

Southwest Michigan Field Crops Update May 15, 2025

Here are updates from the MSU Extension Field Crops team in Southwest Michigan. If you have any items you would like me to include in future email updates - whether events you want others to know about or topics you would like to have addressed - please send an email or call the St. Joseph County Extension office.

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- Announcements
- Field Crops Update
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- [Weather Update](#)
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HISPANOIBLANTES: Spanish Irrigation And Pesticide Safety Workshop TOMORROW

This free workshop offered in Spanish will feature hands-on learning on a variety of pesticide and irrigation related themes. It will be held from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm at the St. Joseph County MSU Extension office. Four (4) RUP credits have been requested. No pre-registration required (although if you plan to send or bring a large group, please RSVP to me, Nicolle Ritchie: 269-858-8739 or ritchi67@msu.edu). [Learn more here.](#)

HISPANOIBLANTES: Spanish Review for Pesticide Applicator Exam May 21

This training in Spanish will prepare participants to take the Michigan certified pesticide applicator core exam. The cost is **\$35 per person and includes lunch and materials**. The exam will not be offered after the review but can be taken at any of the in-person locations or online through the Metro Institute. Held May 21 at Clinton County Smith Hall (819 W Park St, St Johns, MI 48879). Register at <https://events.anr.msu.edu/SpainPesticideReview/>. Four (4) RUP credits have been requested for those who already hold a license.

Refrigerated Trailer for Deer Population Management

Courtesy of the Hunters Feeding Michigan program, farmers can reserve refrigerated trailers at no cost to donate harvested deer. All deer will be processed and donated to Michigan food banks. Contact Dave Laing at laingd4@michigan.gov or 269-858-8167 to sign up or learn more. (It's also not too late to participate in the deer damage project I am doing with deer exclusion cages. Reach out to me, Nicolle Ritchie at ritchi67@msu.edu or 269-858-8739 if interested or with questions.)

 = 160 Servings



Farmers: Donate Venison with a Refrigerated Trailer*

Courtesy of the Hunters Feeding Michigan program, farmers can reserve refrigerated trailers at no cost to donate harvested deer. All deer will be processed and donated to Michigan food banks, at no cost to you. Your deer management activities can help Michiganders in need!

Free Trailer Reservation Includes:

- ✓ Trailer drop-off and pickup at farm
- ✓ Processing of donated deer
- ✓ Venison distribution to local food banks



To sign up, contact Dave Laing **at** laingd4@michigan.gov **or** 269-858-8167

Monetary donations for deer processing can be mailed to:

330 Marshall St., Suite 103, Lansing, MI 48912
Payable to: Food Bank Council of Michigan
Memo: Hunters Feeding Michigan



*Due to added disease testing costs, trailers will not be provided in counties of known Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) and Bovine Tuberculosis (bTB). For more information, please visit michigan.gov/huntersfeedingmichigan

Food-Grade Grains Field Day June 10

Are you interested in growing, processing, marketing or using food-grade grains in the Upper Midwest? If so, join the second annual Food-Grade Grains Field Day on June 10 at the Michigan State University Kellogg Biological Station, 9693 N 40th St., Hickory Corners, MI, 49060. The field day will begin at 9 a.m. with the field tour occurring from 9:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and ending with a free lunch. Learn more from [this article](#) and [register here](#) by May 30.

Branch County Conservation District Summer Field Day: Root to Sprout, June 25

The Branch County Conservation District will host its annual summer field day, *Root to Sprout*, on Wednesday, June 25, 2025, beginning at 10 a.m. at 189 W Colon Rd in Coldwater, Michigan. This year's event will highlight the importance of soil health and irrigation management in improving yields and conserving resources. The program will include educational sessions and opportunities to connect with professionals. Lunch will be provided, and attendees are eligible to receive RUP credits and one MAEAP Phase 1 credit. To reserve your spot, please RSVP by June 1 at branchcd.org or call 517-278-2725 ext. 113.



The Branch County Conservation District
is proud to host
Root to Sprout
LET'S TALK ABOUT SOIL HEALTH AND IRRIGATION
FOR BETTER YIELDS.

