upcoming Events

- 12/01 Native Plant Sale Opens
(See pages 5-8 for more info)
- 1/08 From Weeds to Wildlife:
Create a Native Habitat in
Your Garden
6:00pm - 7:00pm
at Timberland Regional Library,
North Mason-Belfair
- 2/8 Landscaping with Native Plants
Workshop in cooperation with
WSU TTGG
9:30pm - 12:00pm
Mason County Public Works



GROWING COMMUNITY AND ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY

It's the season for enjoying community and working for the greater good. This fall volunteers from throughout the county, Salish Roots Farm, and CIELO joined Mason Conservation District (MCD) staff to harvest gourds from Hunter Farms for local food pantries. Nearly four tons of squash were harvested and distributed at the weekly Salish Roots Farm Stand and Shelton's CIELO monthly food pantry. The day was a bigger success than we could have hoped for. Volunteers delighted in spending a cool sunny day in the pumpkin patch, sorting through the largest and lumpiest gourds so that our communities could enjoy the flavors and festivities of the fall holidays. We are so grateful for the support of the community in this endeavor.

MEET OUR NEWEST STAFF

COLIN TIERNEY

>>> HABITAT RESTORATION PROJECT MANAGER



Colin Tierney has worked in the natural resources conservation and restoration arena for almost 20 years. Originally hailing from NW Oregon, he studied Fish and Wildlife Science at Oregon State. After school, he pursued a career in wetland and waterfowl ecology and eventually found a passion for restoration science. Since then, he has worked as a habitat biologist in Wyoming, Oregon, and now Washington. He has worked in both aquatic and terrestrial restoration positions, with a passion for wetland, prairie, and oak woodland ecosystems. He has experience in all aspects of project management, from planning to implementation. A field ecologist now sentenced to life in a cubical, he is happiest when outdoors, especially when running chainsaws, but is most often found geeking out over birds or plants. He is often accompanied by his notoriously naughty German Wirehaired

Pointer, Charlie. In his personal life, he lives in Poulsbo with his wife, two kids, three dogs, two rabbits and his native plants. In his free time, he enjoys hunting, fishing, camping, work parties, social parties, and building/breaking/fixing things (in no particular order). Here at Mason CD, he is working on several projects, including several in the Skokomish watershed, and will be taking on much of the Skokomish Watershed Action Team coordination. He is happy to talk to folks interested in the habitat restoration projects in the area, native plants, or anything really.

SABINA AHMED

>>> EVERGREEN STATE COLLEGE CLIMATE RESILIENCY INTERN

Sabina found her way to becoming a Mason Conservation District/Evergreen Intern through her interests of conservation and curiosities among “who gets to shape landscapes and plan the plantings” ideas. She has her associates in Biology from SPSCC and is currently working on a Bachelor’s degree focusing on Agroecology and Fiber Arts at the Evergreen State College.

Her previous work experience includes working as a leader on multiple farms in both Oregon and

Washington. On the side, Sabina enjoys basket weaving and whitewater rafting. This term, Sabina has worked on creating a pollinator habitat at Callanan Park, one of Mason Conservation District’s Community Gardens, Sabina has also assisted in our current Indigenous Agroforestry grant for the Squaxin Island Tribe’s Salish Roots Farm.



NEW FACES ON THE CREW



»»» MEET OUR RESTORATION CREW

Our hardworking restoration crew is at the heart of our habitat improvement efforts. During the winter and spring, they plant thousands of native trees and shrubs along local waterways, helping restore critical habitats and improve water quality.

In the summer and fall, their focus shifts to combating invasive species like Himalayan blackberry, Scotch broom, Japanese knotweed, and reed canary grass. By removing these aggressive plants, the crew ensures that native vegetation can thrive, creating healthier ecosystems for wildlife and people alike. Their dedication makes a lasting impact on our landscapes year-round!

We are thrilled to welcome Everett Crichton, Laura Tuttle, Matt Madara, Sophia Schmidt, and Thomas Keeffe, to our crew team. We are also proud of our crew members that have moved into new roles at MCD. Chase Johnson is our new Habitat Restoration Crew Lead, assisted by Kat Rogers. Former crew member Dakota Oliver is now an Engineering Technician, and Mariesa Flores is MCD's new Riparian Project Technician.

