

Exhibiting Flowers & Plants



**This publication has been prepared by the Baxter County
Master Gardeners as a guide in selecting and preparing
horticultural exhibits for display in the Baxter County Fair**



**MASTER
GARDENER**

UofA UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE
Cooperative Extension Service

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Exhibiting Flowers & Plants

Events such as county fairs offer awards to gardeners who enjoy arranging flowers, as well as growing and exhibiting plants and flowers.

Horticultural exhibits should be educational. They should show what can be produced when improved cultural methods are used, when insects and diseases are controlled, and when good seed and plant selection are used. If possible, list the variety of the exhibit on tags for the benefit of others viewing the display.

System of Judging

The Baxter County Fair utilizes the dual-merit system (also known as the Danish system) for judging horticultural entries. Each exhibit is evaluated against standards for the class, as opposed to being judged against or compared to other exhibits. Thus there can be multiple awards – Blue Ribbon (1st Place), Red Ribbon (2nd Place), and White Ribbon (3rd Place) - within each class.

Blue Ribbon winners receive cash premiums paid by the Baxter County Fair Association. A Blue Ribbon award for an exhibit earns a set number of points; the point value of exhibits varies by class and is indicated in the Fair Book. The cash value for points is established each year by the Baxter County Fair Board.

Best of Show is selected from Blue Ribbon winners. The Best of Show award pays an additional cash premium as indicated in the Fair Book.

General Rules of The Baxter County Fair

The Baxter County Fair Book lists rules and regulations to be followed by exhibitors. This booklet is a supplement to the Fair Book. Fair Books are available at the Baxter County Cooperative Extension Service, 216 East 6th Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653 (870) 425-2335

Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements - Division I

See Fair Book for specific requirements by Lot and Class, and information on the proper number of specimens required for each class. An insufficient number of specimens will disqualify the entry.

See specific information under **Requirements for Cut Flowers, Requirements for Cut Foliage, Requirements for Houseplants, Requirements for Outdoor Potted Plants, and Requirements for Floral Arrangements**, in this publication.

Exhibits must be free of insects or disease that may infect or damage other exhibits. All exhibits must be inspected during the exhibit registration process.

No purchased flowers or foliage are permitted.

No artificial coloring or wiring is permitted.

Cut Flowers and Cut Foliage must be displayed in a clean, clear container with a narrow neck to support the stem.

Cut Flowers, Cut Foliage, and Floral Arrangement exhibits must have all foliage below the water level of the display container removed.

Containers for Houseplants and Outdoor Potted Plants may not be larger than 12” wide (inside measurement) or 12” high; containers larger than the specified maximum size will disqualify the exhibit.

We reserve the right to refuse any plants that pose a risk to fair workers or to the public; for example the leaves of a potted pineapple plant, or large agave are dangerously sharp. We reserve the right to refuse any plants that have other unpleasant or adverse aspects; for example, a carrion flower emits an unpleasant odor that would hinder the public’s enjoyment of the Horticulture Room. Noxious weeds and invasive plant species may not be exhibited. If you have any questions about whether your plant will be accepted, please contact the Baxter County Cooperative Extension Service, 213 East 6th Street, Mountain Home, AR 72653; or call 425-2335.

Cut Flowers

Preparation for prize-winning exhibits begins with selecting plants or seeds that will produce quality exhibition flowers. The best way to determine these varieties is to visit fairs or flower shows to see which varieties have received the highest honors. Select those varieties that hold up well in a hot room. Select those varieties that will be in bloom at fair time.

After the best varieties have been selected, they must be properly grown with careful consideration to watering, fertilizing, and insect and disease control. For optimum bloom, some flowers must be pinched back, disbudded, or staked during various stages of growth.

Requirements for Cut Flowers

See Fair Book. Exhibits must meet the class description and any other specifications indicated in the Fair Book. Select the proper number of blooms or stems as required for each class. If the schedule calls for three stems, the entry **MUST** have three stems. An insufficient number of specimens will disqualify the entry.

See **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I** in this publication.

See **Selecting and Preparing Cut Flowers** in this section.

All entries must have been grown by the exhibitor. No purchased flowers are permitted.

