



Hardy Happenings

the newsletter of HPS/Mid-Atlantic Group

July 2024 • Volume 38, Number 3

The purpose of the Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Group is to cultivate, foster, and promote interest and participation in horticulture. hardyplant.org

EVENTS CALENDAR

See page 2 or hardyplant.org for more information about events and Special Interest Groups. Also visit the website for calendar updates and cancellations.

JULY

- 30** Tue, 9:30–11:00 AM
Walking Workshop – Must-Have
Wildflowers for a Meadow Garden,
Goodly Gardens in Worcester, PA

AUGUST

- 11** Sun, 10:00 AM–1:00 PM
Garden Tour of WynEden in
Chadds Ford, PA
- 20** Tues, 1:00–3:00 PM
Grant Recipient Visit – Families for
Houston, West Mt. Airy, Philadelphia

- 24** Sat, 9:00 AM–2:00 PM
Members' Wholesale Shopping
Day 2024 – Still Pond

- 25** Sun, 1:00–4:00 PM
Garden Tour of Vent Du Sud in
Rydal, PA

SEPTEMBER

- 25** Wed, 10:00 AM–12:00 PM
A Year at Brandywine Cottage – Tour 4
of 6, Early Fall in David Culp's Garden,
Downingtown, PA

- 28** Sat, 8:30 AM–12:30 PM
Fall Gardeners Market 2024

UPCOMING EVENTS OF INTEREST

October 18

Perennial Plant Conference @ Scott
Arboretum (Early Bird Rate before
September 20)

November 10

Joint Lecture @ Scott Arboretum –
Nicole Juday

December 8

HPS/MAG Annual Meeting and Lecture:
NEW Larger Venue @ Temple Ambler
Campus – John Grimshaw, MBE, Director
of the Yorkshire Arboretum, England, will
be the guest speaker

President's Message

by Dawn Freeman, hpspresident@hardyplant.org

What a beautiful spring we enjoyed this year! Early warmth and rain jump started the growing season and our gardens responded by moving their bloom schedules ahead a week or so. In turn, we were able to get outside earlier too; maybe you even restored a bed or began an overdue project with this earlier start.

Spring presents an almost overwhelming number of enticing choices for how to spend our time outdoors. We have nurseries to browse and plants to purchase, while our own gardens await attention. Maybe best of all are the many amazing gardens to visit. This spring the HPS/MAG calendar offered an impressive selection of workshops, live demonstrations and garden themed series. Trips to public and private gardens in the Washington, DC area and Newport, RI, plus visits to more than twenty-five private area gardens were topped off by this year's fabulous Member Garden Tour. All these events are designed to engage, inspire and educate the gardener in all of us.

Now, as we settle into these hot, lazy summer days let's give ourselves the gift of time to be still in our own garden to recognize and appreciate our hard work and success. Congratulate yourself on the beauty you've created in your garden and remember to stop and smell the roses in your own back yard.

As always, if you have suggestions or questions, please contact me at hpspresident@hardyplant.org.



[unsplash/eebz-k](https://unsplash.com/photos/unsplash/eebz-k)

EVENTS *and* SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

2024 Members Garden Tour

by Charles Leasure

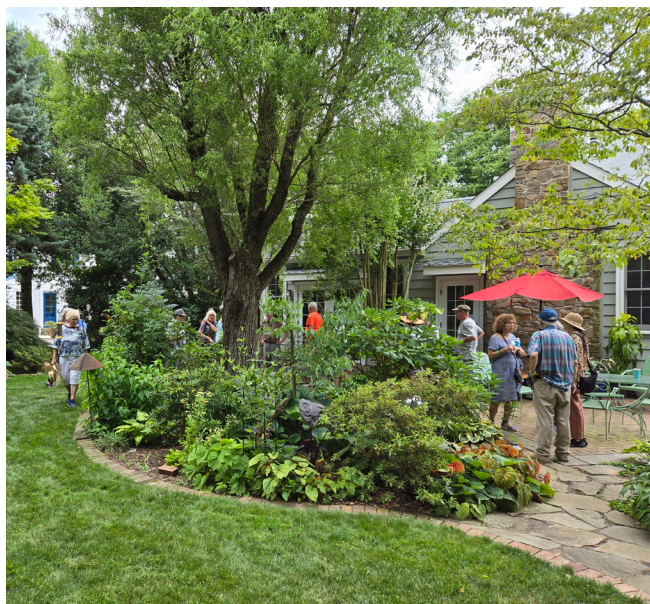
The excessive heat of summer could not keep the Hardy Planters from enjoying the gardens on offer in the Kennett Square region as part of our 2024 Members Garden Tour. We had 251 members attend this event, held on the 29th of June.