FISH PASSAGE PROJECT UNDER THE HIGH STEEL BRIDGE

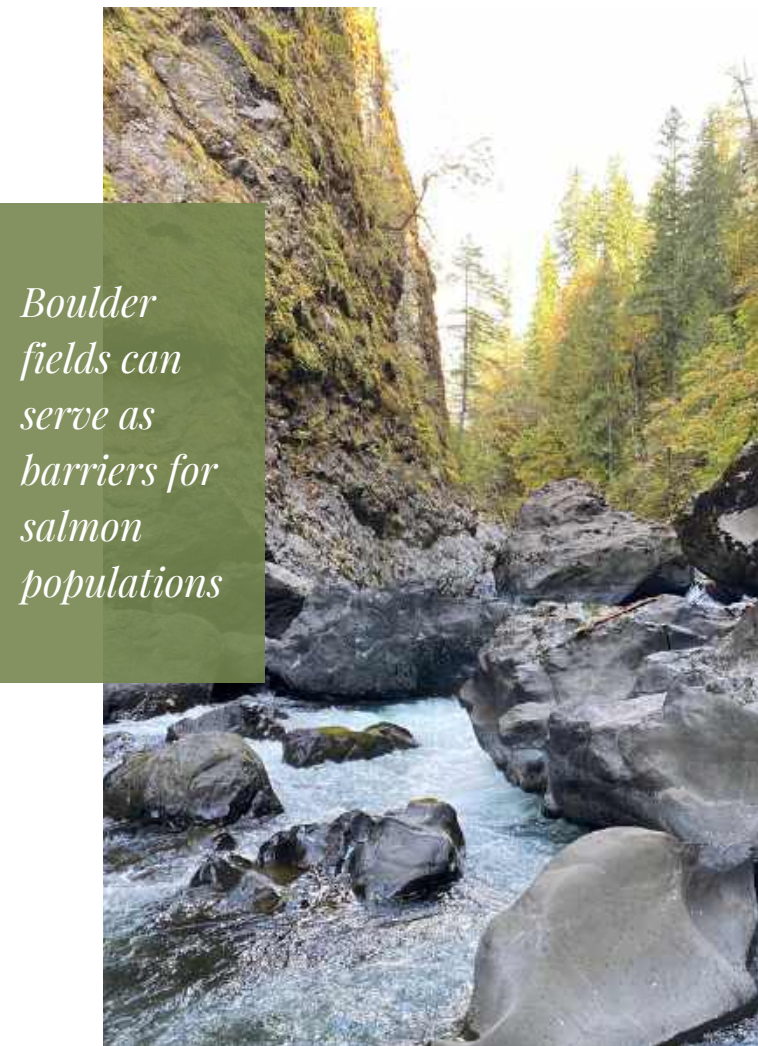
»»» SUPPORTING TRIBAL EFFORTS

Chinook salmon recovery has been a priority for the Skokomish Tribe for decades. In recent years, ecologists and conservationists for the Tribe and supporting organizations have focused efforts on the Upper South Fork Skokomish River. The Skokomish River Canyon is characterized by a series of boulder fields. Some of these boulder clusters span the entire channel and, at low flows, act as barriers to fish migration.

In the early phases of projects such as these, ecologists, engineers, and geologists spend time surveying the project area to understand how the river shapes and is shaped by the landscape. In the initial survey and geological assessment, the project team conducted topographic surveys and took measurements of the sediment and boulders in the water. Last month, the project team, including MCD's own Andy Sorter, District Engineer, and Matt Phillips, Engineering Technician, reassessed the area to evaluate whether significant changes, such as slides or movement of house-sized boulders, had occurred.

»»» EXPLORING POSSIBILITIES

The next steps for the project involve updating the geologic report and refining recommendations based on the latest findings. The team will develop preliminary engineering designs and present them to stakeholders and contractors to explore alternatives, evaluate constructability, and discuss potential impacts and mitigation strategies. Following these discussions, the project will advance to hydraulic analyses, final engineering designs, permitting, and eventually, construction. The collaborative effort with the Tribe, which utilizes advanced tools like drones and LIDAR technology, is a critical part of this work to restore connectivity and support the recovery of Chinook salmon in the Skokomish River.



