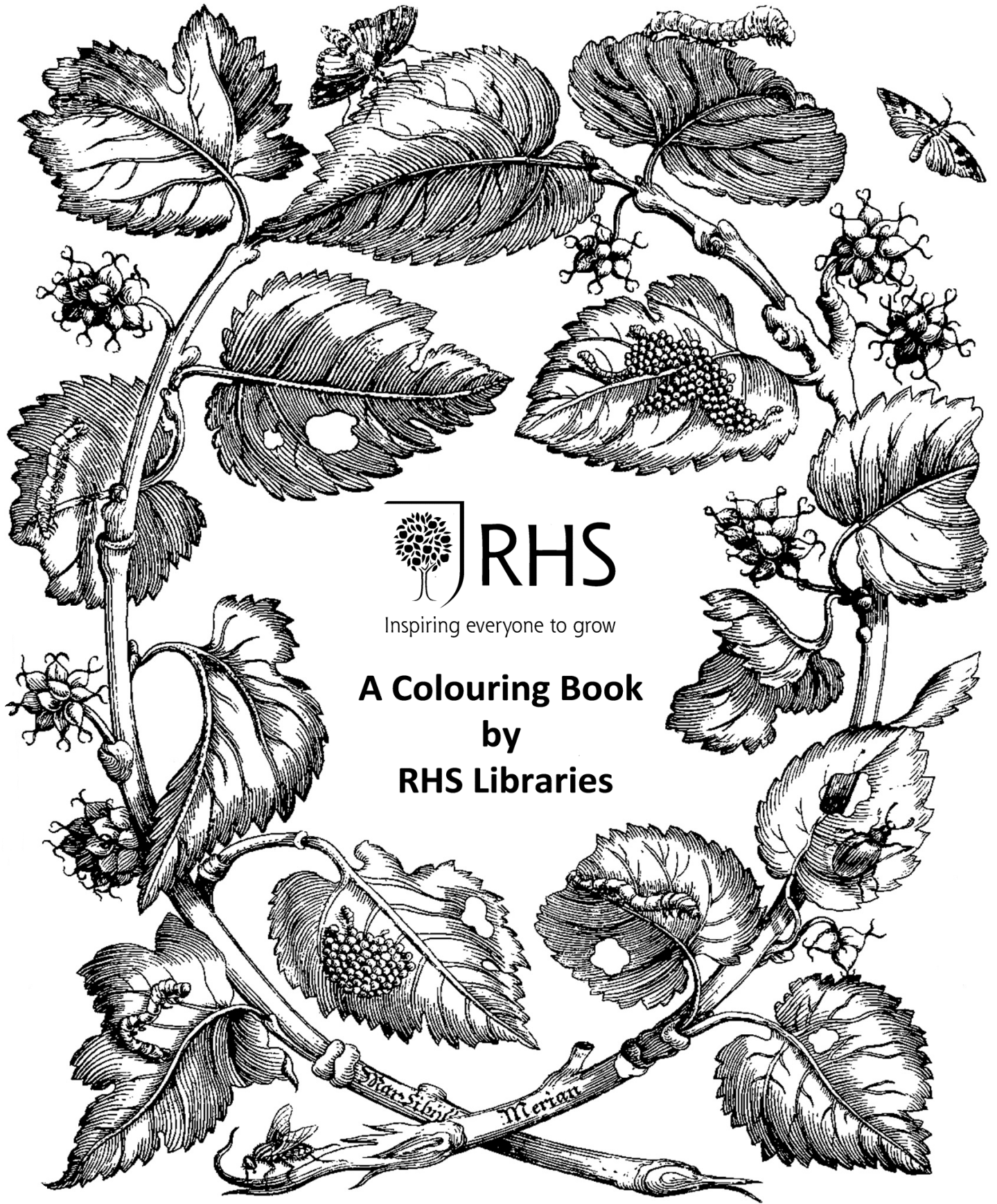


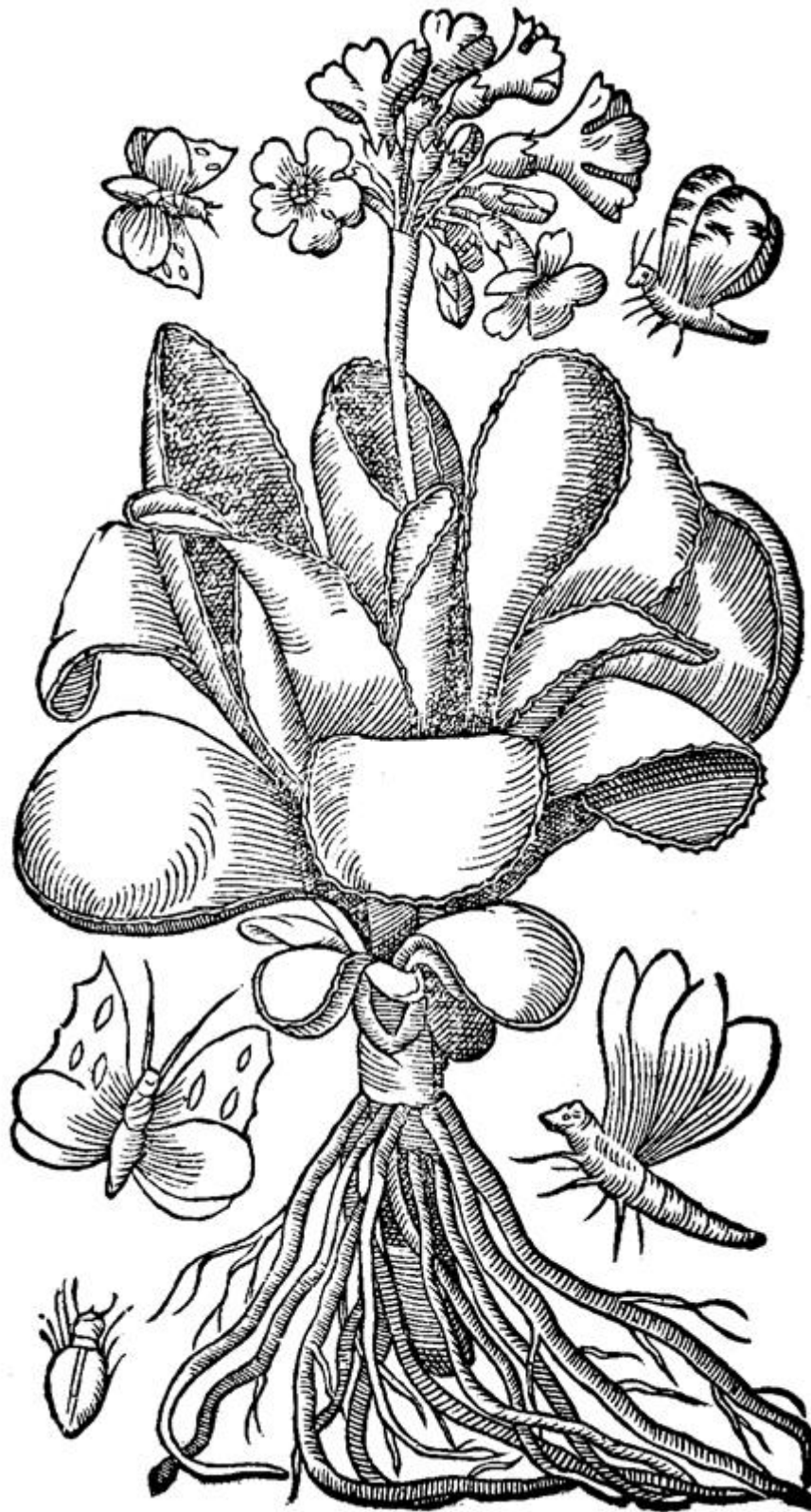