JUNE 25, 2025 @10AM
Huff Farms: 189 W Colon Rd, Coldwater MI 49036

Angie Gradiz (MSU Extension) – Center Pivot Uniformity
Brad Love (Ag Spectrum) – Nutrient Management/Plant Health
Dr. Brian Gardener (Ag Spectrum) – Mitigating Heat & Drought Stress
Dr. Younsuk Dong (MSU)/ Abraham Rai (MSU Student) – Enhancing irrigation efficiency and water conservation in potato fields

RSVP By June 1, 2025
Online (branchcd.org)
Or by phone (517-278-2725) ext.113
Lunch is provided!

THIS PRESENTATION SATISFIES ONE MAEAP PHASE 1 CREDIT/RUP CREDITS AVAILABLE



Grain Bin and Manure Pit Safety Training June 26 at Albright Farms

All are welcome to attend a grain bin and manure pit safety demonstration in the afternoon on June 26 in Branch County. In the evening, training specific to first responders will be provided and is limited to 30 people. [Register and learn more here.](#)

Seed Treatment Webinar series every Tuesday in August, in-person workshop August 18

Category 4 RUP Credits Available
More information to come

SAVE THE DATE!
SEED TREATMENT
WORKSHOP
AUGUST 18

Van Buren County
MSU Extension Office

57418 CR 681, Suite A, Hartford MI 49057

Nicolle Ritchie (269-858-8739) **MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY** | Extension

Michiana Native Plant Sale hosted by SJCCD and SMIST Cisma

Plugs for these native plants are \$3 each. Order pickup is 5/29 and 5/30 from 9 am to 4 pm, and orders can be placed up until the last day of order pickup. Contact Kaitlin Renehan (kaitlin.renehan@macd.org or 269-467-6336 ext 5) for more information or to place an order.



2025 Native Plant Sale



Hosted by the
**St. Joseph County Conservation District
& SMIST Cisma**

Plugs-\$3 each

Order Pickup Dates:

**Thursday, May 29th & Friday, May 30th
9am - 4pm**

**Species availability subject to change.*

To place an order or request additional information

Email: kaitlin.renehan@macd.org

Call: (269) 467-6336 ext.5

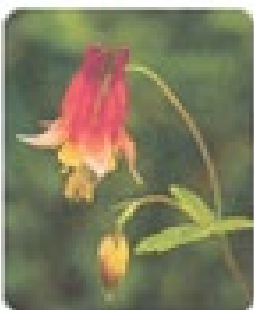
Visit: 683 E. Main Street, Centerville MI



Nodding Wild Onion
(*Allium cernuum*)



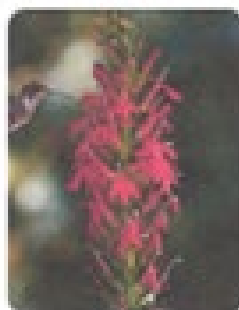
Turtlehead
(*Chelone glabra*)



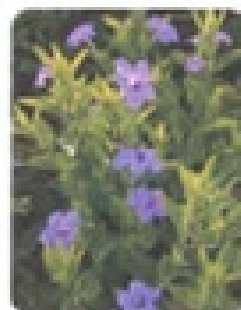
Columbine
(*Aquilegia canadensis*)



False Sunflower
(*Helicopsis helianthoides*)



Cardinal Flower
(*Lobelia cardinalis*)



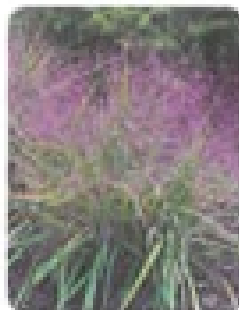
Wild Petunia
(*Ruellia humilis*)



Sweet Joe-Pye Weed
(*Eutrochium purpureum*)



Spiderwort
(*Tradescantia ohimensis*)



Purple Love Grass
(*Eragrostis spectabilis*)



