

ASSOCIATION of

S. G. A. P. Fern Study Group



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SPORE BANK: Barry White, 24 Ruby Street, West Essendon. Vic. 3040

SUBSCRIPTIONS OVERDUE: a few people have still to pay their year 2002 subs. Could they please complete the form attached to the December newsletter and return A.S.A.P. to the Treasurer, Ron Wilkins

WELCOME TO THE NEW TREASURER, RON WILKINS & THANK YOU TO JOAN MOORE FOR TEN YEARS OF SERVICE.

FERN HOUSEKEEPING

Contributed by Ron Wilkins

Just as I was about to take over from Joan Moore as ASGAP – Fern Study Group treasurer, I fell off the roof of my garage. The main damage was a smashed elbow, and although I have almost recovered the full use of my arm, I have accumulated a backlog of work that will prevent me from quickly attending to all the things I had planned to do for the Fern Study Group. There will be another operation mid-year, then I'll be as good as new. Because of my physical condition, I have had to make treasurer records with pen and paper using my one partly functioning good hand, and this will double my treasurer work this year. My plan had been to computerize the accounts so that all information would be on file. The file could then, when I retire from the position, be transmitted to the computer of the next treasurer with the touch of a key. Likewise, if I am away for an extended period as I often am, the file can be sent to the group leader so if there is any urgent financial business, he can attend to it. So please be patient if it seems I am a bit slack in my duties.

Now I can type again, over the last few days I have prepared the subscription spreadsheet, and I will take it to meetings so that payments made there can be recorded on the spot. The treasurer's job is not difficult but it is messy and unrewarding, and it is always difficult to find someone to take it on. I offered because it is essential for the existence of the group. The changes I will make will enable anyone with a computer fitted with Microsoft 'Office' to carry out the treasurer's tasks simply and routinely.

Joan Moore's tenure as Treasurer has left the group in a sound financial position. Its my job to keep it that way and to sound warnings if the group's finances are in danger of becoming unequal to the

demands placed upon them. Incidentally, Joan held the fort for 10 years which seems to me to be much too long for a group of our size. The burden should be spread around more often. In my case, I don't have much time and unlike most members of long standing, my garden is just beginning to be established and my fern collection is primitive and mainly exotic. I need spare time to do the landscaping and track down more Australian ferns.

NO RECEIPTS! Given the [above] circumstances, it would help greatly if members could get used to the practice of not automatically receiving receipts for subscriptions.

There are several good reasons for this. The cost of posting your receipt would waste close to 10% of your subscription.

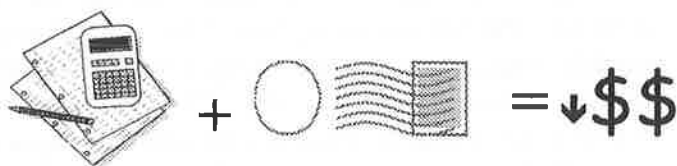
We have all got used to not receiving receipts for all sorts of transactions by mail or phone. My accountant, for example, does not send receipts for cheques I send her. It is far better for me to pay an occasional disputed subscription out of my own pocket rather than to send 100 receipts.

Some must receive receipts, for example horticulturists should be able to claim a taxation deduction for professional association dues. For most of us however, the receipt merely indicates that a payment has been noted. If you pay by cheque, the cheque butt is your record. If you pay by cash or postal order, the absence of the payment slip on your copy of the December Newsletter is a reminder that you have paid your subscription. However if you are unmoved by

my impassioned plea (what a hard heart you must have !), I will, of course, send you a receipt upon request.

Incidentally you will see from the web page of the Fern Society of SA Inc. that receipts are only sent by request. And the cost of subscription to that Society, including their newsletter, is \$17.50. Our \$5 subscription is a very convenient sum and it would be good to keep it at that level for as long as possible. I don't need to stress that with our low subscription how much more important it is to keep our accounts under tight control. I surprise myself. I'm sounding like a professional already!

Peter Hind and I are in process of establishing a new account at the CSIRO credit union (Laboratories Credit Union). This is a pretty cheap way to do banking and it will allow us to put the currently unutilised part of the account into a term deposit with about 4% interest. Hopefully, with your forbearance, within the year everything should be functioning smoothly.