All cut flowers **MUST** have foliage attached to their stems unless they grow naturally on a stalk without leaves such as iris and gerbera daisies. A minimum of 2 leaves per stem is preferred.

Exceptions: Roses need at least 2 sets of leaves having 5 or 7 leaves per set. Large-crested celosia (cockscomb), gladiola and canna may be displayed without foliage.

All entries must be exhibited in a clean, clear container with a narrow opening. Foliage below the water level must be removed.

All entries must be identified with the common name and, when possible, with the botanical name and the variety.

Specimens should be free of artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray or oiling, or waxing.

Selecting and Preparing Cut Flowers

Selecting Flowers

Select specimens free of damage to petals and foliage from insect, disease or mechanical means.

Select flowers with symmetrical, uniform, and well-colored petals and straight stems. Select flowers typical of the variety.

Select flowers in prime condition having no wilted, faded or brown-tipped petals. For flowers having a center disc, select specimens with center florets that are not open, shedding pollen, or turning brown; these qualities indicate that the flower is old and past its prime.

For those classes requiring three or more flowers displayed together, select flowers as nearly alike in all respects as possible. The flowers should be similar in size, color, form, stage of development or maturity, and foliage.

Cutting Flowers

Cut flowers the evening before registration day to allow time for proper conditioning. If unable to cut flowers the evening before, cut flowers early in the morning on registration day.

Cut flowers with a sharp knife or flower shears. Cut stems on a slant to enable flowers to absorb more water. Cut stems longer than required for exhibit. Cut extra flowers in case of damage.

Stand flowers in a bucket of cool water as they are cut from the garden; place indoors in a cool, dark place. Re-cut stems indoors at a 45-degree angle. Cut stems under water to prevent air from entering the stem and interfering with water uptake. Place only an inch or so of the stem under the water to cut it.

Conditioning Cut Flowers

Conditioning is an important factor in successfully exhibiting cut plant materials. The purpose of conditioning is to allow the cut plant material to absorb as much water as possible. Plant material that is not conditioned prior to exhibition appears dried out or wilted; the exhibit may fail or collapse before it is ever judged. Proper conditioning will also prolong the life of the exhibit.

Stand cut specimens in lukewarm water to a depth of half their length overnight in a cool, dark place. This allows the stem, leaves, and blossoms to absorb water to enable them to retain optimum beauty.

Some flowers with fleshy, fibrous stems such as cockscombs or sunflowers will last longer if about ½ inch of their cut ends are dipped in boiling water before being placed in a container. Woody stems should be peeled back and split to allow the stem to absorb more water. Plants that exude a milky substance should be sealed by searing the cut end, using a flame or by dipping it into powdered alum.

Hollow-stemmed flowers should be filled with water before being placed in a container. Holding the cut flower upside down, fill the stems with water, invert the flower holding a finger over the cut end of the stem, place in water.

Some plant material (generally foliage) will benefit from complete submersion in lukewarm water overnight. Experiment with different approaches to conditioning the flowers to be displayed to determine the best method. This will also help determine which flowers are well-suited for exhibiting.

Preparing Cut Flowers

Flowers and foliage should be clean & free of spray, dust, or soil residue. If necessary, gently wash flowers and/or foliage to remove dust, rain splatters, spray residue, and insects.

Do not wash flowers such as Asiatic or Oriental lilies that have pollen-laden anthers.

Flowers and foliage should have no artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray, oiling, or wiring. Flowers and foliage should be free of disease, insect or mechanical damage.

The morning of registration day, cut stems again under water at a 45-degree angle. Stem length should be long enough to support and show off the flower and the foliage to their best advantage above the container. Remove all foliage below the water level of exhibition container; submerged foliage decays, creating foul water.

Place exhibit in a clean, clear container with a narrow opening to support the stem. Select a container that is stable and will not fall over with the exhibit; glass is preferred due to its stability. Bottles such as 1 pint vinegar bottles or 1 pint cranberry juice bottles with the labels and the glue removed make good display containers.

While the containers used for cut flower exhibits are not judged, the eye appeal of an exhibit is greatly enhanced by using a container that is in scale to the specimen exhibited.