Boulder fields can serve as barriers for salmon populations



Evaluating the geological features of the South Fork Skokomish River.

GUIDED SHELLFISH DIG

>>> EDUCATING & EMPOWERING

Mason County is home to many thriving shellfish producers, a fact well known to most residents. However, some community members who wanted to harvest shellfish found the practice intimidating due to uncertainty around regulations, tools, and local conditions. In response, MCD partnered with Capitol Land Trust and Mason County Health to offer a guided shellfish dig at Bayshore Preserve. MCD provided a checklist with essential gear, guidance on purchasing licenses, and steps for checking local harvesting regulations, including how to use the DOH Shellfish Safety Map to ensure safe harvesting.

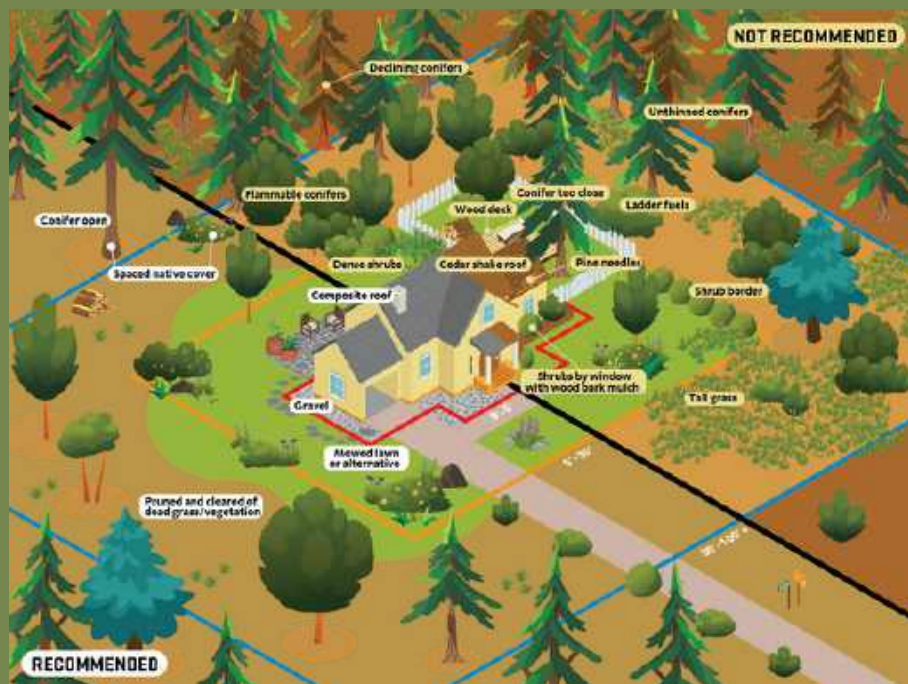
>>> SUPPORTING SUCCESS

On the day of the event, MCD staff and Board President Jason Ragan from Taylor United led participants through hands-on demonstrations on locating, identifying, and measuring clams and oysters, including using clam gauges to ensure compliance with Washington's legal harvesting sizes. Partners from Capitol Land Trust, Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group, and Mason County Health further explained the preserve's ecosystem, water quality, and the link between clean water, sustainable farming, and healthy shellfish populations. Through this experience, participants gained practical harvesting skills and a deeper understanding of how sustainable practices support Mason County's iconic shellfish.



Participants learn to shuck oysters and leave the shells on the beach to support habitat health.