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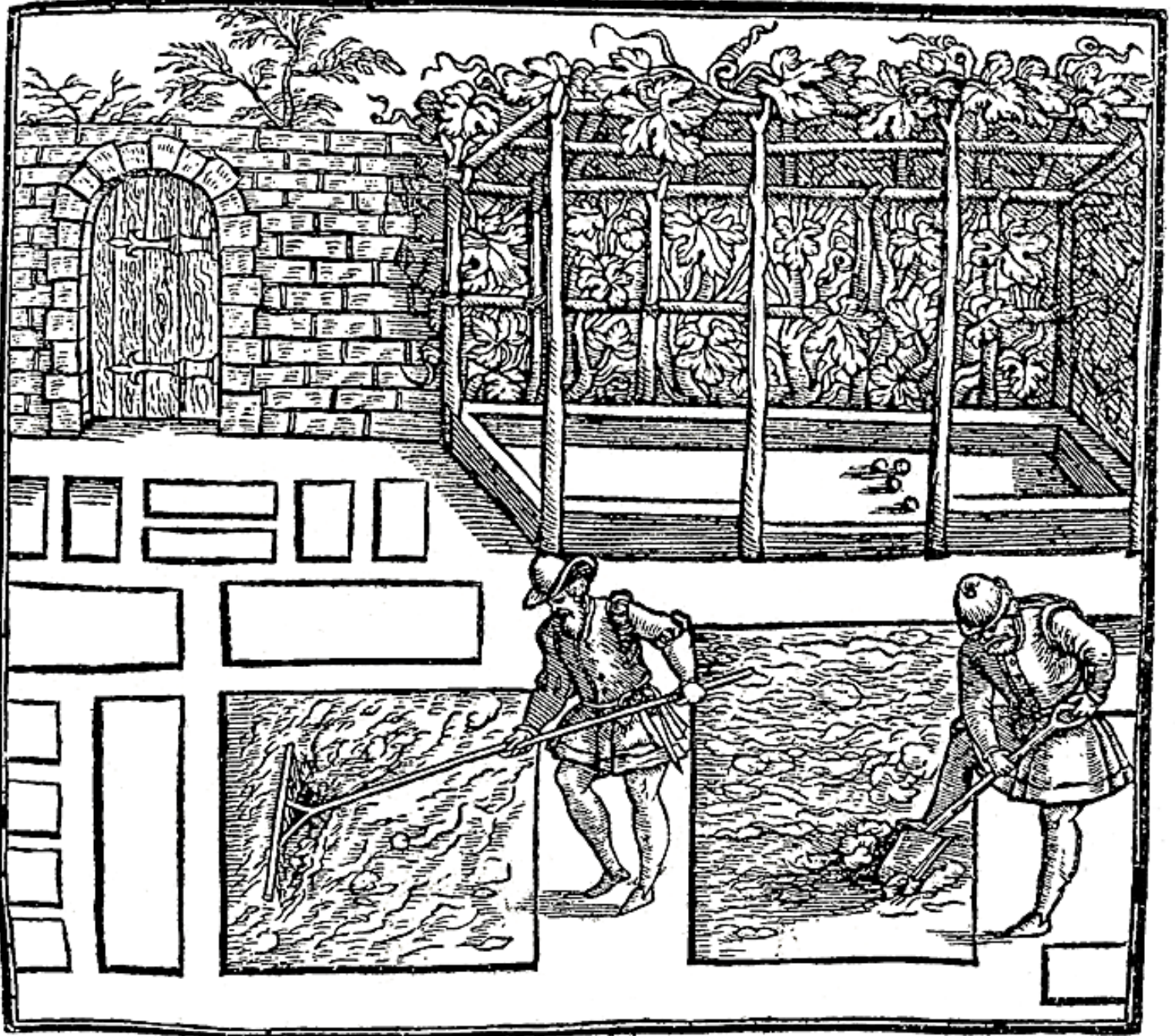