Wild Senna
(*Senna hebecarpa*)

**Additional native plants grown from seed by The District may be additionally offered at time of pickup.*

Field Crops Update

Soybeans and corn continued to emerge. Planting was also ongoing, including staggered male row planting in seed corn. According to the NASS survey as of May 12, 2025, corn planting throughout the state is about 50% complete (almost twice as much as we had planted this time last year). Soybeans are just mildly ahead of where they were last year with about 30% planted. This number is probably higher for southwest Michigan. Continue to check fields for damage from early-season pests such as seedcorn maggot (especially if fields were planted into decaying residues and/or tillage around April 18), black cutworm, grubs (especially along sandy ridges) and slugs (in no-till and/or high residue systems).



Bucket traps in Berrien (near Berrien Springs), St. Joseph (Centreville) and Van Buren (Lawrence) Counties have caught the following:

True Armyworm

Date	Berrien	St. Joseph	Van Buren
4/28	0	1	0
5/5	0	2	0
5/12	0	7	0

Black Cutworm

Date	Berrien	St. Joseph	Van Buren
4/28	5	8	0
5/5	11	19	1
5/12	9	26	0

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Winter wheat is at Feekes 9 and 10. At Feekes 9, the flag leaf is fully emerged. The flag leaf contributes significantly to kernel fill, and some fungicide applications have been going out to keep it free of disease. At Feekes 10, the wheat head is at the very top of the plant starting to emerge. The Feekes 10 stages mark head emergence and flowering, or anthesis, which is a short but important window for head scab (or Fusarium head blight) fungicide application. Powdery mildew and aphids continued in wheat this week at varying levels.



Potatoes began to emerge, and pre-emerge herbicide applications continued to go out. A little less than two weeks after emergence, tuber initiation can begin, resulting in considerable water uptake.

First cuttings of alfalfa will begin next week in some parts of southwest Michigan. Alfalfa weevil continues to be present in fields, and several insecticide applications have gone out at this point. As alfalfa weevil populations build, wait as long as possible to spray, and cut early if possible to preserve natural enemies. Natural enemies provide free season-long insect control. Although the damage looks bad, wait to spray for alfalfa weevil until the crop has met the following conditions: if alfalfa is about 16" tall, about 100% of stem tips have feeding damage, *and* there are 4 or more larvae per stem, harvest early. If the alfalfa is taller than 20" and has the same criteria, again, harvesting is the best control option. For more information, refer to the article "[Weevils are popping in alfalfa fields](#)." If you are in southwest Michigan and feel uncertain about the time and/or procedure for scouting alfalfa weevil, contact Nicolle Ritchie (269-858-8739 or ritchi67@msu.edu), for in-field help rather than spraying too early or unnecessarily

Irrigation and Crop Water Use

Early in the season, water use for **corn** and **soybeans** remains low across all three regions. At the VE stage in corn and the VC cotyledon stage in soybeans, plants are small with limited canopy and root development, resulting in very low water demand, typically less than 0.25 inches per week.

Wheat, on the other hand, is currently at peak water use, requiring over 1.2 inches per week in some areas. Applying the right amount of water at the right time can significantly improve both yield and grain quality. However, if irrigation is needed during flowering, be sure to monitor fields closely for signs of disease. Increased leaf wetness during this stage can raise the risk of foliar diseases such as Fusarium head blight. For more information, refer to [Considerations for irrigating wheat](#).