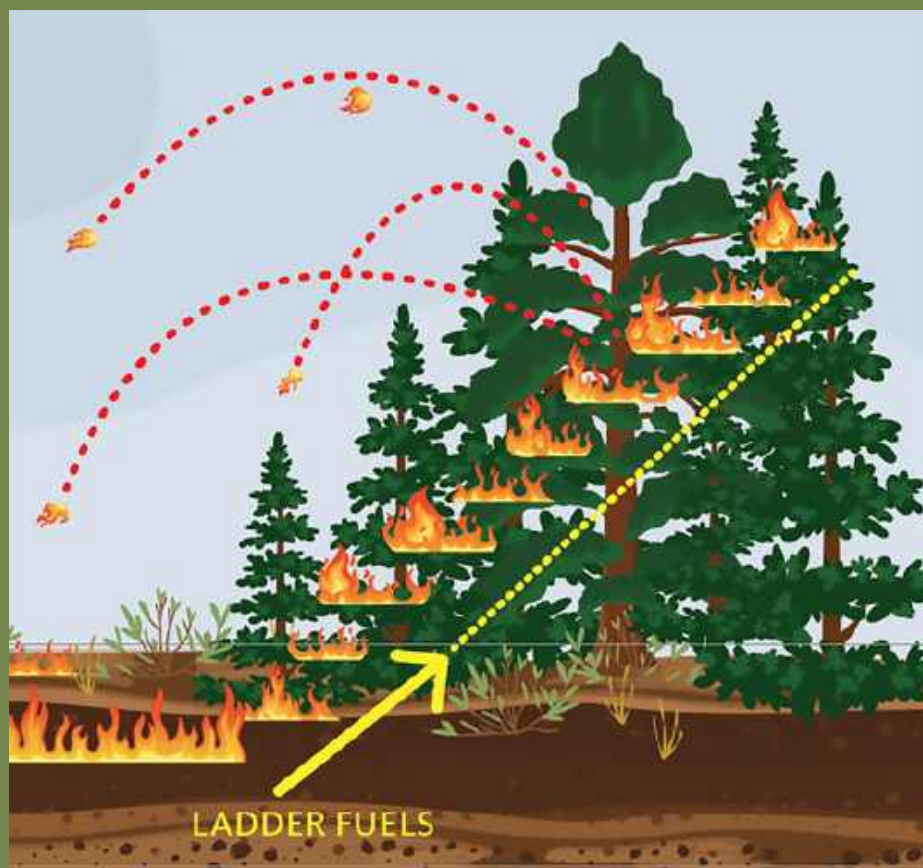
LANDSCAPING WITH FIRE-RESISTANT PLANTS



With all the buzz to incorporate native pollinator landscapes, did you know many of our native plants are also fire-resistant? Fire-wise landscaping is another consideration that can feed pollinator species while keeping your home more resilient against ignition from landscaping-related fires. It is important to keep in mind that plants from these lists are only fire-resistant, not fire-proof, and any landscaping that gets out of hand or is planted too close to the home is considered high-risk as a fire hazard. The key to fire-resistant landscaping comes down to breaking up contiguous fuels by using hardscapes like rock, pavers, and

cement walkways and creating landscaping in small clumps of either fire-resistant or well-watered/maintained plants and widely spaced-out trees (18 feet between crowns). Begin looking at the space around your home as a series of zones or defensible spaces. These Home Ignition Zones are ways we look at disrupting fire, from connecting the dots to igniting your home. Ideally, the first 0-5 feet (Immediate zone) should be without any vegetation or flammable fuels, such as bark mulch; this zone is always the most important defensible space for preventing sustained fire directly up against the home. Working outward, 5-30 feet (Intermediate Zone) is where landscaping can start to be created in small, widely spaced clusters keeping any tree selection to a minimum and avoiding highly flammable conifer species. Everything 30-100ft (Extended Zone) should be kept tidy, grasses cut short/well-watered, and trees should

be limbed for ladder fuels (10-15 feet up from the ground or maintaining 2/3 live crown). Tall shrubs that may overlap with low-hanging tree canopies should be kept to a manageable height (up to 5ft) limiting fire transferring vertically. The plants listed are just a small variety that meets both fire resistance and are available at our plant sale this year. It should be noted that while landscaping with native Common Yarrow, it's recommended to keep it a further distance from the home because of how easily it can spread seeds and creep closer. For further information on other plants to select, see resources such as [Fire-Resistant Plants for Home Landscapes by Oregon State University Extension](#).



Fire-Resistant Package



Common Yarrow

Red Flowering Currant

Each plant in the package comes in bundles of three.

Enhance your landscape with these five fire-resistant native plants, perfect for Western Washington’s full-sun areas:

- Mock Orange: Fragrant white blooms attract pollinators.
- Shrubby Cinquefoil: Compact shrub with bright yellow flowers.
- Pacific Ninebark: Unique peeling bark and white flower clusters.
- Common Yarrow: Hardy perennial with fern-like foliage and white blooms.
- Red Flowering Currant: Vibrant red-pink flowers loved by hummingbirds.