With the exception of large and/or heavy blooms requiring extra support, no flower should rest on the neck of the container. If necessary, stems may be supported by an inconspicuous prop in the container's neck to enable the flower to stand straight. A small strip of clear bubble wrap or saran wrap works well, but it must be inconspicuous. A clear flower preservative may be added to the water to extend the freshness of the exhibit.

Cut Flowers must be identified with the common name and, when possible, with the botanical name and the variety.

Cut Flowers - What the Judges Will Be Looking For

Form of Flower

- Symmetrical.
- Not deformed.
- Not altered by insect damage.
- Evenly arranged petals.

Quality of Flower

- No limp, curled or wilted petals.
- No browning caused by age—indicating past prime condition.
- Free of insect or disease damage.
- Free of spray or dust residue.

Color of flower

- Brilliant and pure with a natural sheen.
- Uniform and typical of the variety.
- Free of artificial coloring.

Size of Flower

Typical of a well-developed specimen of the variety, preferably slightly above average in size.

Foliage

Color typical of variety.

Free of insect or disease damage.

Free of spray or dust residue.

Minimum of 2 leaves preferred, except for roses that should have at least two 5 or 7 leaflet leaves on a stem.

No evidence of faulty nutrition such as yellowing.

No spray, leaf shine or oiling.

Stem

Straight.

Adequate in diameter to hold bloom upright without bending.

Adequate in length to show off and support the flower and foliage to their best advantage above the container.

Free of wiring.

Except for very large and heavy flower heads, no flower should rest on the neck of the container.

Stems must be long enough to prevent this and to display the flower above the container.

Compliance with **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, and **Requirements for Cut Flowers** in this publication.

Cut Foliage

Some plants are grown in the garden and in the landscape for their colorful, showy, and beautiful foliage. This foliage can be the backbone of the landscape. It is the texture, color, size, and/or shape of the foliage that makes it such an appealing and attractive addition to any garden.

Requirements for Cut Foliage

See Fair Book. Exhibits must meet the class description and any other specifications indicated in the Fair Book. Select the proper number of stems as required for each class. If the schedule calls for three stems, the entry **MUST** have three stems. An insufficient number of specimens will disqualify the entry.

See **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, in this publication.

See **Selecting and Preparing Cut Foliage** in this section.

All entries must have been grown by the exhibitor. No purchased foliage is permitted.

Cut Foliage must be displayed in a clean, clear container with a narrow neck to support the stem. Foliage below the water level must be removed.

All entries must be identified with the common name and, when possible, with the botanical name and the variety.

No bloom may be present.

Specimens should be free of artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray or oiling, or waxing.

Selecting and Preparing Cut Foliage

Selecting Cut Foliage

Select specimens free of damage from insect, disease or mechanical means.

Select specimens that are healthy and in prime condition. Select foliage with symmetrical, uniform, and well-colored leaves and straight stems. Select foliage typical of the variety.

For those classes requiring three or more leaves displayed together, select leaves as nearly alike in all respects as possible. The leaves should be similar in size, color, form, and stage of development or maturity.

Cutting Foliage

See **Cutting Flowers** in previous section, **Selecting and Preparing Cut Flowers**; the same information applies to Cut Foliage.

Conditioning Cut Foliage

See **Conditioning Cut Flowers** in previous section, **Selecting and Preparing Cut Flowers**; the same information applies to Conditioning Cut Foliage.

Preparing Cut Foliage

See **Preparing Cut Flowers** in previous section, **Selecting and Preparing Cut Flowers**; the same information applies to Preparing Cut Foliage.

Cut Foliage must be identified with the common name and, when possible, with the botanical name and the variety.

Cut Foliage - What the Judges Will be Looking For

Healthy specimens in prime condition with no evidence of faulty nutrition.

Color and size typical of variety.

Well-groomed specimens. Clean and free of spray or dust residue. Free of damage from insect, disease or mechanical means. Free of artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray or oiling, or waxing.

Well-conditioned foliage.

In classes requiring multiple specimens displayed together, uniformity of specimens in size, shape, color, and degree of maturity.

No bloom present.

Compliance with **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, and **Requirements for Cut Foliage** in this publication.