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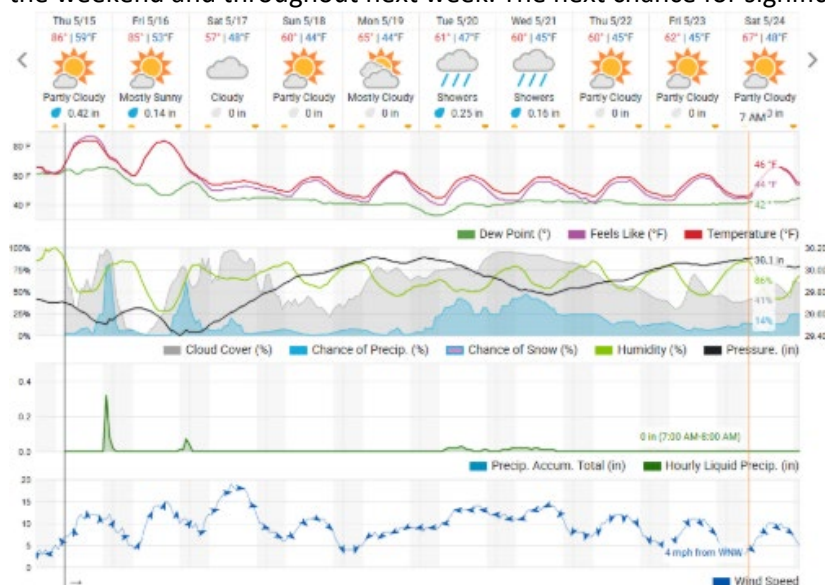
Estimated weekly crop water use for field crops in Michigan (in/week)				
Week of May 12 - May 18				
Crop	Growth stage	Constantine	Entrican	Hart
Corn	VE	0.11	0.12	0.11
	V2	0.21	0.23	0.21
Soybeans	VC Cotyledon	0.21	0.23	0.21
	V1 1st Node	0.32	0.35	0.32
Wheat	Jointing	1.09	1.19	1.16
	Boot / Heading / <u>flowering</u> / Grain fill	1.17	1.28	1.24
	Soft Dough	1.06	1.16	1.12

It's important to continue monitoring local weather and soil conditions to adjust your irrigation strategy as the season progresses. Tools like [Irrigation Scheduling Tools](#), can help estimate crop water needs and decide timing and application.

The table above presents estimated crop water use for various field crops across three locations in Michigan. This data helps irrigation management decisions by showcasing potential crop evapotranspiration, calculated based on reference evapotranspiration and crop coefficients for each crop growth stage. It is crucial to note that crop water use values vary across regions due to differences in weather conditions, growth stages, agronomic practices and soil properties. When using these values for irrigation scheduling, be mindful that they assume all applied irrigation water will be utilized by the plants without any loss. Additionally, these values do not account for any precipitation that may occur during the week of calculation. Reference evapotranspiration data was obtained from Enviroweather, which also offers a model for determining potential crop evapotranspiration. To access this tool, visit [Enviroweather](#), click on "Crops," select your crop and use the potential evapotranspiration tool by choosing your nearest weather station, the latest date of interest and other crop information.

