



THE PAINTBRUSH

MAY – JUNE 2005 NEWSLETTER

SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS CHAPTER
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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DATES TO REMEMBER

Thurs., May 5, 7:30 pm: Board Meeting at Eaton Canyon NC

Sun., May 8, 9:00 am: Eaton Canyon Plant Walk with Carol Carriere

Thurs., May 26, 7:30 pm: A Sense of Place of the San Gabriel River Watershed by Gabi McLean. Also Chapter strategy session.

Sun., June 12, 9:00 am: Eaton Canyon Plant Walk with Eva Morgan

Thurs., June 23, 7:30 pm: Show and Tell Night

Sat. July 9, 9:00 am: Blooms and Butterflies in Icehouse Canyon field trip

Thank You, Kathy LaShure!

Kathy LaShure, *Paintbrush* editor, writer, plant use expert, tireless volunteer, and our good friend is moving away from the San Gabriel Mountains in May, to Inyokern (her husband Rich's new assignment will be in neighboring Ridgecrest). We wish her the very best and *Green Blessings* in her new endeavor! Even though it is hard to say good-bye, it's good to see her excited and looking forward to this change, ready to discover new plants and new friends at their new home.

Before Kathy moves on, her fellow board members wanted to pay tribute to her many contributions to this chapter and learn from her as much as possible. Kathy was gracious enough to take time out of her extraordinary schedule and meet with me over lunch for this interview.

Q: How long have you been involved with the California Native Plant Society?

Kathy: I have been a member since 1991 when my interests in planting with natives, hiking, and taking pictures of native plants drew me to the chapter. I was living in Sierra Madre at the time. I got more involved in the mid-nineties when a number of board members left and I took on the newsletter and membership.

Q: What roles have you played in the San Gabriel Mountains chapter?

Kathy: I've been the *Paintbrush* editor for almost 10 years and was the membership chair for 5 years. I organized the *Under the Oaks* events for 4 years and contributed to the maintenance of the Becky Rothenberg Memorial Wildflower Garden at Eaton Canyon.

Q: During the past years, you put in uncounted volunteer hours for the CNPS-SGM. Why?

Kathy: I strongly believe in volunteerism and I got involved when Becky Rothenberg was still with us. Becky was a professional writer, among many other things, and she was also the *Paintbrush* editor. Becky was a great mentor to me, a good friend, and she inspired me to get involved in the chapter. When Becky died I felt I owed it to her memory to be devoted to the chapter.

Q: How did you find the time to do all those things for the chapter?

Kathy: My regular job at The Gamble House was Saturday through

(Continued on page 3)

FROM THE FIELD I

Maloof Gardens

By Jane Strong

The April 9 tour of the Maloof Foundation gardens led by Rick Fisher, designer of the gardens, gave us a chance to do see what those bare sticks and nude stems sold in November look like in the flush of spring.

The gardens, there are several types ... alluvial terrace, woodland, lemon grove, orchard, and meadow, are simply stunning. My personal favorites are the orchard and lemon grove gardens. Each is based on a color scheme and integrates native plant species and cultivars with other horticultural varieties. The warm, visually stimulating, oranges, reds and yellows of the orchard garden complement the orange-colored fruits of the tangerine, persimmon, and apricot trees. While, on the other hand, the well-matched cool blues, lavenders and light-yellows of the lemon grove garden give a feeling of lightness and serenity.

My advice to you is to tour gardens now to see what you want to buy in November. Check out Eaton Canyon Nature Center, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, as well as the Maloof gardens on your own. There is a valuable and helpful checklist available at the bookstore you can use to mark your preferences. However, you won't get the horticultural tips Rick gave us.



CHAPTER EVENTS

Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (map on back cover) on the fourth Thursday of the month. Informal plant identification and social time from 7:00 to 7:30 pm; programs start promptly at 7:30 pm.

NOTE: No programs in July or August. See you again in September.

PROGRAMS

Thurs., May 26, 7:30 pm: *A Sense of Place of the San Gabriel River Watershed* by Gabi McLean.