As with all our events, volunteers make the difference—a huge cheer for Elizabeth Stinson and her team for overall organizing, being garden greeters, making desserts, setting up the reception area, coordinating the plant give away, and generally pulling off everything that is necessary for the Members Garden Tour. Volunteers are always needed and welcome—if you have not volunteered for an HPS/MAG event in the past please consider volunteering. If you have volunteered, please keep it up! It is fun working toward a goal with like-minded people.

A special thank you goes out to the gardeners that agreed to open their gardens, including the Old Kennett Meetinghouse Cemetery meadow, to members. All the gardens were beautiful and inspiring; despite the withering heat that we and our gardens had to endure the previous week or so. Everything looked to be in top-notch shape and is a testament to the caliber of gardeners in HPS/MAG.

Following the garden tour, we gathered at the Kennett Friends Meeting for a reception that included comradery, fabulous food, horticulture-inspired mocktails, and member-supplied desserts. The perfect conclusion to a fabulous day!

Oh, I should not forget the plant give away. As usual, I went home with several somethings I did not know I needed to add to my garden. There is always space for something new, right?



2024 Online Auction – Final Results

Once again, the HPS/MAG Online Auction was a resounding success. This is due to our generous donors and members who bid on fabulous plants, incredible garden experiences and fun gardening related items. The Auction raised over \$11,000 this year,

which helps fund our community

grant program.

Our Online Auction continues to grow in popularity!

	2024	2023	Percent Increase
\$ Raised	\$11,343.59	\$9,107.28	24%
# of Donors	72	60	20%
# of Items	463	430	8%
# of Bidders	124	97	29%

And as no surprise, HPS Gardeners can be a competitive bunch when it comes to getting that choice plant and bragging rights for submitting the winning bid. And sometimes paying a bit more is worth it. After all, it is for a great cause.

Highest # of Bids	Donor	Item	Retail Value	Bid Value
48	Still Pond	Itoh Peony 'Julia Rose'	\$46	\$77
28	DeVal – North American Rock Garden Society	Tibetan Hellebore & 1 yr membership	\$35	\$62
24	Gettysburg Gardens	Rhododendron 'Varnado's Pink'	\$20	\$38
23	Still Pond	Spigelia 'Ragin Cajun'	\$35	\$51
20	Brushwood	Ampelaster carolinus	\$38	\$50

Notwithstanding the spirited examples presented above, the HPS/MAG Online Auction is an excellent opportunity to obtain garden related products and services at great prices. Please be sure to support our retail/wholesale donors throughout the year and let them know that you are HPS members.

We want to thank all our donors: individuals, organizations, and horticultural businesses for their support. This year the Top 3 donors (dollar value) to the auction were:

- Charles Cresson (\$3,089; 226 items)
- Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (\$902; 46 items), and
- Still Pond (\$438; 10 items)

Thanks also go out to all the volunteers that contacted the donors; collected, stored, cared for, and distributed plants; set up, input data into, and managed the auction site; and otherwise made this whole event a smooth process. This was a team event, staffed as always, by volunteers that freely donated their time and talents for the benefit of HPS members and our grant recipients.

THANK YOU to everyone that had a hand in making this event a success!