FERNS ON THE INTERNET

Contributed by Ron Wilkins

During a recent Fern Study Group meeting, Peter Hind introduced the subject of ferns on the Internet, and showed material from some interesting and useful web sites. He also suggested letting the browser search on 'fern' and just see what you get.

So I tried to see what I could find, not knowing where it might lead me. I tried Altavista and Yahoo browsers and they both came up with thousands of web sites. You have to skip a lot of sites like the 'Fern Creek Cyber Gunsmith Shop'. But you might sneak a look at the 'Recipe for fiddlehead fern soup'. Or the British 'Fern Express' web site that tells us about the **Dicksonia antarctica**, **Cyathea australis** and **Blechnum nudum** and five NZ **Dicksonia** and **Cyathea** species for sale. It states that

all *Dicksonia antarctica* plants carry an export permit issued by the Australian Government, certifying that they have been harvested from sustainably managed resources. You can buy a 6'' – 9'' *D. antarctica* for 22 pounds and an 8 foot trunk for 285 pounds. (\$786.60 Aust. on 19th, of February 02.) Or a one foot *C. australis* for just 45 pounds. A bargain!

You soon come across the web pages of the major fern societies such as the American Fern Society and the British Pteridological Society, both of which are interesting. But the fern pages of the Australian National Herbarium are astounding. The site is still under development, but it is already book size with chapters on classification, structure, conservation, collecting, cultivation, recent name changes and so on. Thinking of taking a trip to Norfolk Is. or Lord Howe Is? Would you like to take a checklist of the Norfolk Is. ferns (43 species) or Lord Howe Is ferns (58 species)? You will find them here. And lots more besides. Another good site is 'Ferns of the Canberra Region'.

As my browsing continued, I was attracted by a site called 'Ferns of the Vercors' (France, near Grenoble). Some time ago while looking at the Internet bookshop site 'Amazon.com' I noticed that the two texts on French ferns were now out of print. So I started an e-mail correspondence, using my not too brilliant French, with the Vercors web site owner who was able to tell me that one of these books would soon be in print again. Subsequently I was able to order it by e-mail directly from the publisher. Our correspondence ranged through ferns, mutual acquaintances – yes, surprisingly we have some - the Sydney bushfires and then on to growing Australian ferns.

Having found a good fern web site, all the links to other fern web sites are worth exploring. For example I found the site on Ferns of New England (USA) this way. It has 114 magnificent photos and I found it interesting to see such fine images of foreign species of common Australian genera. One thing was disappointing. Although several link lists put you in touch with the Victorian and South Australian Fern Societies, there is no link to our group because we have not got a web site. True, the Australian Plants main page lists all the ASGAP study groups, but even there our group leader is not listed, so its not easy for those who may be interested to make quick contact with the study group through the web. This is something for us to correct in the future. I haven't listed the web sites I've referred to - best to browse for them yourself. Who knows what you will find. If you haven't got your own computer, there must be one of the kids or a neighbour who has. Ask them to set it up for browsing on the web. Remember, just search for 'fern' with the browser and you will while away some interesting hours.

HEADING: TV FUELS ILLICIT FERN TRADE.

as appeared in the Herald Sun Newspaper 19th Feb. 2002.

Australian rainforests are being plundered of a prehistoric fern made fashionable by British television shows, a new report has warned.

At least a dozen *Dicksonia antarctica* ferns a day are being smuggled into Britain each day, on top of the 140,000 legally imported into Britain between 1996 and 2000.

The World Wide Fund for Nature said the impact on the ferns was immense as the ferns take up to 200 hundred years to grow to full height.