This photo essay will give us an idea of the diversity, complexity, and beauty of our local watershed. Many of the images will be included in the San Gabriel River Watershed Plan that is being prepared with the participation of SGMRC, Regional Water Quality Control Board, LA County Department of Public Works, SCE, RMC, USFS, Cal Poly Pomona, and others.

Prior to Gabi's presentation we'll have a business meeting to discuss the future of the Chapter and the urgent need to fill several Board positions. If you care about your Chapter please plan to participate.

Thurs., June 23, 7:30 pm: *Show and Tell Night.* Let's see those photos from your recent trips, biological surveys, or just interesting botanical discoveries captured with camera. We'll be prepared with an old-fashioned carousel and projector ready for slides and a laptop computer and multimedia projector for PowerPoint presentations brought in on CD's. Please limit your show and narration to 12 slides. E-mail or call Mickey Long with your RSVP as a presenter: longm@co.la.ca.us or 626-398-5420 (daytime).

BOARD MEETING

Thurs., May 5, 7:30 pm at Eaton Canyon Nature Center

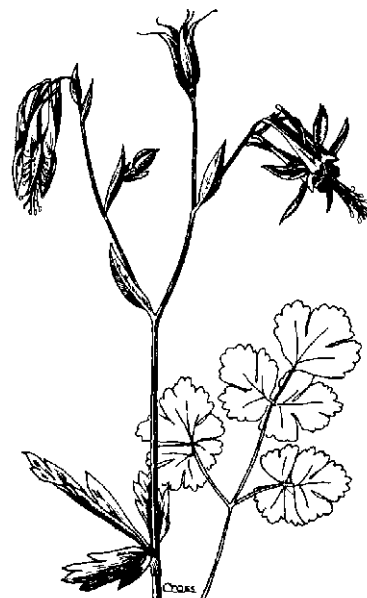
OUTINGS

All the rain should make this a fantastic Spring in Eaton Canyon and elsewhere. Join one of our outings to see what's blooming.

Sun., May 8, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Carol Carriere

Sun., June 12, 9:00 am: *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Eva Morgan

Sat. July 9, 9:00 am: *Blooms and Butterflies in Icehouse Canyon.* Meet at the Mt. Baldy Visitor Center. Jane Strong, leader. **Please check the Chapter website close to the date for details.**



Aquilegia formosa SCARLET COLUMBINE
From Munz' *A Flora of Southern California*

(Continued from page 1)

Monday, and during the week I had flexible hours. So I worked on Chapter tasks in between.

Q: What was the most satisfying task or project you ever undertook for the chapter?

Kathy: The first *Under the Oaks* plant sale and fundraiser was very exciting for me. It was the first large, organized plant sale and fundraiser for the chapter. I was able to involve most board members and others as volunteers. Rick (Fisher) conducted a number of plant sales in earlier years all by himself and consequently, they were limited in their scope. The first *Under the Oaks* netted over \$1,000 which was unheard-of for our chapter. We had always been low on money and this gave us a head start. I felt the plant sale really fit in with the mission of the CNPS by reaching out to educate the public about native plants.

Q: What was the most challenging time or event you were faced with in the chapter history?

Kathy: After Becky passed away in 1998, Rick took over the presidency and when he was no longer able to continue it seemed everything just fell on me. That was in 2000 at the same time that I moved to Whittier. I had already the newsletter and the membership responsibilities, and then there was no president and no vice president. Other board positions were also de facto unfilled. The chapter was at the brink of folding. In order to revive the chapter we needed to get more people involved and committed—and I seemed the only one who was willing to go out and try. I asked the CNPS state office for help and contacted the few people who were regulars at the program meetings and who I thought might be willing to help. I organized a meeting where we faced the decision to either fold as a chapter or to find enough board members to function. To my great relief, this meeting resulted in a new board with several new members, and we have been going strong since.

Q: What kept you going?

Kathy: I am stubborn, I don't like to give up. I don't do things halfway and since I was committed I just had to see it through. I also felt I owed it to Becky (Rothenberg) to hang in there and try everything not to let the chapter go under.

Q: Any regrets?

Kathy: Oh no! I learned so much during my years with the chapter. My work on the newsletter taught me about people, plants, computers, and desktop publishing—I gained a lot. And I met some really nice people.

