



# I-Plants Magazine

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**The Legends and Traditions of Holiday Plants**



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# Editor's Letter

Happy Holidays everyone! It is hard to believe another year has gone by! We are looking forward to connecting with more of you in 2024 and hope to see many of you back out and about at T.P.I.E in January.

We here at I-Plants Magazine want to say THANK YOU for all your support so far with this endeavour.

Happy holidays and best wishes for a happy and healthy 2024!

Kind regards,

Elliott Bennett



*Elliott R Bennett*

Editor-in-Chief, I-Plants Magazine





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*Gala Evening  
Celebrating  
the Green Industry*

# A Gala Evening Celebrating the Green Industry

## ABOUT THE GALA

We are excited to announce that we will be hosting the 3rd annual **International Plantscape Awards Gala** event in support of the National Horticulture Foundation (NHF).

The International Plantscape Awards and Plantscape Hall of Fame in-person event will be held again in partnership with TPIE, FNGLA and NHF on **Thursday January 18th, 2024** in Fort Lauderdale, Florida for a gala night extravaganza that includes a four course meal and the full awards program presentation. All proceeds raised from this event will be designated to NHF to create long term sustainability for the Interiorscape Industry.

The International Plantscape Awards recognizes outstanding achievements in interior plantscape design, installation, creativity, renovation, and innovation. These awards celebrate the strides of interior plantscapers to connect people with plants in remarkable ways.

Entries are judged on their own merit rather than against each other. Award winners earn a designation of gold or platinum based on points scored from information, photos and videos provided. Certain submissions may be awarded the coveted Diamond and Emerald judges' awards for the best overall entries.

We thank you in advance for your support in this great initiative.

**We look forward to seeing you there!**



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# A Gala Evening Celebrating the Green Industry

## ABOUT THE GALA

### EVENT DATE:

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### EVENT VENUE:

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### EVENT TIME:

5:00 p.m. - Pre-Reception in Palm Room Lobby / 6:00 p.m. - Gala Doors Open

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**~ Katharine Hepburn**

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The National Horticulture Foundation (NHF) embraces the opportunity to seek out and provide support to projects relevant to the nursery and landscape industry along with addressing issues related to a diverse and changing horticulture industry. Led by our vibrant network of business professionals, the Foundation is dedicated to seeing the industry thrive and survive well into the future.

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- One half page advertisement in I-Plants Magazine Awards special edition.
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- Quarter page color advertisement in Event Program.
- Corporate logo loop video recognition.
- Corporate signage at table.
- Corporate signage recognition at pre-event reception.

**Pre-event and post event exposure:**

- Corporate recognition in I-Plants Magazine Awards special edition.
- One quarter page advertisement in I-Plants Magazine Awards special edition.
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### **Individual Ticket \$175**

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## For More Information:

### CONTACT

**Tammy Hildebrand**

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# A Force of Habitat?

By Carolyn J.C. Goodin, CLP-I Emeritus

We have been discussing Acclimatization and plants' ability to acclimate to changes in environmental parameters, even to the extreme. What we should now explore is where plants come from, and what hints the natural habitat gives, regarding caring for our interior plant selections. The dictates of the natural habitat, effect plant growth in many ways. Climate in the area in which the habitat is found, impacts growth patterns, plant physiology, metabolism, water consumption and structure. The Morphology of plants is distinct to the habitat, and differentiates plants growing there, from plants growing in other natural habitats. Thus, by studying

the natural habit, we will understand how we must treat the plants, in terms of maintenance, once placed on the job.

Interiorscapers must provide environments for plants that resemble the natural habitat as closely as possible. Without doing so, maintenance of such plants, will be difficult. Plant failure will be high, rotation rates will be difficult to manage, profits will be lower as rotation costs are expensive.

We are most familiar with the Tropical Rain Forest Habitat, as most Interior plant selections come from the Tropics. However,



there are many different habitats, from which we tap, i.e., Arid, Temperate, Maritime, Monsoon, etc. to gather plants that will live in the Interior Environment. Plantscapers are not the hunter gathers, but plant growers are. It is in the nurseries where plants are tested for acclimation. Appropriate candidates are chosen for their acclimating properties and the successful ones are released to the market.