After Ron's item above re, price its no wonder there's a market for the unscrupulous is it? - Editor



NATURAL VARIATION IN *POLYSTICHUM PROLIFERUM* IN VICTORIA

BY ROD HILL

The Fern Society of Victoria Inc. Newsletter
Vol.23, No. 6 Nov./Dec. 2001

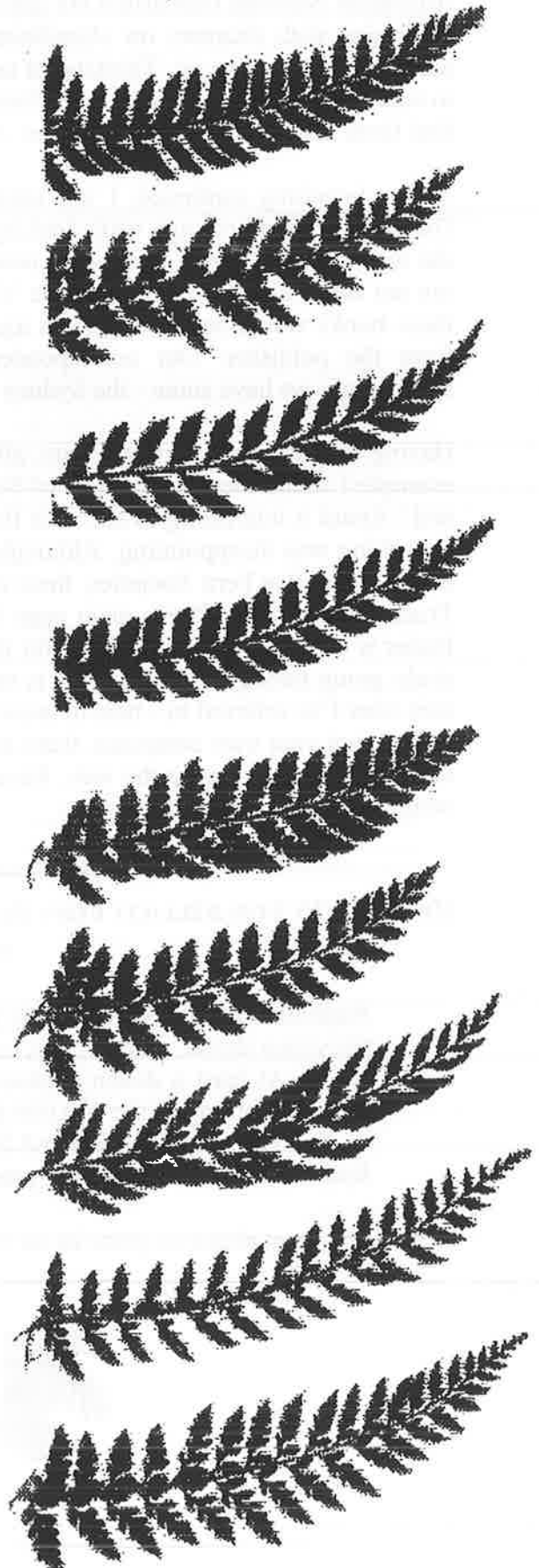
Motivated by the thought of 173 distinct forms of the British *Polystichum setiferum* (recognised by Druery in 1902), I take every opportunity to collect and compare pinnae of our own native *Polystichum proliferum*, whenever I encounter it in the wild.

Although this fern has been widely cultivated in Victoria for many years, there has been little consideration of the variability of this species. However, examination of pinnae plants from numerous locations around Victoria has shown that they differ considerably. While I have as yet propagated only a limited number of these bulbils, those that have grown have retained their characteristics and now I have several quite different forms growing side by side in my Fernery.

My study of *Polystichum proliferum* has revealed that variation is not only apparent from widely separate locations, but that quite often the plants occurring at a single location will exhibit quite remarkable differences. The Pinnae illustrated for example were all collected along a short section of walking track (at most 200 metres long) in the mountains to the North-East of Mansfield. It is immediately apparent that even in a very small colony of these ferns there is tremendous diversity of forms. Other locations where I have similarly noted a great deal of variation in this fern include Mt. Cole, Ferntree Gully National Park and Glenaladale National Park.

While overall the effect of many forms of *Polystichum proliferum* is not especially striking, there are however some very attractive varieties which would make worthwhile subjects for cultivation especially when highlighted by growing contrasting varieties in close proximity.

Editor's Note: I have seen many variations of this species at Kirk's Reservoir, near Ballarat. Kirk's is over 100 years old and the *P. proliferum* are of considerable age. The frond shapes were so diverse that I'd wondered whether they were *proliferum* – so have found the above article of considerable interest.