Q: What are you going to miss most, if anything?

Kathy: I'll miss working with Jane (Strong), webmaster and field trip chair—I exchange a lot of e-mails with her. She has always been so helpful and supportive.

Q: Anything you are glad to leave behind?

Kathy: Not really. Sometimes I felt I needed to nag people to submit their information on time but then I found out they appreciated the re-

minder, so it wasn't nagging to them. I didn't like to deal with the organizational stuff (of the newsletter).

Q: Do you have any advice for us?

Kathy: Get more people involved in the board, reach out and try new things, be open to change.

Q: What are you looking forward to?

Kathy: I am looking forward to my new herbal healing garden that I plan to plant in Inyokern; and learning how to make soap. I am looking forward to a new start.

Q: What's the best time for wildflowers in Ridgecrest?

Kathy: Right now! There's a blooming sea of *Malcothrix glabrata* (desert dandelion), *Cryptantha* (popcorn flower), *Camissonia* (sun cups), *Chaenactis* (pincushion flower), and *Larrea tridentata* (creosote bush) right now on our 2.5 acres in Inyokern. The flowering season moves from the valley to the mountains, starting in February and going all the way through summer. It is so beautiful there! I feel deep gratitude toward the natural world—the natural world really helped me.

Thank you, Kathy, for taking the time out of your extremely busy life for this interview. Thank you, Kathy, especially for the invaluable contributions of your talents and your time that you have given so freely to the chapter in support of the mission of the CNPS. We hope you come and see us again, maybe when we have our next plant sale—we always can use good advice and an extra pair of hands. Or maybe we'll meet in Ridgecrest in the wildflower season.



WELCOME! New members

Dave Matson
Amy Nettleton
Linda Newfield
Andrea Warniment

Thank you to all renewing members. Please consider upgrading your membership category when you renew. Your support of our native flora is greatly appreciated.



LAPSED MEMBERS

Each month our Membership Chair, Graham Bothwell receives an email report from the State CNPS office. It shows both new and lapsed members and any changes in member information.

Recently Graham has noted a dramatic decline in Chapter membership. We hope that this trend can be reversed. Maybe you just forgot to renew your membership. If you see a green oak leaf on your address label, that means the State office considers your membership to have lapsed. But we're giving you another chance. Please do consider renewing soon; you are missed.



<http://cnps-sgm.org>

Check our Chapter's website frequently for up-to-date information on our Chapter's events and for links to other organizations' field trips and classes.

It's one-stop browsing.

GROWING NATIVE LIVES

By Louise Lacey

For the last year I have been sneaking around behind the scenes reorganizing ten years worth of 59 issues of Growing Native Newsletter into different formats so that I can make their information available to you at a significantly lower price and with less effort and money on my part. It's great news so far as I am concerned, because I have missed you!

You will need a computer. (If you don't have one, visit your library, or ask a friend for help.) Go to: www.growingnative.com

Here are the first four:

1. A combination of "The Basics of Growing California Native Plants," and "The Plant Communities of California." They include everything you really need to know to grow California native plants successfully.
2. 175 perennials, 115 for dry gardens, and 60 moist or wet.
3. 150 shrubs, about half evergreen and half deciduous.
4. Wildlife and inspiration true stories, my own and others.

Each segment has several bonuses (including a list of websites offering color photos of native plants), will be from 40 - 75 pages, and each will cost less than \$15. You will learn more about it when you look at the new site. I am doing the writing, editing and typesetting, you are doing the printing. If you would like to protect them, you can cover the pages in plastic sleeves and put them in a binder. There is no postage or shipping.

Check the ones you want and put your credit card number onto my secure site. (PayPal now offers any major credit card, and you no longer have to belong to PayPal.) The material will come out shortly onto your screen as a PDF. When you are ready, start printing the segments out on your own printer. Make sure you have enough paper in it!

Coming within the next year will be four more segments: Our favorite plants - oaks, ceanothus and manzanitas; California prehistory and history and a visionary view of tomorrow; trees, annuals and bulbs (a newcomer's best bet); and flying critters, like birds and butterflies....and more to come within this next year, including NEW MATERIAL.