The Newsletter is published quarterly in January, April, July, and October. Copy deadlines are one month before the issue date. HPS/MAG adheres to one-time use; all other rights are retained by the author. We welcome all contributions. Contact Charles Leasure, hpspublications@hardyplant.org.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

HPS/MAG membership includes being a member of all Special Interest Groups (SIGs) and all members are invited to participate in SIG events. Contact individual SIG leaders for more information.

NATIVE PLANTS

Margaret Moore
sig-nativeplants@hardyplant.org

TENDER PERENNIALS

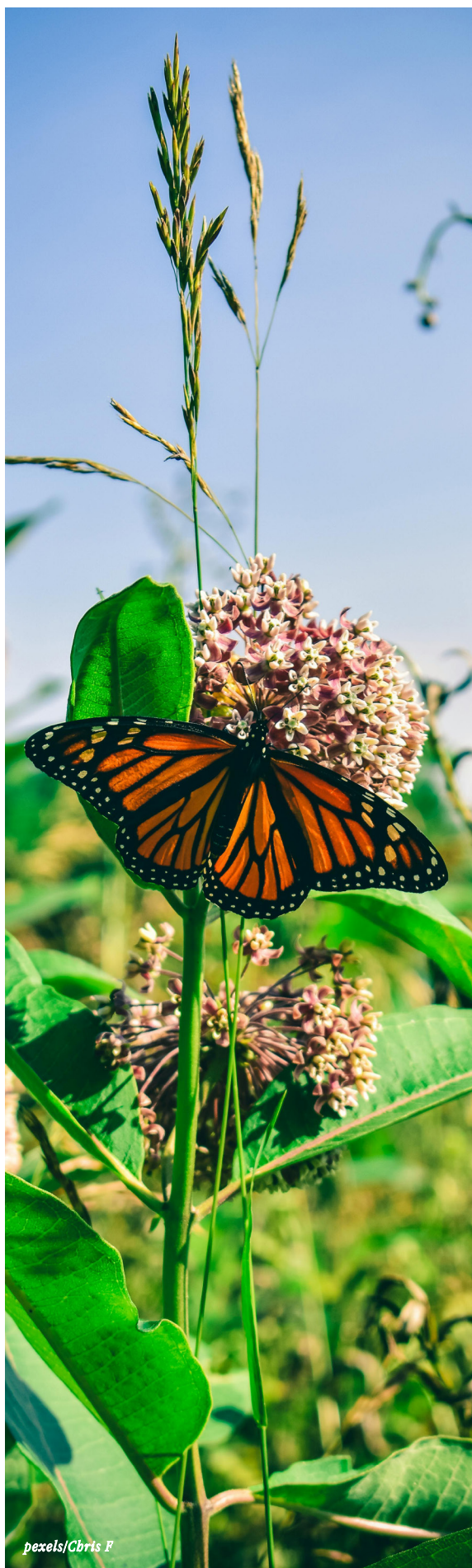
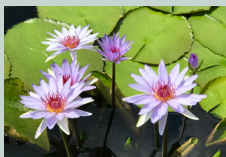
Mary Ann Thomas
sig-tenderperennials@hardyplant.org

WATER GARDENS

Victor Barsky
sig-watergarten@hardyplant.org

DO YOU HAVE A WATER FEATURE IN YOUR GARDEN?

The Water Gardens Special Interest Group is looking for fellow members of HPS/MAG who would like to share their gardens. Tour being organized for Summer 2025. Contact us at sig-watergarten@hardyplant.org.



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Milkweeds and Monarchs

by Charlotte Kidd

The flitting, vividly orange Eastern North American Monarch Butterfly. The morphing, blue-green chrysalis. The mind-blowing emergence of a fragile, moist butterfly nudging wings from mummy-tight overlap into gentle flapping.

Monarchs capture our eyes. Their lives and stories capture our attention. How DO these delicate, migrating *Danaus plexippus* wing it seasonally through multi-generations from Canada to Mexico and back?

