



WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY  
OKANOGAN COUNTY EXTENSION

Okanogan Conservation District  
WSU Okanogan County Extension

# Resource Quarterly

# PLANT SALE EDITION

## New species for 2014!

You asked and we've responded. This year we'll be offering **eight** new native plants, including **three wildflower** species. Here they are!



**Redstem Ceanothus**  
(*Ceanothus sanguineus*)

A deciduous shrub with heavily scented white fluffy clusters of small flowers. Likes full sun, is drought tolerant and fire resistant.



**Wax Currant**  
(*Ribes ceruem*)

A deciduous shrub with white to pink flowers and shiny orange-red berries. Likes full sun, is drought tolerant and fire resistant.



**Western Mountain Ash**  
(*Sorbus sitchensis*)

A deciduous shrub or small tree with white flowers and red-orange berries that stay on the plant into late winter. Likes full sun.



**Shrubby Penstemon**  
(*Penstemon fruticosus*)

A low-growing evergreen shrub with stunning purple-blue flowers. Likes full sun and rocky or gravelly sites.

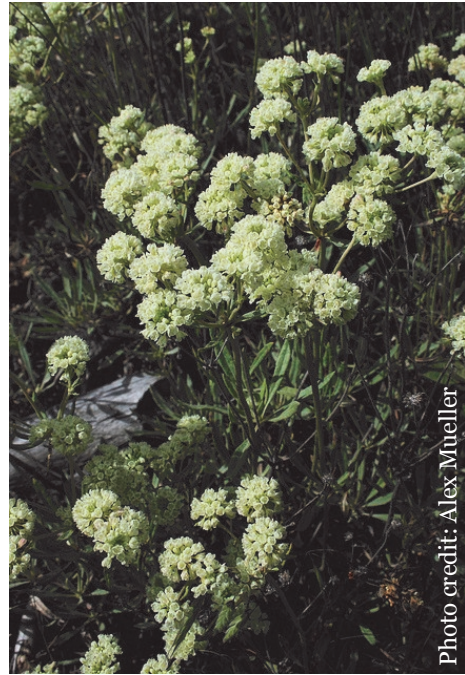
**Get 5% off when you order by 9/30/2013!**

# More New Plants for 2014



**Creeping Oregon Grape**  
(*Mahonia repens*)

A low-growing evergreen shrub with brilliant yellow flowers and deep blue, grape-like fruit. Grows well in shade, is drought tolerant and fire resistant.



**Wyeth Buckwheat**  
(*Eriogonum heracleoides*)

A mat-forming perennial wildflower with cream colored flowers that turn pink with age. Likes dry, rocky areas.



**Western Aster**  
(*Symphyotrichum ascendens*)

Perennial wildflower that is adaptable to a range of sites from wet to dry. Great for attracting native pollinators.



**Indian Blanket Flower**  
(*Gaillardia aristata*)

Blanket flower is a perennial, tap-rooted wildflower with showy, yellow ray flowers and reddish brown central disk flowers. Likes full sun and is drought tolerant.



# Create a Firewise Landscape

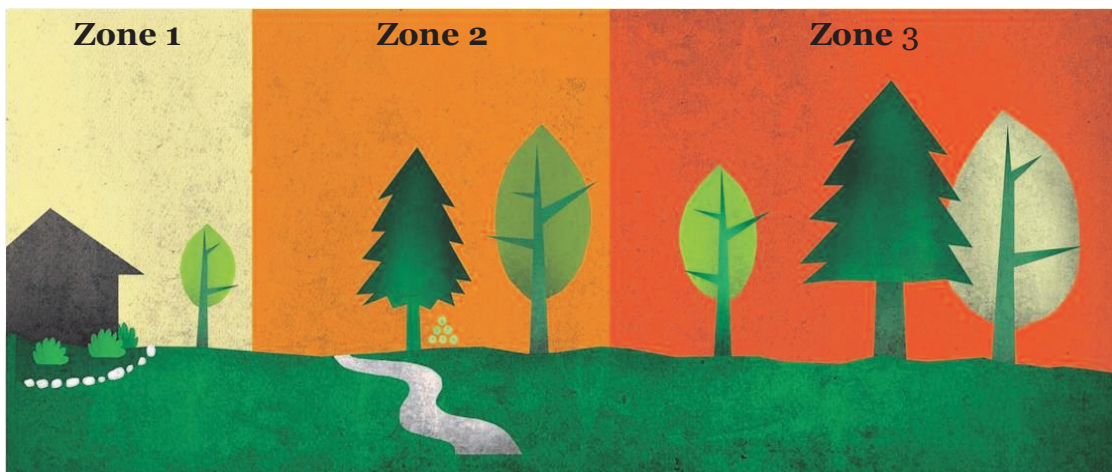


By Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District, with material from Firewise.org