**A Colouring Book  
by  
RHS Libraries**

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Our gardens are full of life, from flowers to fungi and bugs to birds. For centuries people have captured images of the plants and creatures they have encountered, using different methods and techniques to record and share what they have seen. This is a woodcut illustration from Jacques Dalechamps' *Historia generalis plantarum* [Lyon, 1586: 615.3 ALE]. The image of a primula surrounded by a host of insects, was carved onto a wooden block, then inked and pressed onto a sheet of paper to illustrate the accompanying description of the plant.



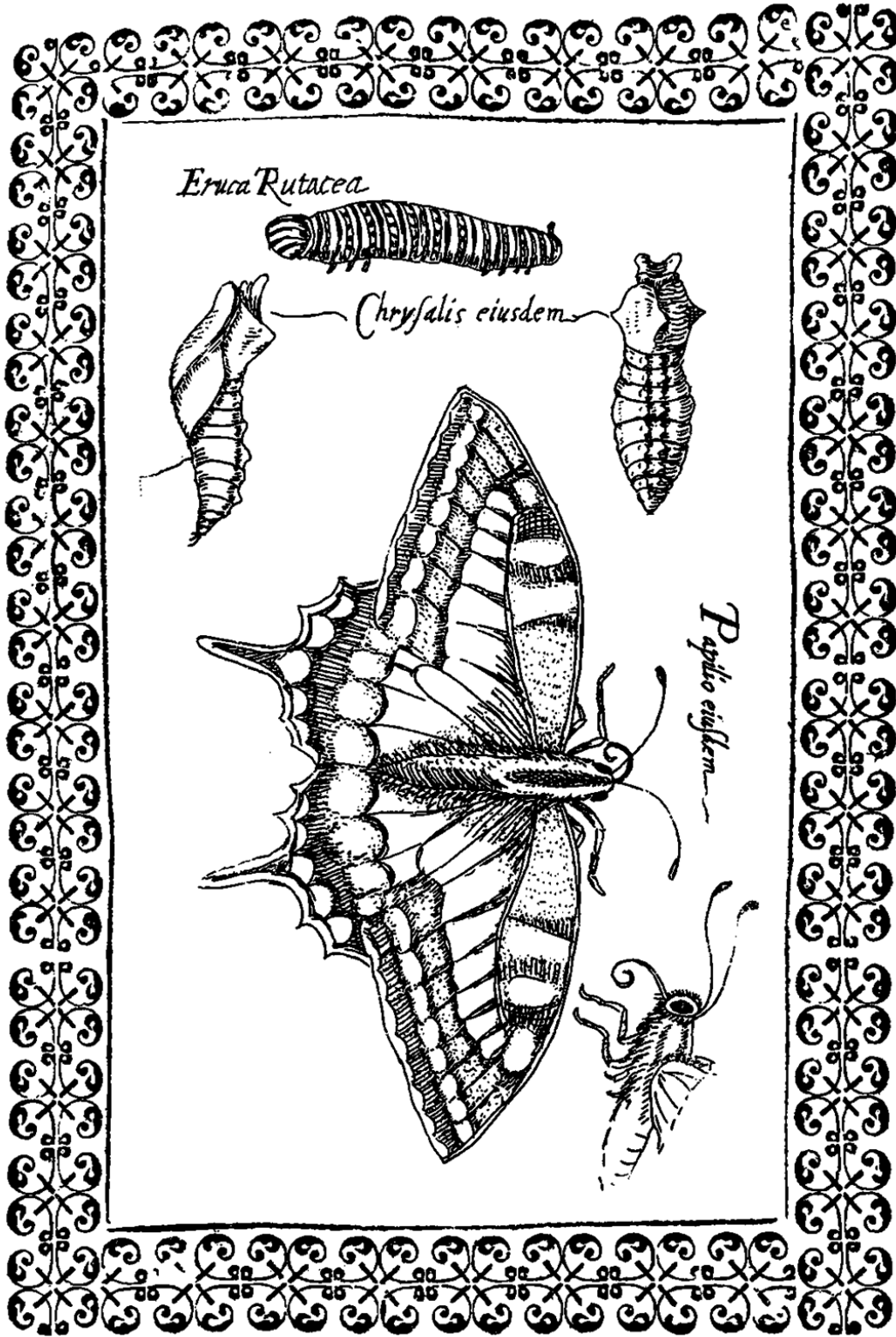
Gardeners can play a key role in helping to encourage and support wildlife and increase the biodiversity of our green spaces. This can be done not only through the plants we grow, but also the methods we use to cultivate them and the different habitats we can provide. We can make space for nature in lots of different ways – from wild borders to window boxes. These gardeners are shown hard at work in a book by Adam Islip called, *The orchard, and the garden* [London, 1602: 950 ORC].



Borage (*Borago officinalis*), with its distinctive star shaped flowers, is a striking plant for the garden that is well known for attracting bees. In fact, it is sometimes known as “bee fodder”, the “bee bush” or even “bee’s bread”. This woodcut illustration appears in *Herbarius Latinus* [Venice, 1520: 615.3 HER]. But, what’s this? It’s attracted a swarm of bees from a 1536 copy of *Herbolario volgare* [Venice, 1536: 615.3 HER].



Growing a variety of plants can create not only visually appealing spaces, but the different flowers, fruits, shapes, colours and scents are attractive to diverse forms of wildlife, providing them with food and shelter. Plants are also incredibly good for our wellbeing. The colours and perfumes that attract wildlife, can also play a role in our mood. [*Ehon yasanso*. Osaka, 1806: 581.9 (5Q) TAC].