If you don't want to use a credit card, simply print out the order page, fill in what you want and send it with your check to my address below, adding \$3.85 for priority mail for each segment. I will cover the paper and the toner. It is still a great deal.

Question? Call or email me. And thank you!

Louise Lacey
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GOODBYE DOESN'T MEAN FOREVER:

Green Blessings to you, Kathy

By Lyn McAfee, Chapter President

I remember meeting Kathy LaShure for what was probably the first time when she called that fateful chapter meeting back in 2000. Leadership had dwindled and the chapter was about to fold, or perhaps be subsumed by the LA/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter.

It was Kathy to the rescue! The emergency meeting she called to try to rouse the troops into action worked. Several of us decided we did not want the chapter to disappear, and stepped up to the plate to assume leadership positions. It was a pivotal time for the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter, and the chapter would not have survived without Kathy's energetic efforts.

As soon as Kathy had the chapter reorganized, she began thinking about how we could raise funds for chapter projects and came up with the idea of *Under the Oaks*, (UTO) our now annual native plant sale. The first sale in 2001 raised \$1000, which we all found to be astounding—but it has only gotten better from there. Each year, thanks to Kathy's outstanding direction, *Under the Oaks* has increased dramatically in sales. *UTO 4*, our 2004 plant sale, netted \$2240.

The newsletter has been the glue holding SGM together. Kathy's professional, diligent and creative editorship has provided the chapter with information, coordination, imagination, and wisdom for more than nine years. Until the past few months, she has also kept track of our membership rolls.

As her life moves in new directions in a new locale—the desert country around Ridgecrest—the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter will profoundly miss her. But we all feel that *goodbye isn't forever!* We anticipate that Kathy will stay in touch, and come back to see us from time to time.



Popcorn Flower

In the words of her favorite salutation—*Green Blessings to you, Kathy!* On behalf of the entire chapter membership, I extend our deep appreciation for the outstanding contribution you have made to the success of our chapter.

May the road ahead be filled with peace, joy, and many interesting challenges.

Editor's Note: While I appreciate all the kind words, I do hope that the Chapter will continue to thrive after I move. Please lend it your support in any way you can. Team effort really works.



Whispering Bells

FROM THE FIELD II Gardens Kissed by Flame

By Jane Strong

“...Is it not strange that botanists do not turn arsonists on occasion that some floral phoenix might arise from the ashes?”

— J.T. Howell

No truer words were spoken. We are believers after Sunday's field trip to Placerita Canyon to view the wildflowers that came after the fire last July. We followed Ian Swift, supervisor of the Nature Center, along the Ecology Trail. An amazing sight. Wildflowers of all kinds thickly covered the burned hillsides and canyon floor ...

tall spires of white snapdragon, white whorled lupine, popcorn flower in abundance, angel's gilia, cream-colored whispering bells ...

bright yellow wide-mouthed monkeyflower, several species of sun-cups, lotuses with curling seedpods and straight ones, more yellow mimulus: many-flowered and creek with bright red spots ...

purple twining snapdragon, collar lupine, Parry's collinsia, a veritable gem ...

pinkish yellow-throated phacelia ...

native grasses tall and short in full flower, green, of course, coast melic and vulpia.

What splendor!



Collinsia

A CHALLENGE,

still!! Is it for you?

A message from Kathy LaShure, editor

Hurray! New member Andrea Warniment has bravely stepped forward to volunteer her time and talents for a portion of the *Paintbrush* editing. She is willing to write articles and gather information and take care of mailing.

But, in spite of my plea at the March program meeting, the Chapter still needs someone to edit and handle layout (i.e. computer work). Remember that the newsletter can be simpler than it has been with fewer articles and illustrations. What's needed most is getting the word out about Chapter activities.

I learned a great deal of what I now know about this task just by doing it, by taking the plunge when I got my first computer. I know that many of you have computers and have basic skills in a word processing program. That's really all that's needed—along with some time.

Won't someone give it a try?

Contact me (encelia@gte.net) or President Lyn (LynMcAfee@aol.com).