Think a Firewise landscape means removing every bit of vegetation around your house? Well, think again! There are lots of ways to have a lovely landscape, while also reducing the risk of your home igniting during a wildfire.

## The Zone Concept

The primary goal for Firewise landscaping is fuel reduction — limiting the amount of flammable vegetation and materials surrounding the home and increasing the moisture content of remaining vegetation. The home itself and everything around it up to 100 – 200 feet is known as the ‘home ignition zone.’ In areas across the country where the risk of wildfire is high, the home ignition zone extends up to 200 feet beyond the actual home structure. Within this 200 foot area, there are three zones:



**Zone 1** encircles the structure and all its attachments (wooden decks, fences, and boardwalks) for at least 30 feet on all sides. This area should have low-flammability plants, landscaping materials, and accessories. *Note:* the 30-foot number comes from the very minimum distance, on flat ground, that a wood wall can be separated from the radiant heat of large flames without igniting.

**Zone 2** is 30 to 100 feet from the home, and plants in this zone should be low-growing, well irrigated and less flammable.

**Zone 3** is 100 to 200 feet from the home and this area should be thinned, although less space between trees is required than in Zone 2.

For specific ideas on a Firewise landscape, see page 4.

## Need Fuels Reduction on Your Land? Grants are Available Now!

Thinning overcrowded trees is good for forest health and reduces wildfire risk. Qualified landowners can apply for 50% cost-share grants from the Washington Department of Natural Resources to carry out thinning, pruning, brush removal, and slash disposal. Go to [http://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp\\_sflo\\_fs\\_ewcostshareapp.pdf](http://www.dnr.wa.gov/publications/fp_sflo_fs_ewcostshareapp.pdf) or contact the Okanogan Conservation District for an application.



# Create a Firewise Landscape



Continued from page 3



## Landscaping Tips for Zone 1: Think Lean, Clean, and Green

Plants in this area should be limited to carefully spaced plantings that are low-growing and free of resins, oils, and waxes that burn easily. Fire-resistant plants are marked with a flame symbol (see title bar above) in the Plant Sale Guide on pages 6 & 7. Remember that even fire-resistant plants can burn if they are not maintained!

Within five feet of the home, use non-flammable landscaping materials such as rock, pavers, annuals, and high moisture content perennials. Be sure to remove dead leaves and stems immediately.

Water plants and trees regularly to ensure they are healthy and green, especially during the fire season. Mulch also should be kept watered, as it can become flammable when dry.

Consider xeriscaping, especially in areas with low water supply and/or water use restrictions. Xeriscaping conserves water through creative use of landscaping features that are fire resistant, yet require limited irrigation. Contact your local nursery or landscape architect for more information.

Space flammable conifer trees generously (approximately 30 feet between crowns) to reduce the risk of crown fire. Remember, trees that hang over the house will deposit leaves and branches on the house and immediate area.



### Plants That Go “Whoosh”

Firefighters refer to them as “little green gas cans”. Here are some species you’ll want to keep well away from your house:

- |             |                     |
|-------------|---------------------|
| Juniper     | Arborvitae          |
| Yew         | Bitterbrush         |
| Sagebrush   | Pine                |
| Douglas Fir | Evergreen Ceanothus |

*A note on Ponderosa Pine: this species is considered fire-resistant when 1) it is old enough to have developed thicker bark; and 2) if green branches are 8-10’ above any fuels growing below the tree.*





# Okanogan Conservation District Native Plant Sale 2014



**Pre-order now; take delivery April 5, 2014**

**Don't wait for the April 5th sale...  
we sold out in less than an hour in 2013!**

**Your pre-order guarantees you'll get the species you want.**

The Okanogan Conservation District's annual plant sale promotes the stewardship and conservation of natural resources. Native trees and shrubs can provide many positive benefits to your property and the environment such as improved water quality, enhanced fish and wildlife habitat, reduction of wind and soil erosion, cleaner air, reduction of energy costs, and beautification! All proceeds from the sale support the district's conservation education and technical assistance programs.