Create a low-maintenance, fire-smart garden that’s both beautiful and resilient.

Natural Yard Care Package



Each plant in the package comes in bundles of three.

Transform your yard into a haven for pollinators with these easy-to-grow native plants, perfect for Northwest landscapes:

- Red Flowering Currant: Bright red-pink blooms attract hummingbirds.
- Western Bleeding Heart: Delicate, heart-shaped flowers thrive in shaded spots.
- Tufted Hairgrass: Graceful clumps of grass add texture and habitat.
- Purple Coneflower: Bold purple blooms loved by bees and butterflies.
- Thin-Leaf Huckleberry: Edible berries and charming foliage for year-round interest.

This package creates a vibrant, pollinator-friendly yard with minimal maintenance.

Learn, Plant, Grow your Native Yard.

NATURAL YARD CARE WORKSHOPS

From Weeds to Wildlife: Create a Native Habitat in Your Garden

Wednesday, January 8th - 6:00pm-7:00pm, 23081 NE State Route 3, Belfair

Transform your outdoor space by removing aggressive invasive plants and replacing them with beautiful native species. Our workshop covers everything from weed control to selecting the best native plants for pollinator-friendly and wildlife-supporting landscapes.

Natural Landscaping Made Easy: A Guide to Native Plants

Saturday, February 8th - 9:30pm-12:00pm, 100 W Public Works Drive, Shelton

Join MCD staff as we present at WSU’s Through the Garden Gate Workshop Series! Learn how to incorporate native plants into your landscape for a beautiful, healthy, and environmentally friendly yard. We’ll cover the importance of planting native species and share best practices for designing, planting, and maintaining a natural yard that supports local wildlife and conserves resources.



For more information, visit masoncd.org or call us at 360-427-9436

Order online at masoncd.org

Number of Bundles	Plant Species	Plant Size	Price Per Bundle	Amount
	Evergreen Trees			
	Alaska Yellow Cedar	Plug	5 Tree for \$9.90	
	Douglas-fir	12" Bare Root	5 Trees for \$15.20	
	Grand Fir	12" Bare Root	5 Trees for \$8.70	
	Incense Cedar	12" Bare Root	5 Trees for \$8.70	
	Ponderosa Pine	12" Bare Root	5 Trees for \$8.70	
	Western Redcedar	Plug	5 Trees for \$15.20	
	Deciduous Trees			
	Bigleaf Maple	18" Bare Root	5 Trees for \$16.30	
	Herbaceous Perennials			
	Broadleaf Stonecrop	Bare Root	5 Plants for \$5.95	
	Cascade Penstemon	Bare Root	5 Plants for \$5.95	
	Goatsbeard	Bare Root	5 Plants for \$8.05	
	Hairy Sweetgrass	6-12" Bare Root	5 Plants for \$10.45	
	Oregon Sunshine	Bare Root	5 Plants for \$5.95	
	Sea Thrift	Bare Root	5 Plants for \$8.05	
	Shrubs			
	Baldhip Rose	12" Bare Root	5 Shrubs for \$16.85	
	Nootka Rose	12" Bare Root	5 Shrubs for \$15.40	
	Oval-leaf Huckleberry	Plug	5 Shrubs for \$17.95	
	Thimbleberry	12" Bare Root	5 Plugs for \$15.20	
Number of Packages			Price Per Package:	
	Fire-Resistant Package		15 Plants \$39.80	
	Natural Yard Care Package		15 Plants \$30.05	
			Total	

PLANT SALE INFORMATION Online Store Opens December 1st



Quantities are limited and sold on a first come first serve basis, so don't wait.

- »» Plants are sold in bundles of five, except for the Natural Yard Care and Fire Resistant Packages.
- »» View, Order, and Pay for Plants **Online**. Payment via credit card is required for all online purchases.