Philadelphia's abloom with avid Eastern North American Monarch butterfly admirers. Some marvel at their fluttery flights and landings. Many support migrating Monarchs by growing nectar flowers to feed breeding adults and milkweeds with leaves that sate voracious Monarch larvae. Others carefully nurture miniscule Monarch eggs into reproductive adults.

From May through November, Eastern Monarchs feed and breed along the eastern seaboard south from Canada. Southeastern Pennsylvania is a busy breeding ground in the Monarch's flyway. Philadelphia, a hospitable green oasis in that migration chain.

Among the informal Philadelphia community—Hardy Plant Society/Mid-Atlantic Region members Janet Lippincott of Chestnut Hill; Andy Croft of west Philadelphia via Utah/Iowa; Ann Marie Ross of Burnham Road, West Mt. Airy. And now me, as an advocate for creating Monarch Watch Way Stations.

Andy Croft and Ann Marie Ross teased me into the *Danaus plexippus* culture. “*Danaus plexippus*” — Greek for “sleepy transformation”. Andy, who began studying butterflies at age 10, gifted me a plump, green-blue chrysalis ready to emerge into a monarch. I draped the chrysalis attached to a paper towel over a large glass bowl on my office desk. Purple winglike veins and two gold spots came to light.

Sunrise brought a breathtaking metamorphosis. A dripping, swaying butterfly eased from her translucent shell. Struggling to balance, she gripped her feet (tarsal claws) on the shell, then paper towel. A puddle of fluid below. An emp-



Janet Lippincott



Janet Lippincott

ty exoskeleton above. A few hours later, she was strong enough to climb a trellis and take flight over my native honeysuckle 'John Clayton'.

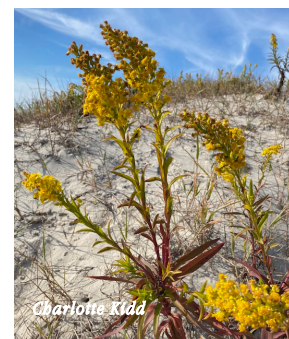
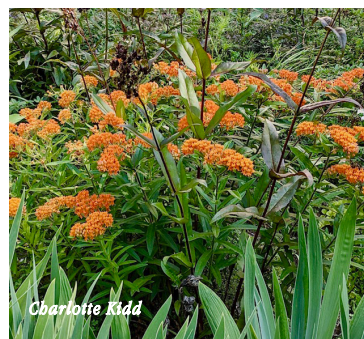
On summer days in Mt. Airy, Ann Marie walks and chats with neighbors while looking for milkweed to feed her collection of larvae and caterpillars. Our paths crossed at Mt. Airy gardens that I created and maintain.

Ann Marie's fascination began when "a monarch butterfly came into my yard and laid an egg right in front of me on a stray milkweed my neighbor planted years ago." She took the milkweed stem indoors, the egg attached under a leaf. After two days the egg hatched into a caterpillar. With a crunching noise, the caterpillar devoured leaf after leaf till it grew into a chrysalis. "It was quite magical, eating, resting, growing, and letting off green poop," Ann Marie recalls.

Janet Lippincott, Ann Marie, and Andy take their stewardship seriously in delightful fun. All three can spot the pinhead-sized Monarch egg attached on and under milkweed leaves. The full cycle from egg to adult butterfly ranges from 20 to 35 days.

Andy naturally notices a female Monarch darting above a flower-filled garden, searching for milkweed. When she alights on an *Asclepias* leaf, her feet (tarsi) discern the milkweed chemical that triggers egg-laying. He watches her deposit the egg and glue-like substance holding it under the leaf.

Male versus female ID. The slightly larger male monarch, aka king or emperor, has a dark scent dot on each hind wing, visible when wings are open. The female monarch,



aka queen or empress, has thicker vein wings, giving her a darker appearance. Her hind wing does NOT have a black dot.

On her daily walks, Ann Marie mostly eyeballs common milkweed stems overhanging sidewalks. Friendly and open by nature, she may ask neighbors with gardens to part with leafy branches for monarch caterpillars growing in her home.