Combined
Fern & Vireya Rhododendron Show 2002
Sat 27th & Sun 28th April 2002

Venue: Mt. Waverley Community Centre,
Cnr. Miller Cres. & Stephenson Rd. Mt Waverley.

**Fern Competition, Displays, Sales –
Feature display – Aspleniums**

☎ Enquiries

Fern Society of Victoria. Inc. (03) 9375 370; 9337 9793

BLAST FROM THE PAST – THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE APPEARED IN EDITION 52 OF THE NEWSLETTER - MARCH 1991. I THOUGHT OUR NEWER MEMBERS MAY BE INTERESTED AND LONG STANDING MEMBERS MAY WISH TO REMINISCE.

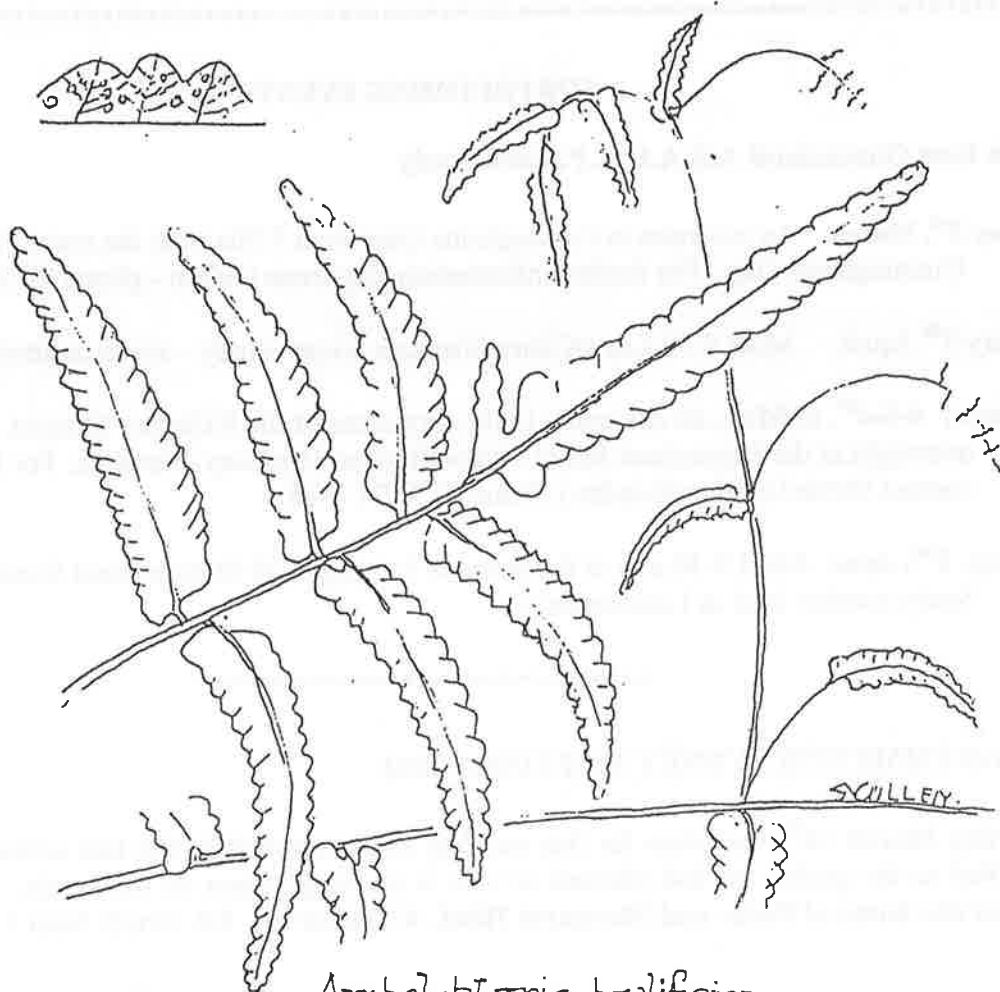
Ampelopteris prolifera.....in Gladstone Tondoon Botanic Gardens

Ampelopteris, pronounced am pel op' ter is, is aptly named from the Greek, ampelos a vine, and pteris a fern. Some of its fronds can extend 2 to 3 m in length. At the same time the frond will produce many plantlets along the entire rhachis. Given suitable conditions the plantlets will root and in turn start the whole process of plantlet producing fronds.