It's not just flowers that bring colour to our gardens, but the wildlife that visits too. Butterflies are an important pollinator and there are around 18,000 different species across the globe. While their wings may seem powdery if touched, they are actually covered in tiny scales, which are themselves modified hairs. This engraved illustration shows part of the intriguing lifecycle of a butterfly - the caterpillar, then the chrysalis that protects the soon to emerge butterfly. You'll also spot an illustration of the butterfly's proboscis. This is the straw-like mouthpart that is used to feed from plants. Butterflies particularly like plants grown in full sun, in a sheltered position where they can freely flit from flower to flower to extract their sweet nectar. [Rome, 1616: 581.9 (4Q) COL].



Different plants can also attract our feathered friends. Seeds, fruit and berries make for a tasty meal, as do some of the insects who visit the plants too. If we also provide a water source for them, birds can become a regular visitor in the garden. This little great tit (*Parus major*) from Lonitzer's *Kreuterbuch* [Frankfurt, 1593: 615.3 LON] has found a seed, but birds might also visit shrubs like the hawthorn, which has been incorporated here into a design by Gertrude Jekyll, the famous horticulturalist and garden designer [A/JEK/SBK/175].

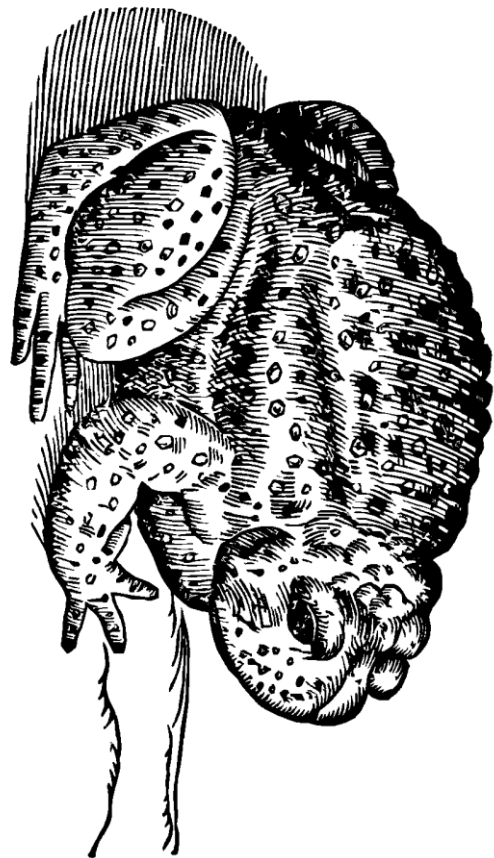
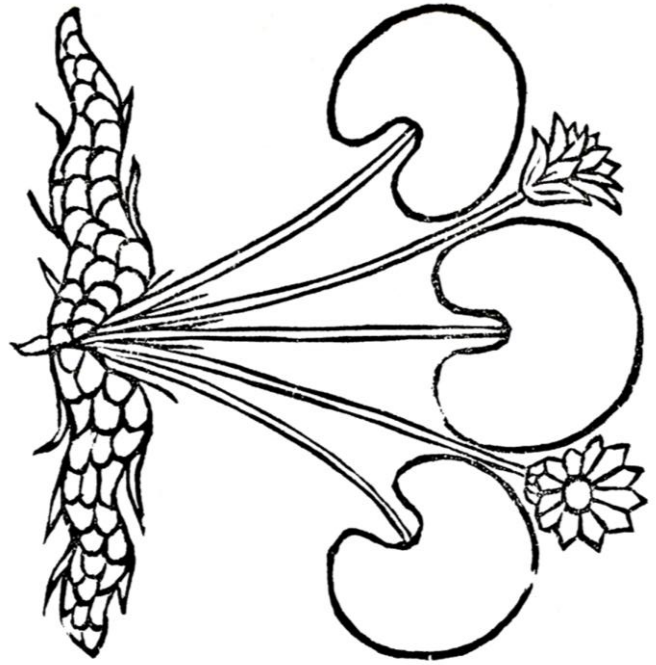
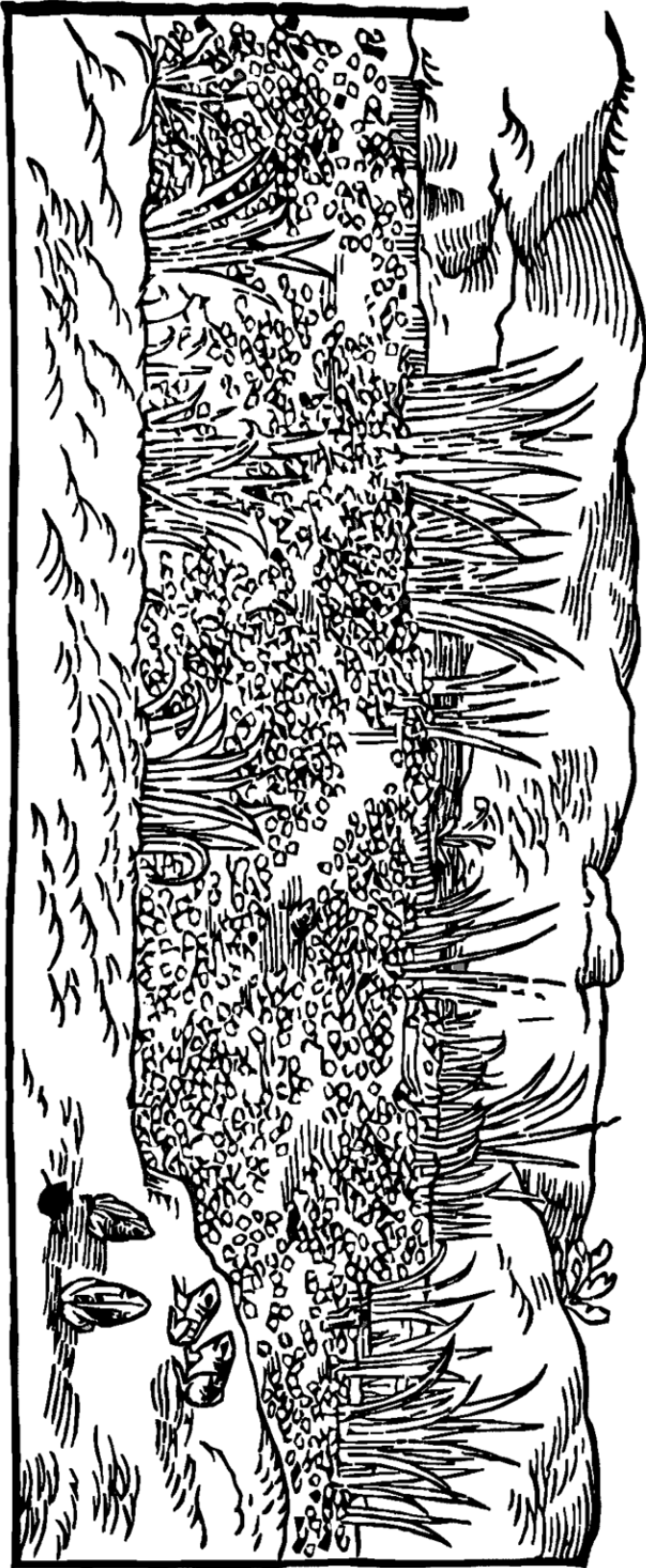
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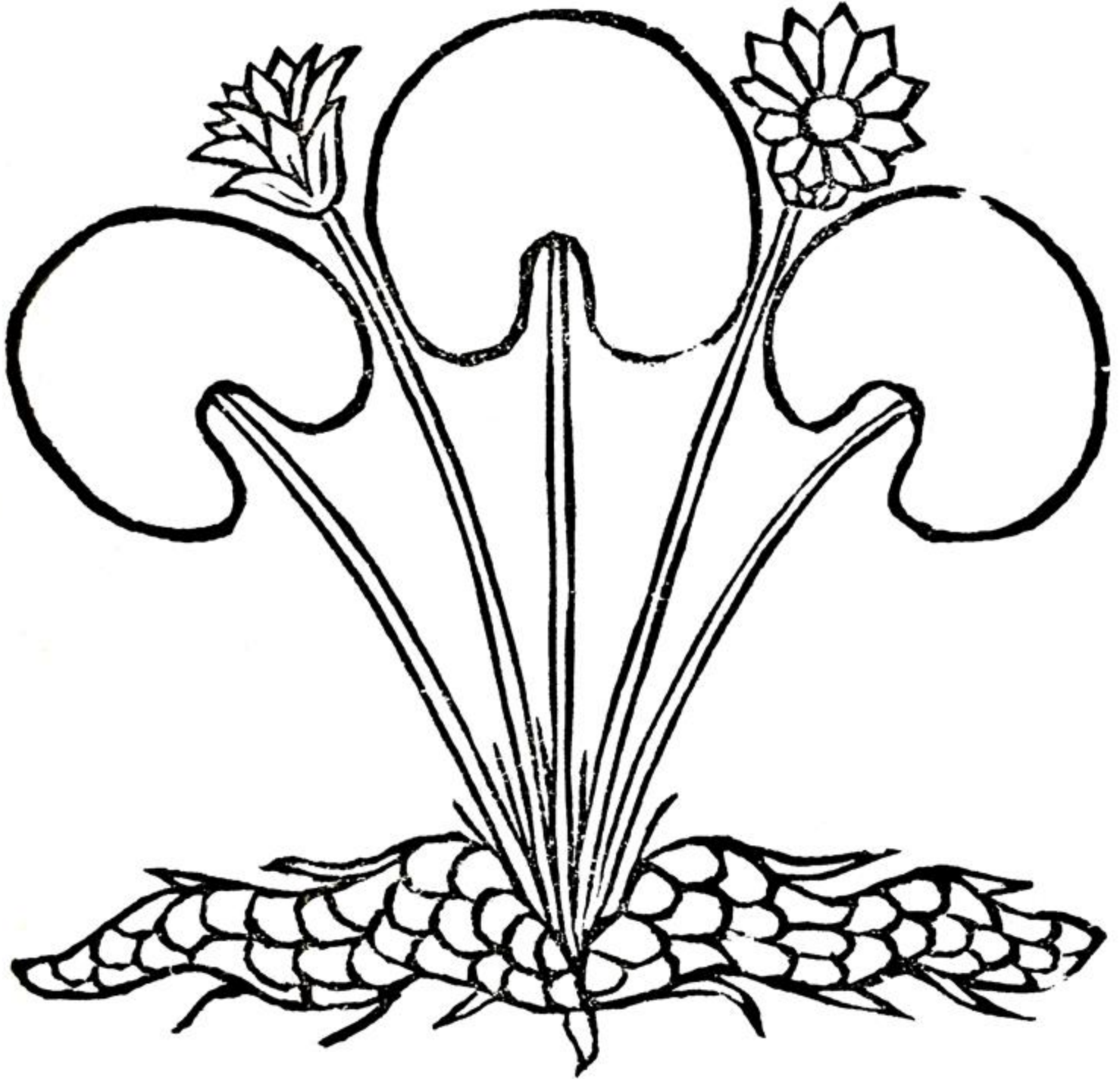
Different habitats attract different species of plants, animals and fungi. Creating a woodland garden or even simply leaving wood or leaf piles in the garden can provide a haven for beetles and other creatures. It can also offer an environment for fungi to thrive. Some fungi are decomposers, meaning that they break down organic matter using enzymes and then feed upon them, subsequently returning nutrients to the soil. Detritivores feed on material that is already dead or rotting, particularly plant detritus. Worms are detritivores who play an important role in supporting soil health, so they are a very helpful garden resident. Leaf litter for example, which can also be used as a mulch in borders, is a home for some species of worms while others will pull leaves down into the soil. When the leaf litter begins to decay, the worms will start to eat and digest them. When this is excreted it will help to enrich the soil, improving its structure and nutrient content. Our gardens are full of important cycles and processes that make our gardens flourish. [Original artwork by Thomas Robins the Elder, c.1760: **A/TR(E)/3**].