The easiest example to start this discussion is the Arid, or Desert habitat. This is the habitat in which we find Cacti, Euphorbias and Succulents. This habitat is mostly dry, hot during the day, much cooler at night, has very low humidity, and infrequent precipitation. Many species of cacti have spines or “needles.” These, not only reduce transpiration, but protect the plants from predators, which may be interested in obtaining water from stems. Stems are fleshy and usually swollen. These morphological characteristics, give one hints relating to how these plants are adapted to survive in this harsh environment. Remember

when we talked about Transpiration? Plants lose moisture from their leaves.

Cacti are adapted to conserve water. The needles are modified leaf structures. By being tiny, the surface area, exposed to the elements is greatly reduced. This morphology, reduces water loss. Stems are water storage structures, from which water is tapped during times of draught. Thus, cacti are morphologically adapted to survive their hot, dry, and low humidity environment. What this information tells us is that cacti should be kept in high light, and watered infrequently.

The morphology of Succulents is a bit different. Leaves and stems are both water storage structures. The plump leaves, usually grow in rosettes. They are found in a myriad of colors and thus are favorites of succulent gardeners. The common Jade Plant is a shrub. It grows fast and has brilliant green fleshy leaves. Because it branches naturally, large beautiful specimens are collected. The Jade becomes





a natural center piece for succulent gardens which can be surrounded by rainbow of colors rosette succulents provide.

Succulents are easy to grow. The habitat dictates they be placed in sunny locations. Avoid positions with high humidity. Because the entire succulent is a water storage system, irrigation is at a minimum. The trick to watering cacti and succulents, is to wait until a slight wrinkle in the fleshy parts is observed. Once that is seen, perhaps wait one more week before watering. Water as if a brief rain shower has occurred. Thoroughly wet the mix and make sure all excess water has drained away. That is very important.

There is one species of succulent that deserves mention. These are from the family of Lithops, commonly known as "Living Stones." Lithops cannot handle high humidity. They take what the need from the air. Too much air moisture and they succumb to fungal infections and turn to mush. They grow on rocks in very dry climates. Precipitation is very infrequent, if at all. They are native to South Africa and the Namib desert. These are very dry rocky areas. Lithops mimic the rocks in their environment, to cleverly disguise themselves from predators. They have thick, fleshy water storing leaves. These are usually split in two

parts. In late Autumn and early Winter, they produce beautiful daisy like flowers. Beautiful, and exotic as they are, they are very difficult to grow. With their native habitat being so specific, it is difficult to replicate without climate-controlled equipment. Applause to the people who manage to grow Lithops. It is a skill to envy.

Euphorbias are the most numerous of the arid group. This is because Euphorbias have characteristics of both cacti and succulents. They have needles, storage organs and, in many cases, they have leaves. Usually, they can be identified by the milky sap they produce. In some cases, plants which are too confusing to classify are called Euphorbias. This explains why Euphorbias are the largest class in the Arid environment.

Euphorbias are found all over the world, mostly in areas with hot summers, little precipitation, and low humidity. Hot spots in South Africa, Madagascar, deserts of North and South America, Australia, and Asia are where most Euphorbias are found. Some euphorbias are found in Monsoon areas. These flush during the rainy season but tend to go dormant during the dry season. The entire plant is a water storage system, allowing it to survive the dry times. They produce leaves at the apical



part of the plant, but are known for their spiny water storing stems. Pachypodium is typical of this group, with its large silvery stems, heavily laden with spines. Other Euphorbias have smooth bark like stems which produce blooms on their tips. Desert Rose is typical of this group. The greatest asset of these plants is their beautiful architecture.

Now for those which are difficult to identify because they have unique characteristics, we find the tropical Plumeria tree, also known as the frangipani, which produces leaves and flowers during the hot sunny summers, but goes dormant in during the rainy seasons. It loses all leaves and flowers as if deciduous, and will again grow these when the season changes back to hot and sunny. These are found in Mexico, South and Central America and Hawaii. They are classed as Euphorbias, because of the white sticky sap they produce. The sap in many cases is poisonous. One non deciduous variety is the Singapore Plumeria. These do not go dormant keeping their leaves and flowers year-round. Flowers are less fragrant, and die back quicker than their counterpart.