For see, winter is past,
the rains are over and gone.
Flowers are appearing on the earth.
The season of glad songs has come,
The cooing of the turtledove is heard
in our land.

The fig tree is forming its first figs and
the blossoming vines give out their
fragrance.

Come then, my beloved,
my lovely one, come.

—Song of Songs, 2:11-13

PLANT PROFILE

Larrea tridentata; Creosote

By Kathy LaShure with illustration from *The Jepson Desert Manual*

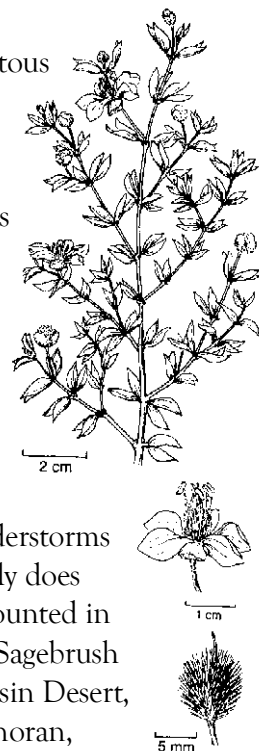
I know that most of you probably think that this ubiquitous desert shrub doesn't occur within our Chapter's boundaries. It's true that Creosote is not a cismontane (this side of the mountains) plant. But it is a transmontane plant for sure and our Chapter's official boundaries extend north all the way to the Kern County line. So there's plenty of Creosote territory north of the San Gabriel Mountains. Since I'm moving to Inyokern and our new house is surrounded by Creosote bush scrub, I thought I'd feature it in my last Plant Profile article.

I've had a relationship with Creosote my entire life, having grown up in Phoenix. It provided the unique fragrance that permeated the desert after summer thunderstorms released the aromatic resins in its leaves. The desert really does smell like rain for desert dwellers, as so wonderfully recounted in Gary Nabhan's book *The Desert Smells Like Rain*. Just as Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*) defines the higher, colder Great Basin Desert, Creosote is the signature plant of the lower, warmer Sonoran, Mojave, and Chihuahuan deserts. It ranges from southern California east to central Texas and south into several Mexican states. In fact, in Mexico it is called *Gobernadora*, reflecting its tendency to form monocultures. And it might be the reason so many newcomers to the West think that the desert is pretty boring, at least from a car roaring down a freeway. In California Creosote grows below 3500', covering vast stretches of land where few other large shrubs grow.

The plant sports many branches growing from a central point and they can be 12 feet tall but are usually less, about person-height. Mature branches are reddish brown to gray. The foliage (tiny waxy leaves) varies in color according to the moisture the plant receives: rich green with ample rain, olive-drab during the dry seasons, brown and dropping under extreme drought. It can be covered with many bright yellow flowers after any significant rainfall. The seed capsules are round and so fuzzy that you can easily see them from a speeding car.

Creosote is the most drought tolerant perennial plant in North America. It can survive for two years without a drop of rain. It does so by shedding leaves (drought deciduous) and even branches. Creosote bushes space themselves according to the available water.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Creosote is its longevity. The plant tends to grow into clonal clumps with individual stems in the center of the plant dying and being replaced with stems farther out, eventually forming a ring. Some of these rings in the Mojave desert may be 10,000 years old or more. This makes Creosote the oldest living plant known. I'll be exploring the Walker Pass rings not far from my new Inyokern home.



KOCHAR: STAPLES OF TONGVA FOOD

Ribes spp.; Currants & Gooseberries

by Mark F. Acuña, Gabrieleno-Tongva

Illustration from Munz' *A Southern California Flora*

It is now late *Sintikar* (June), and the gray days have become drier and hotter. The days have increased in length and Summer Solstice with all of its ceremonies will be on us. Already the Tongva are gathering for that great day of the longest sun. The women have been opening their *Kochar* reserves to begin the making of pemmican, a staple of Tongva diet.

The fruits of both currants and gooseberries had been gathered and dried and now with the festival coming, the dried *Kochar* will be pounded into meats and fats to make that delicious berry-flavored pemmican.