Houseplants

Growing healthy houseplants is both challenging and enjoyable. Some houseplants are grown solely for their foliage while others are grown for their blooms as well as their foliage.

To successfully grow houseplants requires knowledge about good nutrition, correct pruning and/or pinching-back, adequate light requirements, and selection of the correct plant for the available growing environment. Houseplants may need to be turned periodically to encourage the plant to develop an even overall shape. Temporary training or growth props may be needed to train the plant to grown in the desired manner.

Plants grouped in containers (collections) should have similar sun, water, and fertilizer requirements. Foliage and flower color, texture, shape, and size are important aspects to consider when selecting plants for effective container grown collections.

Requirements for Houseplants

Houseplants are plants grown mainly indoors under ordinary home conditions. It is acceptable for plants to be grown under lights or summered outdoors. Plants grown for outdoor use in containers for the summer are exhibited as Outdoor Potted Plants.

See Fair Book. Exhibits must meet the class description and any other specifications indicated in the Fair Book.

See **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, in this publication.

See **Selecting and Preparing Houseplants** in this section.

Plants must have been in the care of the exhibitor for at least 3 months.

Container must be no larger than 12” in width (inside measurement) and 12” in height. Containers larger than the specified maximum size will disqualify the exhibit.

Houseplants grown for foliage must have no blooms present. Houseplants grown for bloom must be in bloom.

Collections are artistic arrangements of 3 – 5 different varieties of plants with similar sun, water and fertilizer requirements, in a single container. Collections must have been designed and planted by the exhibitor.

African violets must be in bloom and have only 1 plant per pot; the plant should be symmetrical and centered in the pot.

Vines must not be longer than 4 feet from crown to tip.

No decorative or artificial accessories are allowed.

Plants must be identified with the common, name, and when possible, with the botanical name and the variety name.

Selecting and Preparing Houseplants

Plants should be healthy and vigorous, with no evidence of nutritional deficiency.

Plants should be symmetrical in appearance, compact, and bushy; plants should not be not scraggly, leggy or top heavy. Plants should not be overcrowded in their container. Consider removing pups or offshoots as they may detract from the symmetrical appearance of the plant.

Plants should be mature enough to be a good representative of the species and variety. Select plants typical of the variety in color, shape, and texture of foliage, stems, and blossoms (if present).

Plants should be well-groomed. Dead, wilted, faded or damaged blossoms (if present) should be removed. Dead or damaged buds, leaves, stems or seedpods should be removed. Pruning and grooming cuts should be made at the node. Plants should be clean and free of soil, dust, or spray residue on leaves and flowers (if present).

No artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray, oiling, or wiring is permitted.

Plants should be free of insects, or damage from insect, disease or mechanical means.

Container may be no larger than 12” in width (inside measurement) and 12 “ in height (this is a requirement). Container should be in good condition, having no chips or cracks. The container should be clean and free of soil or salt build up on the rim or on the outside of the container.

The container should be in good proportion to the size of the plant. The container should blend well with, and not detract from the plant.

The soil should be clean and free of dead leaves or flowers, salt build up, mold, or weeds.

Cacti and succulents should have no broken, damaged, or missing spines. Dead or damaged blossom, leaves or segments should be removed.

Vines should be well branched; vines should be pinched and pruned to control growth and prevent long or sparsely leafed stems.

Collections should have similar sun, water, and fertilizer requirements. Foliage and flower color, texture, shape, and size are important aspects to consider when selecting plants for effective container-grown collections.

Houseplants - What the Judges Will Be Looking For

Healthy, vigorous plant, indicating proper nutrition and care.

Plant typical of the variety.

Symmetrical, bushy, compact plants.

Well-groomed plants: clean; free of insects, dead leaves, blossoms or broken stems. Exposed soil and containers clean.

Free of damage from insect, disease or mechanical damage.

Plant in good proportion to container. Appropriate container choice.

Collections: Appropriate selection and compatibility of plants. Effectiveness of plant combination .

Compliance with **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, and **Requirements for Houseplants** in this publication.