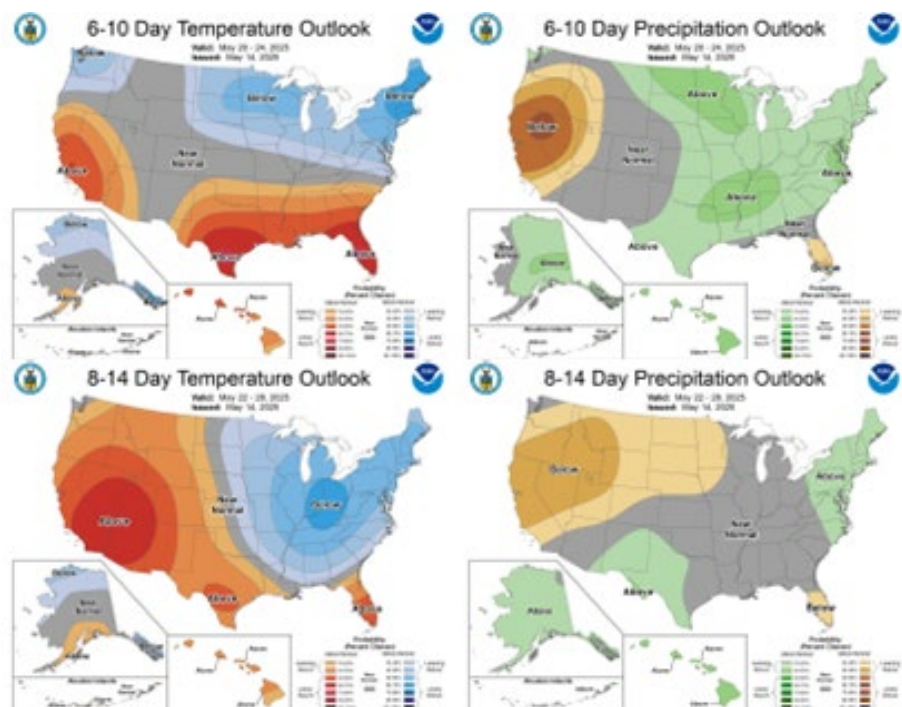
Weather Update

Scattered showers over the past week did little to halt field operations as planting and cultivation continued. For the most part, conditions were mild but humid. Possible storms tonight and tomorrow will bring cooler temperatures over the weekend and throughout next week. The next chance for significant precipitation will be early next week.



Ten-day weather forecast for Kalamazoo according to wunderground.com.

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The 6-10 day (May 20-24, top) and 8-14 day (May 22-28, bottom) outlooks for temperature (left) and precipitation (right).

Calendar

[Note: Titles are clickable links to online content when highlighted and underlined.]

- May 16** [Spanish Pesticide and Irrigation Safety Workshop](#). 8:30am-12:30pm. St. Joseph County MSU Extension Office. This workshop offered in Spanish will feature hands-on learning about pesticide and irrigation safety best practices. **4 RUP**
- May 20** [Regional Wheat Day - Allegan County](#). 10am-12pm. Join Michigan State University Extension and the Michigan Wheat Program as you visit an on-farm wheat variety trial. Updates on current research projects in wheat will be discussed.
- May 21** [Spanish Review for Pesticide Applicator Exam](#). 8:30am-1:30 pm. Clinton County Smith Hall. This training in Spanish will prepare participants to take the Michigan certified pesticide applicator core exam. The exam will NOT be offered, only a review. \$35/person **RUP**
- May 22** [Virtual Breakfast: Heat Stress and Wheat](#). 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. Register once for the entire series. **CCA only**
- May 22** [Urban Agriculture and Policy Workshop for Beginning Farmers](#). 5:30-8:30pm. KVCC Food Innovation Center. Kalamazoo Valley Community College will be hosting a series of workshops for beginning farmers based on new curricula developed by a team of beginning farmer educators across Michigan. Free.
- May 29** [Virtual Breakfast: Dry Bean Management](#). 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. Register once for the entire series. **RUP/CCA**

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- May 29** **Native Plant Sale Order Pickup.** 9am – 4pm. 693 E Main Street, Centreville, MI 49032.
- May 30** **Native Plant Sale Order Pickup.** 9am – 4pm. 693 E Main Street, Centreville, MI 49032.
- June 5** **Virtual Breakfast: Wheat Fungicide.** 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **RUP/CCA**
- June 10** **2025 Food-Grade Grains Field Day.** 9am-1:30pm. Kellogg Biological Station. Join for our second Food-Grade Grains Field Day, co-hosted with MSU Extension and Michigan Agriculture Advancement. The free event will feature speakers across the supply chain, and an opportunity to see the various grain crops grown at KBS. Register by May 30.
- June 12** **Virtual Breakfast: Cercospora for Sugar Beets.** 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **RUP/CCA**
- June 18** **Scouting School Day 2.** 8:30am-12pm. Scouting School is spread across three dates. Day two will be held in the morning and will consist of hands-on scouting in the field for diseases and insects present. It will also include covering anything else discovered while in the field.
- June 19** **Virtual Breakfast: Legacy Phosphorus.** 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **CCA only**
- June 25** **MSU Weed Tour.** Morning. More information to come. **RUP**
- June 25** **Michigan Wheat Summer Field Day.** Afternoon, immediately following the weed tour. More information to come.
- June 25** **Root to Sprout: Branch County CD Field Day.** 10am. This year's event will highlight the importance of soil health and irrigation management in improving yields and conserving resources. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP. **RUP**
- June 26** **Virtual Breakfast: Irrigation Management.** 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **CCA only**
- June 26** **Grain Bin and Manure Pit Safety Training.** The afternoon will feature trainings and information for all. The evening will feature trainings specific to first responders. More details to come.
- July 3** **Virtual Breakfast: Insects.** 7am. This free, weekly series provides timely and relevant information on rapidly changing field crop and environmental conditions, pests and diseases. **RUP/CCA**
- July 16** **Scouting School Day 3.** 8:30am-12pm. Scouting School is spread across three dates. The final day will be a morning session and include scouting in the field doing hands-on inspection for any insects present and signs of insect damage and diseases present. It will also include covering anything else discovered while in the field.