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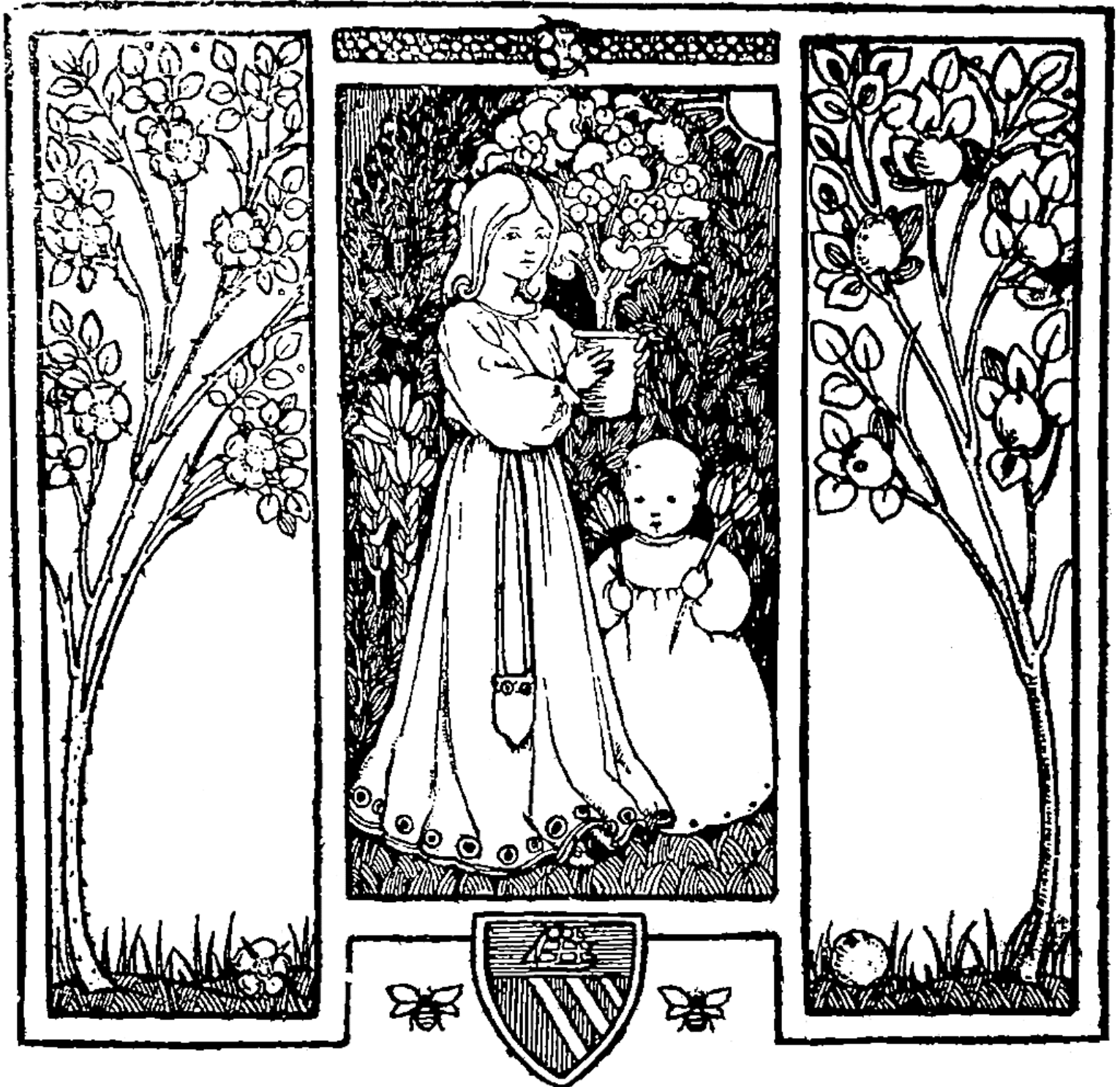