Outdoor Potted Plants

Requirements for Outdoor Potted Plants

Outdoor Potted Plants are plants grown in containers for outdoor use. Houseplants summered outdoors should be entered as Houseplants.

The requirements for Houseplants also apply to Outdoor Potted Plants. See **Requirements for Houseplants** in the previous section;

Selecting and Preparing Outdoor Potted Plants

The recommendations for Houseplants also apply to Outdoor Potted Plants. See **Selecting and Preparing Houseplants** in the previous section.

Outdoor Potted Plants - What the Judges Will be Looking For

The judging criteria for Houseplants also applies to Outdoor Potted Plants. See **Houseplants - What the Judges Will be Looking For** in the previous section.

Compliance with **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, and **Requirements for Outdoor Potted Plants** in this publication.

Floral Arrangements

Flower arranging is the art of selecting and organizing flowers and foliage according to the elements and principles of design in order to attain a pleasing and interesting design. Design is the selecting and arranging of objects and deals with the form of their composition. Good design requires a relationship between all of the component parts.

*See separate booklet entitled **Principles of Floral Arrangement**, prepared by the Baxter County Master Gardeners as an introduction to floral arrangement for exhibitors interested in exhibiting floral arrangements at the Baxter County Fair. **Principles of Floral Arrangement** is available at the Baxter County Cooperative Extension Office, 213 East 6th Street, Suite 111, Mountain Home, AR 72653; (870) 425-2335.*

Requirements for Floral Arrangements

See Fair Book. Exhibits must meet the class description and any other specifications indicated in the Fair Book.

See **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, in this publication.

See **Selecting and Preparing Plant Material for Floral Arrangements** in this section.

All material used in arrangements must be fresh plant material. No dried or artificial plant material may be used.

No purchased or artificial accessories or decorations are permitted.

No purchased flowers or foliage are permitted.

Arrangements should be free of artificial coloring, leaf shine, spray, oiling, or wiring.

No arrangement may exceed 21” in overall height; overall height is the combined height of plant material and container.

Miniature arrangements may not exceed 5” in overall height, width, or depth.

Clear containers are the LEAST desirable for floral arrangements.

Selection and Preparation of Plant Materials for Floral Arrangements

See **Selecting and Preparing Cut Flowers**, (and **Selecting and Preparing Cut Foliage**) sections of this publication. The information presented in these sections also applies to the selection and preparation of plant materials to be used in Floral Arrangements.

Containers

Depending upon the class in which the arrangement is entered, the container can be a hidden part of the design (simply there to hold the arrangement) or it can be an important and interesting feature in the overall arrangement. To keep stems from being visible and becoming an undesired focal point, use a non-clear container. Clear containers are the LEAST desirable for floral arrangements.

Height

The longest line or the tallest point of the arrangement should be at least 1½ times the container height (or diameter). In determining the correct overall height for the arrangement, use whichever container dimension is greater – the length/diameter or the height.

For taller, upright containers, use the container's height in determining the appropriate overall height for the arrangement. For example, if an upright container is 6" tall, the overall arrangement height will be at least 15" tall.

Container Height:	6"	
Plant Material Height:	$\frac{9"}{}$	(6" x 1.5)
Overall Arrangement Height:	15"	

For low oblong or round dish-type containers (1" or so), use the container's diameter in determining the appropriate height for the arrangement. For example, if an oblong container is 1" high and 4" long, determine the height of the arrangement based on the length of the container, not the height. The overall arrangement height will be at least 10" tall.

Container Length:	4"	
Plant Material Height:	$\frac{6"}{}$	(4" x 1.5)
Overall Arrangement Height:	10"	

In determining the correct overall height for a basket, use the height or diameter of the basket (whichever dimension is greater) not the height of the handle.

Keep in mind that the height of the plant material includes any elements that extend below the top of the container.

Floral Arrangements - What the Judges Will Be Looking For

Freshness of foliage and flowers. Properly conditioned plant material.

Use of a non-clear container.

Height: The height of the arrangement should be at least 1 ½ times the height or diameter of the container. Overall height is limited to 21 inches.

Artistic selection and combination of colors, textures, shapes, and sizes of the flowers, foliage, and container.