Another weird plant that landed in the Euphorbia group is the Poinsettia. It is so classed because of the white milky sap. This

plant depends on daylength, with blooms initiated during long night periods. It becomes the Christmas plant because in mid Fall it produces colorful bracts instead of leaves, just in time for Christmas.

With all the different types of plants in the categories of Cacti, Succulents and Euphorbias, it is no wonder why this group is so large. Plants growing in Arid climates are drought tolerant, but as far as irrigation needs are concerned, studying the habitat from which they come will tell you how to prepare for the best placements.

Be aware that the Arid habitat is difficult to recreate indoors, not without taking appropriate measures in lighting and temperature controls. Thus, plan on rotating frequently. Now, nothing replaces live plants however, the remarkable progress made in artificial Cacti, Succulents and Euphorbias, allows for the employment of the architecture, without high rotation rates, nor the health benefits which live plants provide.

Next time we will look at the Monsoon Habitat which is typically very rainy or very dry. Until then Stay well, stay informed, and stay Professional.

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# The Art of Integrating Plants into Interior Spaces

By: Jean-Pierre Sijmons

Plants are a great way to add color, life, and vibrancy to indoor spaces.

Not only do plants add beauty, but they can improve the air quality and provide a calming environment.

However, incorporating plants into interior spaces requires more than randomly placing a few plants. Here are some of the most effective ways to incorporate plants into your indoor environment.

## Considering Room Conditions

Different indoor spaces can have different conditions. Some spaces might receive lots of sunlight, while others might be dark. Therefore, it's crucial to consider the conditions of the space when choosing plants.

## Using Plants as Focal Points

Plants should be more than an afterthought in your interior design. Larger plants can serve as focal points in rooms, drawing the eye and adding a touch of drama to your interior.

## Thinking About Scale and Proportion

The size of your plants should be in proportion to the size of the furniture and the size of the space. A large plant can overwhelm a small room, while a small plant can get lost in a large space.





### **Variety adds interest**

Using a variety of plants can add interest and depth to the interior. Different shapes, sizes, and colors can create a more dramatic look.

### **Creative Planters and Decorative Containers**

The decorative planters you use can significantly contribute to your interior design. Creative planters and decorative containers can add an extra layer of style and personality to a space. Whether your interior style is modern, rustic, or something else, you can find planters that complement your decor.

### **Grouping Plants Together**

Grouping plants together can create a mini indoor garden. This can be especially effective on shelves or in corners. It's also a great way to create visual interest and a sense of abundance.

### **Maintenance Matters**

Plants do require maintenance and some plants require more care than others. If you're not a green thumb, consider choosing plants that are easy to care for or hire a plantscaping professional.

### **Improving Air Quality**

Many indoor plants can improve air quality by removing VOCs from the air.

Integrating plants into your interior design can be a rewarding experience that brings a touch of nature indoors. They can significantly enhance any interior space with the right choice, placement, and care.

### **Enlisting the Help of Interiorscape Professionals**

If you need help integrating plants into your interior design, consider enlisting the assistance of interiorscape professionals. These experts specialize in designing, arranging, and caring for indoor plants.

They can assist you in selecting the right plants for your space, considering factors such as light conditions, humidity, and the overall aesthetic of your space.

Interiorscape professionals can also provide valuable advice on the best planters and decorative containers to use, ensuring they complement your existing decor. They can help you create stunning focal points, group plants for maximum impact, and even design a mini-indoor garden. Furthermore, these professionals can properly maintain your plants, ensuring they remain healthy and vibrant.

Interiorscape professionals can take the guesswork out of integrating plants into your interior design. They can transform your space into a lush, green oasis that looks stunning, promotes a sense of well-being, and improves air quality.

## **Jean-Pierre Sijmons**

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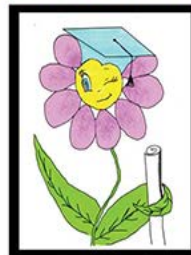
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A Professional's Guide to Indoor Plant Care

By Carolyn Goodin, CLP-I Emeritus

### Smartee Plants



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## The Legends and Traditions of Holiday Plants

### Poinsettias

The poinsettia is native to Mexico. They were cultivated by the Aztecs.