Our bareroot plants and plugs are a cost-effective way to add beauty, function, and value to your property. Looking for evergreens to create a living fence? How about plants for that spot by your pond? Need a specimen shrub to make your yard pop with flowers and fruit? You'll find a wide variety of plants in our catalog on the following pages.

Check out the plant guide to find out what species will do best on your site. Soil moisture and sun exposure are two key criteria to consider, as is the mature height of the plant. Make sure you're putting the right plant in the right place-under the power line is no place for a Ponderosa Pine! More information can be found on our website: [www.okanogand.org/plant-sale](http://www.okanogand.org/plant-sale)

**Pre-orders will be taken September 1– January 17.** Receive a **5% discount** by ordering by September 30, 2013. Large orders (100+ of one species or 500+ of a mix of species) get a **significant price break**. If you've got questions, or suggestions for native plant species we should offer, contact us! 509-422-0855 ext. 100 or [ocd@okanogand.org](mailto:ocd@okanogand.org).

**Note:** we've changed our plant selection this year. If you don't see an old favorite, let us know and we will create a "want list" for that species. If we can guarantee orders of 50-100 plants (minimums vary by supplier), we will bring that species back for 2014.



# 2014 Plant Sale: Native Plant Descriptions

For more information and pictures, go to [www.okanogand.org/plant-sale](http://www.okanogand.org/plant-sale)







































Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Height	Classifications	Habitat-Use-Description
<b>TREES</b>			
Ponderosa Pine <i>Pinus ponderosa</i>	80' - 100'		Tolerates a variety of soil conditions and hot dry sites. Shade intolerant. Has dark green needles 3-5 inches long and reddish-brown, scaly bark. Fire-resistant with age; sapling not so.
Quaking Aspen <i>Populus tremuloides</i>	40' - 50'		Fast growing, cold hardy tree with smooth pale gray-green to whitish trunk. Light green leaves flutter in the slightest breeze and turn golden yellow in fall. Roots will sucker.
Rocky Mountain Juniper <i>Juniperus scopulorum</i>	50'		Found on rocky or sandy soils, especially dry south-facing slopes. Pyramidal tree with silvery blue-green scale-like leaves, reddish-brown bark, and dark blue, berry-like cones.
Western Larch (Tamarack) <i>Larix occidentalis</i>	80' - 125'		Found at 2,000-6,000 feet elevation in cooler, moister zones. Shade intolerant. Very tall conifer whose short needles turn a brilliant yellow and drop each fall. Bark is reddish-brown.
<b>SHRUBS</b>			
Blue Elderberry <i>Sambucus cerulean</i>	15'		Upright, bushy shrub up to 8 ft across with thick shoots. Bears white flowers and produces berries which can be used in jams, pies, and wines.
Creeping Oregon Grape <i>Mahonia repens</i>	2'		Evergreen ground cover for shady areas. Showy clusters of yellow flowers in spring are followed by purple edible fruit. Both flowers and fruit are good for attracting pollinators and birds.
Douglas spirea <i>Spirea douglasii</i>	5'		Found along streams and wetlands. Forms dense thickets and has potential to become invasive in garden settings. Beautiful spikes of pink flowers.
Kinnikinnick <i>Arctostaphylos uva-ursi</i>	Up to 1'		A mat-forming shrub found on sandy and well-drained sites. Has glossy green leaves, pinkish-white urn-shaped flowers and red berries that persist into winter. Good for wildlife.
Mock Orange <i>Philadelphus lewisii</i>	10'		Found in variable sites from moist open forests to dry rocky sites. Fragrant white flowers smell similar to orange blossoms. Good cover for wildlife. Medium green leaves turn yellow in fall.