MSU Extension Digest Briefs

BULLETIN E2342 - RECORDKEEPING SYSTEM FOR CROP PRODUCTION

PUBLISHED ON MAY 12, 2025

A system for keeping records for pesticide application, nutrient application, manure application, animal burial and composting, irrigation and employee training.

COVER CROPS FOR MICHIGAN: SUNFLOWER

PUBLISHED ON MAY 12, 2025

Sunflower is a quick-growing warm season annual broadleaf cover crop with deep roots that improve soil compaction and scavenge soil nutrients. Sunflowers are great additions to multi-species cover crop mixes.

COVER CROPS FOR MICHIGAN: RED CLOVER

PUBLISHED ON MAY 12, 2025

Red clover is a vigorous cool-season legume cover crop. When planted early enough in the season, red clover overwinters well and can produce nitrogen.

COVER CROPS FOR MICHIGAN: CEREAL RYE

PUBLISHED ON MAY 12, 2025

Cereal rye dependably overwinters, even when seeded late into the fall and can offer erosion protection and weed suppression.

COVER CROPS FOR MICHIGAN: OILSEED RADISH

PUBLISHED ON MAY 12, 2025

Oilseed radish is a quick-growing cool-season annual brassica cover crop. The long taproot helps improve soil compaction and scavenges nitrogen from the soil.

MICHIGAN CANOLA CROP HITS FLOWERING

PUBLISHED ON MAY 08, 2025

Updates from the field on canola crop progress and insect pests.

WHEAT WATCHERS WEEK OF MAY 5, 2025

PUBLISHED ON MAY 08, 2025

See how the wheat crop is progressing across the state this week.

MSU AGBIORESEARCH, MSU EXTENSION ANNOUNCE 2025 FIELD DAYS

PUBLISHED ON MAY 08, 2025

The events will take place across Michigan from May through September.

SOUTHWEST MICHIGAN FIELD CROPS UPDATE – MAY 8, 2025

PUBLISHED ON MAY 08, 2025

Corn and soybeans started emerging, and wheat is at Feekes 8/9 (flag leaf emerging to fully emerged with ligule).

GRAIN BIN AND MANURE PIT SAFETY EDUCATION SAVES LIVES

PUBLISHED ON MAY 07, 2025

Providing Michigan agribusinesses and farm families with grain bin and manure pit safety education helps prevent fatalities on their farms.

WHAT IS EVAPOTRANSPIRATION AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT IN IRRIGATION?

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PUBLISHED ON MAY 07, 2025

Evapotranspiration (ET) isn't just a scientific term, it's the foundation of efficient irrigation. Understanding and applying ET helps maximize yields while improving water productivity.

JOIN US FOR THE SECOND ANNUAL FOOD-GRADE GRAINS FIELD DAY

PUBLISHED ON MAY 06, 2025

This free event, co-hosted by MSU Extension and Michigan Agriculture Advancement, will include presentations from experts throughout the supply chain and a chance to view a variety of grain crops cultivated at KBS.

EXPLORING ALTERNATIVE FIELD CROPS

PUBLISHED ON MAY 05, 2025

Alternative crops come with both opportunities and risks.

WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO SELL GRAIN?

PUBLISHED ON MAY 02, 2025

Market trend data may hold the key to maximizing sales.



Nicolle Ritchie

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