The colorful bracts were used to make reddish-purple dye. The poinsettia's milky sap was used to treat fevers.

After the Spanish conquest and the introduction of Christianity, poinsettias began to be used in Christian rituals.

Franciscan priests used the poinsettia in their nativity processions.

Poinsettias were first introduced into the United States by Joel Roberts Poinsett, the United States Minister (ambassador) to Mexico from 1825 to 1829.

Poinsett had plants sent to his home in South Carolina.

He then distributed plants to horticultural friends and botanical gardens.

The Ecke family of California has been instrumental in the development of today's poinsettia.



Initially, poinsettias lasted only a few days in the home. All had red bracts. Today's varieties are more compact, durable, and long-lasting. Red, pink, white, gold, marbled, and variegated varieties are now available.

The colorful part of the poinsettia commonly referred to as the plant's flowers are actually modified leaves or bracts.

The true flowers are yellow to green, button-like objects located in the center of the bracts.

Poinsettias are short-day plants. Short-day plants grow vegetatively during the long days of summer and produce flowers when days become shorter in the fall.

In order for poinsettias to flower for Christmas, they must receive complete darkness from 5 p.m. to 8 a.m. each day from early October until the bracts show good color, usually around early December. (Most poinsettia varieties require 8 to 10 weeks of short days to flower.)

Contrary to popular belief, the poinsettia is not poisonous.

However, it is not intended for human or animal consumption. Individuals are still advised to keep the poinsettia out of the reach of small children and pets.

One potential health problem associated with poinsettia is dermatitis or irritation to the skin. When a poinsettia stem is cut or broken, milky sap oozes from the wound. Some individuals may develop a skin irritation if the milky sap comes in contact with their skin.

## **The Christmas Tree**

The Christmas tree is a tradition that is believed to have begun in Germany in the sixteenth century. There are several legends concerning the origin of the Christmas tree. Historians do know that the primitive cultures of northern Europe believed that evergreen trees possessed godlike powers.

The evergreen tree also symbolized immortality. The Germanic peoples would bring evergreen boughs into their homes during winter to insure the protection of the home and the return of life to the snow-covered forest.

As Christianity spread throughout Europe, eventually the evergreen tree was transformed into a Christian symbol.

German immigrants and Hessian soldiers hired by the British to fight the colonists during the American Revolution are thought to have brought the Christmas tree tradition to the United States.

Millions of cut Christmas trees are sold every year in the United States. Over 15,000 Christmas tree farms across the country use ~350,000 acres of land to grow 350+ million trees.

## **Christmas Cactus**

Holiday cactus is a more accurate name as a plant purchased during the holidays may be a Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera × buckleyi*), a Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*), or a hybrid. Christmas and Thanksgiving cacti are similar in appearance. However, the stem segments



on the Christmas cactus have scalloped edges, while the stem segments on the Thanksgiving cactus have 2 to 4 pointed teeth along their edges.

Holiday cacti are native to the mountainous forests of southeastern Brazil. These unique members of the cactus family are epiphytes. They grow in the crotches of trees and derive water and nutrition from rain, decaying organic matter, and filtered sunlight.

The stems of holiday cacti are composed of flattened stem segments called phylloclades. The leaf-like phylloclades carry on photosynthesis for the plant.

Day length and temperature control the flowering of both *Schlumbergera* species. Like the poinsettia, holiday cacti are short-day plants. Plants will not bloom properly if exposed to artificial light at night. Flowers may also fail to develop if the plant is exposed to temperatures above 70°F. Night temperatures of 60° to 65°F with slightly warmer daytime temperatures are ideal for flower formation.

## **Mistletoe**

Mistletoe is a semi-parasitic plant with small, leathery leaves and small, white berries. Mistletoe plants manufacture their own food, but must obtain water and minerals from the host plant. American mistletoe (*Phoradendron leucarpum*) can be found growing in deciduous trees from New Jersey and southern Indiana southward to Florida and Texas. It is the state flower of Oklahoma. Mistletoe sold during the holiday season is

gathered in the wild. Most mistletoe is harvested in Oklahoma and Texas.