# 2014 Plant Sale: Native Plant Descriptions

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Common Name <i>Genus species</i>	Height	Classifications	Habitat-Use-Description
<b>SHRUBS, CONT.</b>			
Red Osier Dogwood <i>Cornus stolonifera</i>	15'	    	Fast growing shrub found along streams and wetlands. Brilliant red foliage in fall with bright red twigs year round. White flowers give way to white berries. Good for wildlife. Plant will sucker.
Red Stem Ceanothus <i>Ceanothus sanguineus</i>	10'	   	White flower clusters and attractive red stems make this an beautiful landscape plant. It develops a deep root system that can aid in soil stabilization, making it great for slopes. Nitrogen fixer.
Rocky Mountain Maple <i>Acer glabrum</i>	25'	  	Fast growing, with moderate drought tolerance; prefers moist but not saturated soils. Typical maple shaped leaves turning bright red-orange in fall accompanied by "helicopter" seeds.
Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier alnifolia</i>	5'-10'	    	Found in a variety of sites from dry to moist. Showy white flowers. Edible purplish-black fruit. Important for wildlife. Can get 15 to 20 ft wide.
Shrubby Penstemon <i>Penstemon fruticosus</i>	2'	  	Woody and low-growing, with dark green leaves that stay on all winter. Tube-shaped flowers are a rosy-purple to lavender. Prefers rocky, dry sites; is moderately drought tolerant.
Wax Currant <i>Ribes cereum</i>	3'-5'	     	Compact and mounded, with cherry-like bark and light green foliage turning yellow in fall. Clusters of light-pink, bell-shaped flowers give way to bright red berries that are great for wildlife.
Western Mountain Ash <i>Sorbus sitchensis</i>	4'-15'	   	A shrub or small tree with clusters of white flowers giving way to bright orange-red berries that persist through winter. Great for fall color and wildlife.
<b>WILDFLOWERS</b>			
Blanket flower <i>Gaillardia aristata</i>	1-2'	  	Showy, taprooted perennial plant with yellow and red/purple flower heads. Great for wildlife, especially pollinators.
Wyeth Buckwheat <i>Eriogonum heracleoides</i>	1-2'	  	Produces large splays of cream to yellow flowers that turn reddish pink with age. Good drought tolerance. Flowers attract insects which attract insect loving bird species such as grouse.
Western Aster <i>Symphotrichum ascendens</i>	1-2'	 	Valuable species for attracting native bees and butterflies. Adapted to a broad range of conditions.





# 2014 Plant Sale: Native Plant Descriptions

For more information and pictures, go to [www.okanogand.org/plant-sale](http://www.okanogand.org/plant-sale)

## Also New for 2014...Seed Mixes!

This year we will be offering two seed mixes from Rainier Seeds in Davenport, WA. These two habitat mixes from their CountryBasics line are a great way to build native plant diversity in your backyard or back 40! Both of these mixes are best seeded in late fall or early spring.

### **Native Xeriscape™ Mix: \$12.50 per 1/2 pound. Seeding rate: 1/2 lb. per 1000 square feet**

This mix of native grasses and wildflowers is suited to non-irrigated areas. This mix contains:

Idaho Fescue	Blue Flax	Perennial Lupine	Balsamroot
Gaillardia	Evening Primrose	Globemallow	Pearly Everlasting
Prairie Coneflower	Purple Coneflower	Silky Lupine	

### **Greenbelt Plus™ Mix: \$ 2.50 per 1/2 pound. Seeding rate: 1-2 lbs. per 1000 square feet**

This mix of native grasses is a good choice for Firewise landscaping in the area 30'-100' from the house. The species are lower growing, stay greener longer than our native bunchgrasses, and tolerate mowing. This mix contains:

Hard Fescue	Streambank Wheatgrass	Sheep Fescue
Canada Bluegrass	Sherman Big Bluegrass	

More information about these mixes and the other plants we offer is available on our website at [www.okanogand.org/plant-sale](http://www.okanogand.org/plant-sale)



## Photo Contest!

Be in our 2014 calendar edition! Photos should incorporate one or more of the following themes and represent what is unique about Okanogan County:

<b>Agriculture</b>	<b>Forests</b>	<b>History/Tradition</b>
<b>Natural Wonders</b>	<b>Recreation</b>	<b>Water/Wetlands</b>
<b>Wildflowers</b>	<b>Wildlife</b>	

We will accept photos through October 2013. Digital photos should be in .JPG format and in the largest resolution possible to ensure quality printing. If your photos are selected, you will receive three copies of the calendar edition to share with family and friends. To submit an entry, email [kirstenc@okanogand.org](mailto:kirstenc@okanogand.org) with the subject line "photo contest". You can also send prints to:

Kirsten Cook, Okanogan Conservation District, 1251 S. 2nd Ave, Room 102, Okanogan WA, 98840

Please include a mailing address with your entry.