One neighbor turned the meeting into a teachable moment - taking her young son to see Ann Marie's apartment room alive with incubating eggs, crunching caterpillars, emerging chrysalises.

On Gravers Lane in Chestnut Hill, Janet Lippincott has raised dozens of eggs into butterflies at her officially registered Monarch Watch Way Station. Her refuge is well-stocked. She counts at least 100 milkweed plants plus a glorious array of nectar flowers on her quarter-acre property.

Raising monarch eggs is controversial. These three stewards believe nurturing from eggs to butterflies gives more monarchs better chances of survival. In the wild only a very small percentage of eggs reach adulthood. Andy lists why. An egg can fall off the leaf. Monarch eggs

are favorite prey of ants, jumping spiders, Tachinid flies, parasitic wasps. . .

Unequivocally, providing more habitat for North American Eastern and Western Monarchs—same species East and West of the Rocky Mountains—is essential to ensure their survival. The monarch is a candidate for U.S. Endangered Species Act protection. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is expected to decide by December 2024.

Both populations migrate north in spring. Most Western Monarchs overwinter in California—Santa Barbara County, San Francisco Bay, San Luis Obispo, Monterey County, Santa Cruz County. Eastern Monarchs winter in the oyamel fir forests of central Mexico.

Active support for monarchs is more important than ever. Late last year, the number of overwintering Eastern North American monarchs dropped seriously due to drought—after several years of somewhat stable populations.

The official Monarch Waystation sign marks Janet's dedication. Her habitat is lush with food and water for the monarch's entire lifecycle.

"Beyond my back fence, I made a whole patch for milkweed: *Asclepias tuberosa* (butterfly weed), *Asclepias incarnata* (swamp milkweed), *Asclepias purpurascens* (purple milkweed)." She grows *Asclepias syriaca* (common milkweed) mostly in large pots because its rhizomes spread far underground.

"There are lots of flowering plants to keep them happy. They especially like the coneflower and black-eyed Susan. There's a pond, four birdbaths and a bubbling fountain." Janet also sets out sliced ripe bananas and oranges.

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When she frees the newly emerged (eclosed) adults, “they usually move on; they fly straight up into the air and disappear.”

Five years raising monarchs, Janet’s noticed “the butterflies show up around July 4.” More butterflies follow. Soon eggs and caterpillars. For more, see [Facebook.com/janet.lippincott.14](https://www.facebook.com/janet.lippincott.14).

“It’s important to encourage people to plant lots of different kinds of milkweed,” she adds. She’s providing milkweed seedlings for neighbors’ gardens as per advice of noted entomologist Doug Tallamy of the Homegrown National Park project. He explains that monarchs survive better when supported by milkweed corridors, i.e., milkweed plots in adjoining properties.

Why milkweed? Survival! Eastern North American monarch caterpillars ONLY eat milkweed leaves. Adult monarchs feed on nectar.



Seed Exchange

This is the 31th year of the Hardy Plant Society Seed Exchange!

The 2024–2025 Seed Exchange will be open August 1st for your donations. The Seed Exchange has been an educational and fun perk of your HPS membership from the beginning of HPS/MAG. Last year’s Seed Exchange catalog had over 900 donations collected by our membership.

Who can participate? Any member or non-member can donate seeds to the Seed Exchange. The perk for members is that only they can order seeds from the Seed Exchange catalog. If you have donated at least five different varieties of seeds to the current year’s Seed Exchange,

then there are bonus seeds packets available when ordering.

How can you participate?

Please look over the donation form inserted in this newsletter to see the type of information that needs to be provided for entry into the Seed Exchange catalog. Any type of seed may be donated, as long as it is not on the national invasive plant list or your state’s invasive plant list. We are particularly looking for donations of heirloom vegetables—we would love to add more of these to our catalog.

The Seed Exchange team strives to make it as easy as possible for you to donate seeds. So, if you would rather, just

From May through September, the monarchs we see in southeastern Pennsylvania are feeding, breeding, and laying eggs. August through December frames their fall migration south to Mexico.