Little wonder it is rarely considered more than a fern oddity for the enthusiast to grow in a basket or try to keep it from invading the whole of his garden. I first saw this fern growing naturally on the banks of the Albert River (Newsletter No 9 - June 1980). It appeared to be an unattractive fern, with the ability to trip up a hapless walker most efficiently.

So imagine my surprise when visiting the Tondoon Gardens recently, to see a very attractive fern, being used as a ground cover on a gully, and to discover it was indeed Ampelopteris prolifera. Growing on a warm moist sheltered slope and covering a 3 by 4 m area, the fronds were a soft bright green, about 60 cm. Gone was its inclination to produce long tangling fronds and sparse pinnae. The area was apparently planted thoughtfully allowing the original plantlets to root well. Now they seem happy to just grow lush fronds, with an occasional one producing the long plantlet bearing frond.

Contributed by Irene Cullen



Ampelopteris prolifera.

REPORT ON SYDNEY'S FERN STUDY GROUP FEBRUARY MEETING**Contributed by Joan Moore**

We viewed the Audio Visual on Ferns made by our member, Fred Johnston, for the N.S.W.S.G.A.P. This is a series of truly beautiful photos of ferns in nature and in gardens. Fred is a wonderful photographer.

This audio visual is available for hire by S.G.A.P. groups including, Fred says, interstate groups. Those interested should get in touch directly with Fred:

Mr. F. Johnston, 18 Taylor's Road, Dural 2158. Phone (02) 9625 8705.

NOTES FROM S.E. QLD. A.S.G.A.P. FERN STUDY BRANCH

Our end of year meeting at Graeme Nosworthy's home was well attended. It deviated from the usual programme. Instead we had an Asplenium study. As usual Peter Bostock gave a most interesting and informative talk on the specimens presented – some being hybrids. Our usual large fern swap followed. After lunch some members took advantage of a stroll down to Graham's rainforest, while others hurried off to other Christmas socials.

The February meeting at Shirley and Nev Deeths home was mainly taken up with arranging a programme for the year 2002. Our May excursion will be to the lovely fern areas of the Killarney District. We will visit as many of the fern areas as possible. For particulars see our notes in the forthcoming events. Time was made to visit Nev's ferns and to follow the progress of his sporelings. During lunch we wished Peter Bostock a safe and happy time in the U.K. He in turn invited us to the International Airport at 5a.m. the day they were to leave. There were no takers.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS**South East Queensland A.S.A.G.A.P. Fern Study**

Sunday 3rd. March. An excursion to Cunninghams Gap Meet 9.30a.m at the main Picnic Grounds – Cunninghams Gap. For further information ring Irene Cullen - phone 07 3423 7347.

Sunday 7th April Meet 9.30.a.m at Claire Shackels home –study – more on fern propagation

Weekend 4-5-6th. of May. an excursion to the fern areas of the Killarney District. Staying overnight at the Homestead Motel - New England Highway-Warwick. For further particulars contact Merle Gynther(Goadby).Phone 07 3374 1946

Sunday. 2nd. June –Meet 9-30.a.m.at the home of Ian Inglis-29 Station Road Sunnybank.
Study another look at Lastreopteris

PROGRAMME FOR SYDNEY MEETINGS 2002

Saturday March 16th, our plans for this meeting as **announced in the last newsletter have been cancelled** as the garden we had planned to visit is no longer open on weekends. **Instead, we will meet at the home of Peter and Margaret Hind**, 41 Miller St., Mt. Druitt from 11.30a.m. We will

discuss the ferns often referred to as "lacy ground ferns" which, Peter says, is a term used to describe ferns with creeping stems and fronds more than twice pinnate.

Sunday, April 21st. Visit to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Sydney. Meet in the entrance to the Fernery at **10a.m.** Bring lunch. We hope to have a look at ferns elsewhere in the Gardens as well as those in the Fernery.