Plant Pick Up:

Friday, February 21st, 10:00am to 5:00pm

Saturday, February 22nd 9:00am to 2:00pm

COMMON NAME GENUS SPECIES	HEIGHT	CLASSIFICATION	Habitat and Growth Characteristics. Typical Uses and Description.
EVERGREEN TREES			
Alaska Yellow Cedar <i>Chamaecyparis nootkatensis</i>	80'	  	A prized ornamental species with attractive foliage and graceful growth habit. Grows in dry to moist conditions.
Douglas-fir <i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	250'	  	Important food source for chickadees, finches, and Douglas squirrel. Grows best in full sun to part shade on well-drained soil.
Grand Fir <i>Abies grandis</i>	250'	  	Glossy, dark green to bright green needles. Grows in dry to moist conditions and is a shade tolerant species.
Incense Cedar <i>Calocedrus decurrens</i>	100'	  	Dense fan-like foliage, reddish brown bark and pleasant odor. Grows biggest in moist, well-drained, soil but will tolerate hot, dry sites. Prefers full sun to light shade.
Ponderosa Pine <i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	100'	 	Needles are in bundles of three, forming tufts at the end of each branch. Prefers deep, well-drained, soil and is resistant to drought once established.
Western Redcedar <i>Thuja plicata</i>	150'	  	Lustrous dark green foliage. May be planted under existing canopies on moist sites. Vigorous growing, ornamental tree.
DECIDUOUS TREES			
Bigleaf Maple <i>Acer macrophyllum</i>	95'	  	Fast-growing shade tree that grows well in dry to moist sites. Can be planted on sites infected with laminated rot for site rehabilitation.
HERBACEOUS PERENNIALS			
Broadleaf Stonecrop <i>Sedum spathulifolium</i>	3-8"	  	Ornamental, evergreen groundcover with clusters of bright yellow flowers that are favored by native pollinators and beneficial insects.
Cascade Penstemon <i>Penstemon serrulatus</i>	2'	   	Perennial forb with clusters of blue to purple flowers that grows in part shade in moist to wet soils. Used by hummingbirds and native bees.
Goatsbeard <i>Aruncus dioicus</i>	6'	   	Perennial with feathery plumes of cream colored flowers in late spring. Grows best in moist soil in partial shade, although it will grow in full sun if given consistent moisture.
Hairy Sweetgrass <i>Hierochloa odorata</i>	3-8"	  	Preferring a full sun on average to moist soil. Glossy-green leaves have a sweet vanilla fragrance, and it creeps slowly to form a grass patch. Space plants 1 foot apart.
Oregon Sunshine <i>Eriophyllum lanatum</i>	4-24"	   	Mounds of feathery foliage, mini-sunflowers, and drought-resist. Great for sunny rock gardens, border edges, and parking strips.
Sea Thrift <i>Armeria maritima</i>	6-12"	  	Evergreen perennial with clusters of pink flowers atop slender stalks rising well above the plant's foliage. Blooms mid to late spring. Easy to grow.
Shrubs			
Baldhip Rose <i>Rosa gymnocarpa</i>	3-5'	   	A low-growing rhizomatous shrub with fragrant, rosy flowers. Provides nectar for birds and pollinators; the hips persist through winter and are eaten by mammals, birds, and insects.
Nootka Rose <i>Rosa nutkana</i>	3-8'	   	Clusters of large 2" pink flowers & red fruit. Grows well in most areas. Good for erosion control & wildlife habitat.
Oval-leaf Huckleberry <i>Vaccinium ovalifolium</i>	6-8'	    	Deciduous shrub has small oval leaves and pinkish flowers. Bluish black berries are plump and edible. Grows well in moist coniferous forests and bogs.
Thimbleberry <i>Rubus parviflorus</i>	2-8'	   	An adaptable plant that grows in moist to dry and wooded to open sites. White flowers followed by edible berries.

Number of Packages		Price Per Package
Fire-Resistant Package	   	(3) Common Yarrow - <i>Achillea millefolium</i> (3) Mock Orange - <i>Philadelphus lewisii</i> (3) Pacific Ninebark - <i>Physocarpus capitatus</i> (3) Red Flowering Currant - <i>Ribes sanguineum</i> (3) Shrubby Cinquefoil - <i>Dasiphora fruticosa</i>
Natural Yard Care Package	   	(3) Purple Cone Flower - <i>Echinacea purpurea</i> (3) Red Flowering Currant - <i>Ribes sanguineum</i> (3) Thin-Leaf Huckleberry - <i>Vaccinium membranaceum</i> (3) Tufted Hairgrass - <i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i> (3) Western Bleeding Heart - <i>Dicentra formosa</i>



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