Harmony: Everything - the container, the various types of flowers, the foliage, the various textures and shapes – must look as if they belong together and create a united arrangement.

The application of the elements of design: color, light, space, line, form, pattern, texture, and size.

The application of the principles of design: balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, and scale.

Compliance with **Baxter County Fair Horticulture Exhibit Requirements – Division I**, and **Requirements for Floral Arrangements** in this publication.

Final Check Before Registration

The Fair Book should be checked for any special rules concerning flower and plant exhibits and floral arrangements. Also check the **Requirements at the Baxter County Fair** and the **Requirements for Cut Flowers, Requirements for Cut Foliage, Requirements for Houseplants, Requirements for Outdoor Potted Plants, and Requirements for Floral Arrangements**, in this publication.

After arriving at the Fair, carefully look over the exhibits for any unnoticed dead leaves, dirt or, for cut flowers, any leaves below the water level. Make certain your containers are filled with water. Count to make certain you have the proper number of specimens per fair rules and that you have met all the regulations for each class that you have entered. It is wise to take extra specimens to the show in case of breakage, etc.

GLOSSARY

Axis: One or more central lines (real or imaginary) around which an artistic form is organized or composed. In a traditional flower arrangement the axis will be through the middle or focal area.

Annual: An herbaceous plant that normally completes its life cycle in one year.

Anther: The pollen-bearing part of the stamen.

Arrangement: A design of plant material, usually in a container organized according to the elements and principles of design to display beauty, expression and harmony.

Balance: A principle of design which is the visual equilibrium. It may be either symmetrical or asymmetrical.

Biennial: A plant that doesn't bloom or set seed until its second year of life.

Branch: An offshoot from the main stem of a plant.

Cactus: A plant having areoles, a cushion-like organ on stems and branches from which the spines, stems, and flowers grow. The presence of areoles distinguishes a cactus from a succulent. All cacti are succulents, but not all succulents are cacti.

Collection: Grouping of 3-5 varied plants in one pot. The collection cannot be 3-5 identical plants. It must include at least 2 different varieties or types.

Conditioning: A process for optimum freshness which allows horticulture to absorb more water than it gives off.

Disbudding: The removal of lateral buds along a stem of a plant to help develop a larger terminal bud.

Elements of Design: The basic visual elements that comprise a design. Includes space, line, form, pattern, texture, color, size, and light.

Floret: An individual flower, usually part of a dense cluster such as one floret of the center (the disc florets) or the outer petals (the ray florets) of a zinnia or daisy.

Focal Point: That area or portion of of a design that first attracts attention.

Grooming: Removal of dirt, spray residue, dead leaves and flowers, insects, and any foreign material on a plant, flower, and foliage.

Hardening: To condition plant material usually in water to strengthen them for lasting ability and freshness when exhibited.

Herb: Annual, biennial, or perennial plants that are used for medicine, food, flavor, scent, or dye.

Mass Arrangement: A closed form created with many solids and few open areas.

Miniature arrangement: A small design with consideration given to all of the elements of design, but scale is most important. It must not exceed 5” in height, width, or depth.

Node: The place on a stem where a leaf or stem is attached.

Non-woody: Describes the fibrous system of a soft-stemmed plant. See the definition of “woody.”

Perennial: A non-woody plant that normally grows, blooms, and sets seeds for 2 or more years. Some perennials live only a few years. Others such as peonies may live for 100 years or more.

Principles of Design: Fundamental rules to be used as a guide in organizing design elements. Includes balance, dominance, contrast, rhythm, proportion, and scale.

Spray: A small branch bearing dependent branchlets or flowers (such as with cushion mums).

Stamen: The center part of the flower composed of filament, anther, pollen, and pollen sacs.

Stem: 1.) the main axis of a plant above the soil line. This main body supports leaves, blossoms, and/or fruit, 2.) in a horticulture show schedule, the term "stem" means the bloom AND the structure that supports it.

Substance: That which gives a lasting quality to plant material because of the tissue structure, firmness, and thickness.

Woody: Describes the fibrous stems of certain perennials, such as trees and shrubs, that persist above the ground throughout the year.

For more information, contact:

**Baxter County Master Gardeners
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July 2005