If you have space, creating a pond is another fantastic way to encourage all sorts of wildlife into our gardens. In return, the creatures we attract can help the gardener, not only through pollination of plants, but amphibians like toads and frogs will help control slug and snail numbers. [*Historia generalis plantarum*. Lyon, 1586: **615.3 ALE**; *Herbolario volgare*. Venice, 1536: **615.3 HER**; *Petri Andreae Medici Caesarei et Ferdinandi Archiducis Austriae, Opera quae extant omnia*. Basel, 1674: **615.3 MAT**].



Aquatic plants have adapted in numerous ways to survive in the water and play a central role in the ecosystem of a pond. Plants like the waterlily depicted here, have leaves that float on the surface of the water. These lily pads provide landing spots for insects such as dragonflies, as well as cool places below the water's surface and areas of shelter from predators. The plants also oxygenate the water through photosynthesis and can even help to keep it clean, making a healthy environment for all sorts of creatures to live. There is a whole world below the surface! [*Herbolario volgare*. Venice, 1536: 615.3 HER].



A love of gardens really has no age limit. An early introduction to nature can help foster a lifelong love and appreciation of the natural world around us. Did you know that RHS Libraries have an extensive range of books for children? From early works introducing young readers to horticulture and natural history, through to modern stories to entertain, you will find a vast array on our shelves and as part of our ebook offering. RHS Libraries are full of a variety of books for all age groups that can help you to learn more about the fascinating and sometimes dramatic life of our gardens. [*Gardening for children and others*, 1910: 372 WAY].

To find out more and to view any of the items mentioned in this colouring book, you are warmly invited to book a research appointment. Please see our website for details:

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