*All submissions will become the property of the Okanogan Conservation District. By submitting your photo, you are releasing it to us to use and reproduce as we see fit.*



# We Want Your Conservation Project Ideas!

*By Terri Williams, Okanogan Conservation District*

At the Okanogan Conservation District, staff always keep their ear to the ground for potential new conservation projects - talking and listening to neighbors, friends, big agricultural producers, small farmers and folks who live in town. We want to know what our communities think about our natural resources – water, soil, forests, wildlife, etc., and how we can help protect and improve them. Our current conservation programs were developed when someone identified a resource need and we found funding to help address it.

**We need your help!** In order for us to be as effective as possible, we need project ideas and specific landowners interested in implementing conservation projects. Ideas can be large or small – often it helps us find funding if the resource need is larger than just a single property and if the effects of the resource are felt by more than just one landowner. So get together with your neighbors who have similar concerns and let us know how we can help! Here are two examples that are currently being developed for future funding; please contact us if you have ideas of your own!

## **Upper Okanogan River:**

Many properties along the Okanogan and Similkameen Rivers between Tonasket and Oroville have river banks that are steep and experience heavy seasonal erosion during the high spring runoff. Sometimes this erosion is exacerbated by agricultural activities. The sediment introduced into the river from areas causes damage to irrigation equipment and reduces viable salmon habitat, among other effects. Several properties with livestock-caused bank erosion are included in a new grant application we are developing. Some planned actions include installing alternative livestock watering systems and innovative seasonal fencing options, installing in-stream structures to help dissipate some of the water's erosive force, and planting trees and shrubs along the riverbank to help catch and filter water-borne sediment. If you live along the river and have bank erosion caused by livestock or other human-related reasons, contact Terri Williams (see below).



*Okanogan River bank erosion*



*Erosion at the Tunk Valley Grange*

## **Tunk Creek Sediment:**

Soil in the Tunk Valley is often described as “moon dust” – it's highly erodible and easily moves with the slightest wind or water if not protected. Several landowners in Tunk Valley have expressed interest in seeking assistance funding to protect steep slopes that eventually add sediment to Tunk Creek. If you live in Tunk Valley, and have any eroding slopes that contribute sediment to the creek (even if you are not directly on the creek), contact Terri Williams at (509) 422-0855 x. 105 for more information.



## SAVE THE DATE!

The **2013 Community Success Summit**, focusing on what's working in North Central Washington, will be in Okanogan on **November 20, 2013**. This event is not to be missed! Come hear stories of success and share your own ideas too. Lunch is included and will feature fresh food produced in the Okanogan. For more information and tickets, go to <http://irisncw.org> or call 509-881-1812. This event is made possible by IRIS and many community partners including the City of Okanogan, the Okanogan School District, and the Okanogan Conservation District.



## Buyer Beware...of What's in Your Hay

*By Linda Schmidt, Okanogan County Noxious Weed Control Board*

We consider ourselves informed consumers. We read the ingredient list on our breakfast cereal; we want to know where our produce was grown. We even read the labels on dog food. But do we know what is in the hay we feed our livestock? Even though we may buy hay out of the rancher's field and haul it ourselves, unless we have walked that field, we cannot be sure of what is in that bale of hay.

Many people have learned too late that their hay contained plants which were toxic to their livestock. Some plants, such as Common Groundsel, which contains toxins that cause liver damage, are cumulative and the damage is not realized until sometime later; other plants such as Poison Hemlock or Hoary Alyssum tend to have a more immediate effect. Wild mustard and Canola can be toxic to cattle and possibly horses. Even if the unknown plant material is not toxic, it is not always the best quality feed and animals may consume more feed, or less if it is not palatable, making it more difficult to keep them in condition. If you look at your hay and don't recognize it as grass or alfalfa, beware!