From 2015 to 2022, monarch populations overwintering in Mexico were relatively stable.

Alarming, last winter (2023) less than half the usual number of Eastern monarchs reached Mexico. Monarch Watch reported a 59.3% decrease in monarch colonies’ forest area compared to 2022. That drop reflects the second-lowest number of overwintering butterflies counted since 1994. The WWF-Telmex Telcel Foundation Alliance and partners provided the data. See Monarch Watch Update, Feb. 8, 2024.

Extensive drought is the culprit. “Monarch numbers are at a near all-time low because of drought conditions last fall that extended from Oklahoma deep into central Mexico,” wrote Chip Taylor, founding Director of Monarch Watch. Droughts reduce flowering and nectar production. “Monarchs need the sugars in nectar to fuel the migration and to develop the fat reserves to get them through the winter.” Taylor advised planting even more milkweed and nectar plants “to help the monarchs recover from this catastrophe.”

While feeding and breeding, Eastern Monarchs cycle through four life stages: adult, egg, larva (caterpillar), pupa (chrysalis) to eclosure (emergence).

To thrive, they need water, salt, and two specific foods—milkweed leaves for the caterpillars; nectar flowers for the adults.

Monarchs and other butterflies “puddle.” They seek moisture and nutrients from shallow areas of water and soil. Making a “puddle” can

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email a spreadsheet or a Word document with your seed list and descriptions to seedexchange@hardyplant.org.

If you have donated to the Seed Exchange in the past five years, we will email a list of the seed you have donated in the past. The previous years donation form is an editable Word document. If you do not receive a history of your past donations by September 15th, please contact seedexchange@hardyplant.org.

Your seed donation forms must be returned by e-mail or mail (address is on the donation form in this newsletter) by October 31, 2024. Please follow this timeline so that the Seed Exchange team

can input your donations in a timely manner and ensure that the Seed Exchange catalog is ready by the end of December.

Only the seed donation forms need to be to the Seed Exchange committee by October 31st. The seeds need to be mailed by January 10, 2025 (address on the donation form in this newsletter).

If you have any questions, please contact Susan Doblmaier at seedexchange@hardyplant.org.



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be as easy as filling a large plastic saucer or shallow bird bath with water, sand, soil. A pinch of plain salt. Keep the mixture moist.

Larvae Host milkweed is the lifeline for monarch caterpillars who **ONLY** eat milkweed leaves. Tender young blades are best. Caterpillars, like our teenagers, have huge appetites, so females usually lay one egg per leaf.

Nectar Host Plants sustain adults breeding and preparing to migrate from May to December. The nectar's sugars and nutrients will fuel the 3,000-mile flight and overwintering in Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains.

The Xerces Society is looking for volunteer citizen scientists to add photos and plant IDs to its Monarch Nectar Plant Database. See <https://xerces.org/monarch-nectar-plants/>.

Milkweed is a WIN-WIN. Milkweed grows leaves for caterpillars AND flowers for adults. Five types of milkweed recommended for the Eastern Monarch grow in our Mid-Atlantic region.



A MEMBERSHIP BENEFIT

Did you know?

Your HPS/MAG membership covers two people from the same household.

When two household members register for an HPS/MAG event, each member pays the member rate. If you want to add the name of your second household member to your membership profile, email hpsmembership@hardyplant.org.

If a member wants to bring a non-member to an HPS/MAG event, the member pays the member rate and the non-member pays the non-member rate. Generally, the cost for a non-member is \$10 more than the cost for a member. The goal of this pricing is to encourage non-members to become members. You only need attend a few events to more than cover the cost of becoming a member (\$35 for 1 year/\$60 for 2 years) and enjoy ALL the benefits of membership.

"Member Only" events are designed exclusively for members. If a non-member friend wants to attend a members-only event, they need to join HPS/MAG first then register for the event.

We are making this clarification to help everyone pay only what is expected for an event.

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HPS/MAG - Publications
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