Saturday May 18th Meeting at the home of Tess Taylor, 4 Prospect Street, Blacktown, from **11.30a.m.** Discussion subject to be decided.

Saturday, June 15th, Visit to the Scout Camp on Mount Keira. Just before the main road from Sydney begins the final descent to Wollongong there is a well marked right turn to Mt. Keira. Follow this to the Camp parking area. **Meet there at 10.30a.m.** Further Directions from Peter if necessary. Phone 9625 8705

ORDERING SPORE

Spore is available free of charge from Barry White, 24 Ruby St. West Essendon. Vic. 3040
When ordering please include a stamped self-addressed envelope.

CURRENT SPORE LIST

Acrostichum speciosum 12/01
Arachniodes aristata 5/00
Asplenium australasicum
11/01
Asplenium milnei 1/02
Blechnum articulatum 1/02
Blechnum camfieldii 5/00
Blechnum cartilagineum 1/01
Blechnum chambersii 2/99
Blechnum fluviatile 2/00
Blechnum minus 6/99
Blechnum patersonii 8/99
Cyathea celebica 3/99
Cyathea cooperi 11/01
Cyathea cooperi var.
cinnamonia /99
Cyathea leichhardtiana 11/00
Cyclosorus interruptus 3/99
Cystopteris filix-fragilis /00
Deparia petersenii 6/00
Dicksonia antarctica 1/02

Dicksonia youngiae 1/99
Diplazium australe 6/00
Doodia australis 12/99
Hypolepis glandulifera 1/02
Lastreopsis acuminata 3/01
Lastreopsis decomposita 12/00
Lastreopsis hispida 2/00
Lastreopsis microsora 12/00
Lastreopsis rufescens 12/00
Lastreopsis tenera 12/00
Macrothelypteris
polypodioides 4/01
Microsorium pustulatum 1/02
Ophioglossum pendulum 2/00
Pellaea falcata 11/01
Platynerium bifurc. cv
Lemoinei 9/01
Platynerium bifurc. cv Roberts
9/01
Platynerium bifurc. cv. Hilo
/99

Contributed by Barry White

Platynerium bifurc.
cv.HulaHands /99
Platynerium bifurc. Mt. Lewis
9/01
Platynerium bifurc. ssp.
veitchii 9/01
Platynerium bifurc.cv
Willinckii Scofield /99
Platynerium hillii /99
Platynerium superbum 10/01
Platynerium superbum
(Cairns) /99
Polystichum australiense
12/99
Polystichum formosum 6/99
Pronephrum asperum 3/99
Psilotum nudum 8/99
Pteris comans 10/00
Pteris tremula 2/01
Pteris umbrosa 1/02
Sticherus urceolatus 3/99

Thanks to the following spore donors: Lorraine Deppeler, Rose Bach, Nev Deeth and Ron Robbins

Spore Donations – Spore donations are not only welcome, they are essential for the proper functioning of the spore bank. All types of spore are welcome including fresher samples of ones already on the list. There is no necessity to separate the sporangia from the spore. The whole, or part, frond may also be sent in, all is acceptable. Please include date of collection and, if collected in the bush, the area. In the list, the month and year of collection is shown. The letter B indicates collected in the bush. The area of collection is available on request.



DOES NO-ONE KNOW THE ANSWER OR HAVE SUGGESTIONS RE THE FOLLOWING QUESTION WHICH APPEARED IN THE DECEMEBER?

CAN YOU HELP? IRENE CULLEN ASKS: When placing young Platycerium sporelings, how do you distinguish the top from the bottom frond?

CONTRIBUTIONS SOUGHT – Thanks to those groups who sent articles this quarter. However, I would still like to appeal to individuals or groups to send articles, questions on their favourite plant, an interesting spot they may have visited, a tip on how to grow, or propagate plants, or problems you might be experiencing with growing. Questions have generated a deal of interest in the past.

DEADLINE FOR COPY: Closing date for material to be included in the June 2002 Newsletter is May 15th, 2002. Your Contributions are valuable.



**If undeliverable return to:
272 Humffray St. Nth.,
BALLARAT. Vic. 3350**

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