Many people have discovered new, sometimes noxious, weeds growing in the areas in which they have been feeding and have the added expense of eradicating those weeds. It is suspected that the Spurge Flax now found in Okanogan County was introduced by a load of hay from the Midwest where Spurge Flax is more commonly found. This noxious and very difficult to eradicate weed has since spread from its original location to several more sites around the county. Several thousands of dollars have been spent in treating these infestations.

So how can you know what you are buying? Talk to the seller and if possible inspect the field prior to the hay being cut. Cheap hay is not always cheap in the long run. Washington Wilderness Hay and Mulch (WWHAM) is available in Okanogan County and it is required if you plan on taking horses or livestock on to federal lands. Contact our office or visit our web site for a list of growers in Okanogan County: 509.422.7168 or <http://okanogancounty.org/nw>.

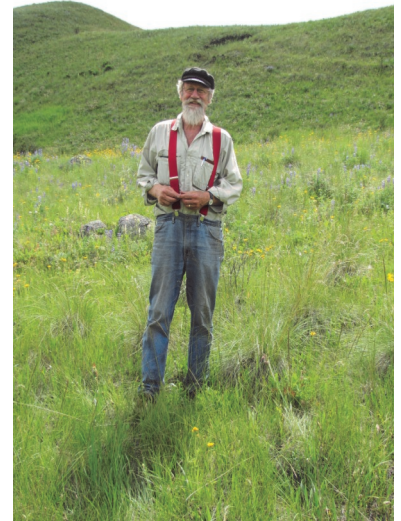
# Grassland Ecology and Grass Identification

By Julie Ashmore, Okanogan Highlands Alliance

## Outdoor Highland Wonders Program Saturday, September 14th

Learn about our local grassland ecology from one of the region's premier grass experts, Don Gayton. You don't have to be botanists to enjoy this two-part indoor/outdoor event: everyone will get something from Don's wealth of knowledge. Topics covered will include grassland types, invasive plants, grazing and fire interactions, and simplified methods of identifying grasses.

There will be an indoor presentation Saturday morning, followed by an outdoor field trip. Everyone is welcome to attend the indoor presentation; however, pre-registration is required for the outdoor field trip. The field trip will include two sites in the Okanogan Highlands and will build on the concepts introduced during the indoor presentation. This is the final outdoor Highland Wonders event of the 2013 season. Details are available on OHA's website: [www.okanoganhighlands.org/education](http://www.okanoganhighlands.org/education) or by calling Okanogan Highlands Alliance at 509-433-7893.



Don Gayton, M.Sc., P.Ag.

## Voluntary Easements a Good Option for Landowners

By Garry Schalla, Okanogan Land Trust

Many people have a deep appreciation for a special piece of land: one that has been in their family for generations, one which has been worked and tended, one that is a source of beauty and enjoyment. Landowners often want to protect the land they love from development that would change its special character. Conservation easements are one way to accomplish this.

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements between landowners and land trusts or a government agency which permanently limit some land use in order to protect conservation values. Landowners continue to hold title to and enjoy their land and may sell it or pass it along to their heirs at their discretion. Each easement is unique to the land and purpose; for example, an agricultural conservation easement might allow for continued farming with additional farm structures while an easement aimed at providing open space might allow only limited structures. A conservation easement might apply to only a portion of a property and does not need to allow public access.



Voluntary easements are a tool that provides benefit to landowners and the public alike. Land protected by conservation easements remains in the tax base and helps maintain resources that enhance our quality of life: open space, agricultural lands, habitat, and water resources. Our area is special because so many of these qualities remain. To learn more about easements, contact the Okanogan Land Trust at 509-486-2765 or [www.okanoganlandtrust.org](http://www.okanoganlandtrust.org).

**Okanogan Conservation  
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**[www.okanogan.wsu.edu](http://www.okanogan.wsu.edu)**

**Okanogan Conservation District**

Providing local leadership through educational, technical, and financial assistance to landowners to help them voluntarily conserve and enhance natural resources for over 70 years.

1251 South 2nd Ave. Room 102  
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***Resource Quarterly***

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