Traditions involving mistletoe date back to ancient times. Druids believed that mistletoe could bestow health and good luck. Welsh farmers associated mistletoe with fertility. A good mistletoe crop foretold a good crop the following season. Mistletoe was also thought to influence human fertility and was prescribed to individuals who had problems bearing children. Mistletoe has also been used in medicine. It has been used as a treatment for pleurisy, gout, epilepsy, rabies, and poisoning. Mistletoe also played a role in a superstition concerning marriage. It was believed that kissing under the mistletoe increased the possibility of marriage in the upcoming year.

Although mistletoe has been used in the treatment of several ailments, the berries are poisonous. Individuals using mistletoe during the holiday season should keep the sprigs out of the reach of children. For safety reasons, many companies have replaced the berries with artificial, plastic berries.

## **Holly**

Holly was considered sacred by the ancient Romans. Holly was used to honor Saturn, god of agriculture, during their Saturnalia festival held during the winter solstice. The Romans gave one another holly wreaths, carried them in processions, and decked images of Saturn with them. During the early years of the Christian religion in Rome, many Christians continued to deck their homes with holly to avoid detection and persecution by Roman authorities. Gradually, holly became a symbol of Christmas as Christianity became the dominant religion of the empire.

ARTICLE SOURCE:

Website: <https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/legends-and-traditions-holiday-plants>







Christmas Cactus



Holly



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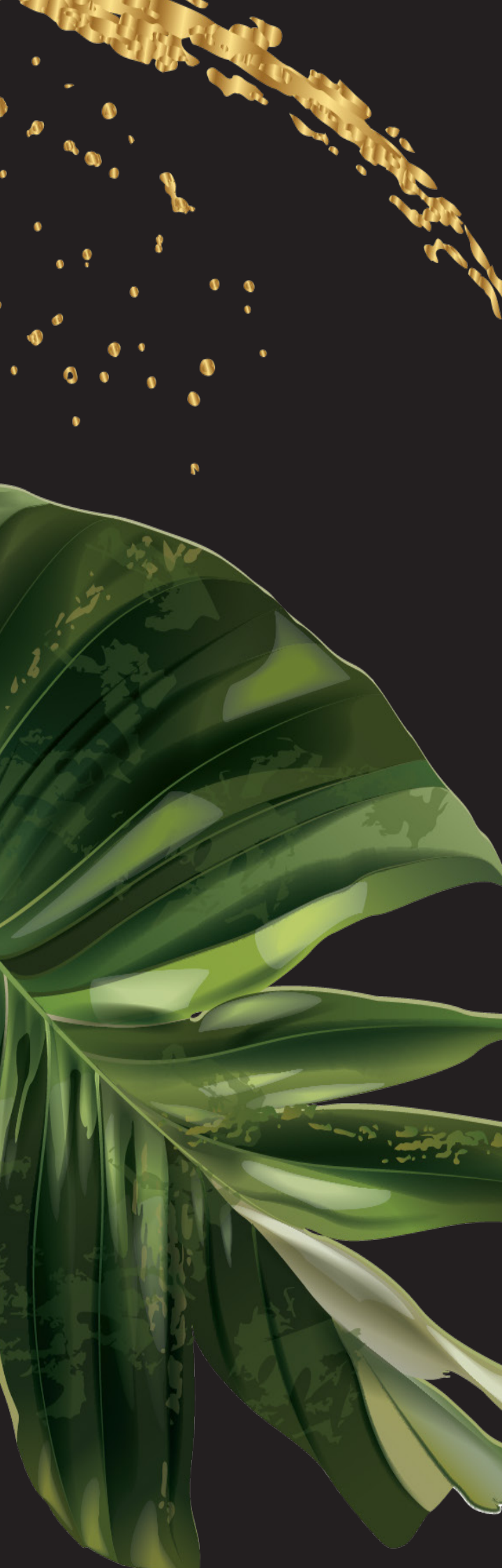
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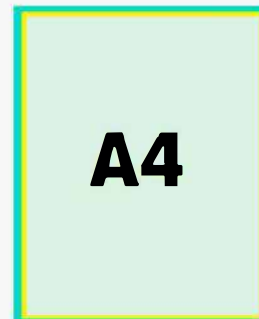
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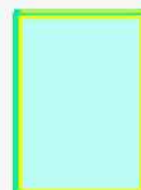
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