All thirty species of currants and gooseberries are edible. And when days of hardship hit the people, the leaves and twigs were boiled and eaten and added to the daily meals of acorn mush. The berries themselves are high in vitamin C, phosphorus, and iron.

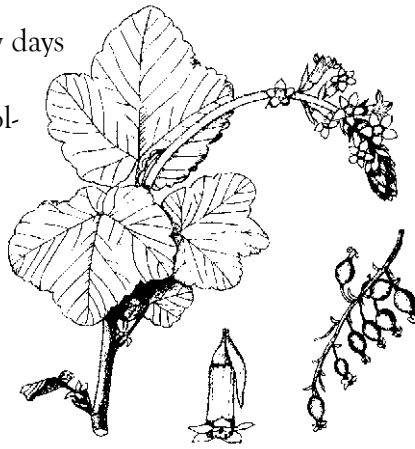
The Tongva made use of five species of *Ribes* (the botanical genus): *aureum*, *californicum*, *cereum*, *indecorum*, and *malvaceum* for medicinal purposes. *Ribes aureum* (Golden currant which blossoms from March to April) was used as a poultice for pains and soreness. The dried inner bark was pulverized and smeared on sores or for pains. A decoction of the inner bark was drunk for leg swellings, and the leaves were used as wound dressing. The juice of *Ribes aureum* was used for curing sore throats, burns, and fevers.

The berries of *Ribes californicum* were eaten to promote the flow of urine, and washes of *californicum* were used to cure canker sores. Teas from the fresh leaves were brewed to reduce fever and to improve appetite. The teas were also drunk to comfort pregnant women. The berries of *Ribes cereum*, which were traded from the Cahuilla, were made into a remedy for stomach aches.

The roots and the dried leaves of *Ribes indecorum* (White-flowered currant which blossoms from November to March) were used for toothaches. *Ribes malvaceum* currants were used as an additive in many remedies to treat stomach aches, and the roots were used for toothaches. All of the currants and gooseberry shrubs produced excellent wood for arrow shafts.

One should be careful with all of these *Kochar*, for eaten in large doses they are an emetic.

Wooded canyons, chaparral, washes, open hills, Foothill Woodlands, and Closed-cone Pine forests all offer home for the ever present *Kochar*.



Ribes malvaceum

JOIN CNPS NOW!!

Learn to understand California's unique flora and help to preserve this rich heritage for future generations.

Dues are tax deductible. You will receive this newsletter, the informative quarterly journal *Fremontia*, and the statewide news *Bulletin*. If you would like to receive only this newsletter, the price of a subscription is \$5 per year.

YES, I'd like to affiliate with the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter.

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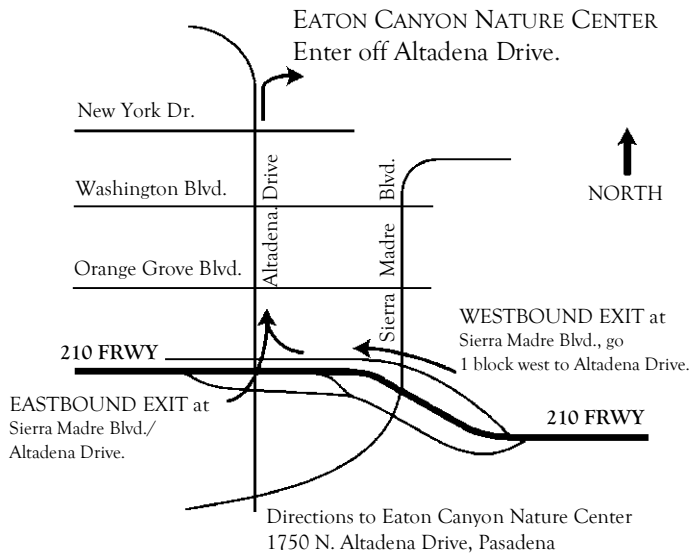
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Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs & professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding & appreciation of California's native plants & to conserve them and their natural habitats, through education, science, horticulture & advocacy. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the quarterly journal Fremontia, the quarterly Bulletin which gives statewide news & announcements of Society activities & conservation issues, & the chapter newsletter.



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