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Research Article

## FORMULATION AND EVALUATION OF HERBAL CREAM CONTAINING *ANNONA SQUAMOSA* LEAF EXTRACT

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### Abstract:

The current study focusses on developing and evaluating a herbal anti-aging cream that contains leaf extract from *Annona squamosa*, sometimes known as custard apple, which is known for its collagen-boosting and antioxidant qualities. The goal of this research is to develop a skin-friendly, potent herbal cream with scientifically proven ingredients like green tea extract and aloe vera, which are both known for their anti-inflammatory and rejuvenating properties, in response to consumers' growing desire for safe and natural alternatives to synthetic cosmetics.

Herbal extracts were blended with appropriate excipients to make the cream, which was made using the slab technique and oil-in-water emulsion process. Following established protocols, the formulation was thoroughly assessed using tests for stability, greasiness, skin irritation, phase separation, spreadability, viscosity, pH, physical appearance, and washability. The end product had a pH of 6.0, was stable, smooth, non-greasy, and had good spreadability. There were also no indications of phase separation or discomfort.

According to this study, a herbal cream made from *Annona squamosa* is a potential natural anti-aging product that provides safe, efficient skin benefits without hazardous side effects. In the expanding global market for herbal skincare products, the results validate its potential for further development, standardization, and commercialization.

**Keywords:** *Annona squamosa*, Anti-aging cream, Herbal cosmetics, Antioxidant, Collagen booster, Natural skincare, Oil-in-water emulsion, Skin compatibility, Stability study, Phytochemicals

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## INTRODUCTION:

### • Physiology of Human Skin

Skin is the largest exposed organ, constituting 15% of total adult body weight. Penetration of molecules through skin primarily takes place by three routes, i.e., through intact stratum corneum, sebaceous follicle, and sweat ducts.

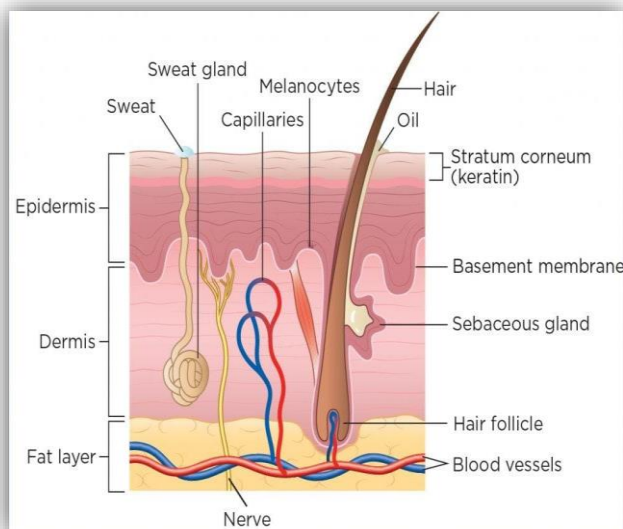


Fig. 1: Structure of skin

### Taxonomical classification OF Skin

The skin is taxonomically classified into three scales:

1. Micro scale: It consists of cells and layers of skin.
2. Meso scale: It consists of skin features, hair, freckles, moles pores, skin surface, and wrinkles.
3. Macro scale: It consists of body regions and body parts.

### • Functions Of Skin:

Primary function of skin is protection of organs. However, it has many other important functions also.

#### 1) Protective Function:

All of the body's organs are covered by skin, which shields them from the following elements:

- i. Toxic chemicals and bacteria.
- ii. Forceful blow ultraviolet radiation.
- iii. Defense against bacteria and hazardous materials.

#### 2) The Sensory Function:

The biggest sensory organ in the body is thought to be the skin. The specialized cutaneous receptors are formed by its many

nerve ends. Touch, pain, pressure, and temperature sensations all activate these receptors, which then send the signals to the brain by afferent neurons. Different sensations are perceived at the brain level.

#### 3) Function of Storage:

Sugar, water, chloride, and fat are all stored in the skin. By causing the cutaneous blood arteries to dilate, it can also store blood.

#### 4) Synthetic Function:

Sunlight's UV rays react with cholesterol in the skin to produce vitamin D3.

#### 5) Body Temperature Regulation:

The control of body temperature is significantly influenced by the skin. Through evaporation, convection, conduction, and radiation, excess heat is expelled from the body through the skin. By secreting perspiration, the skin's sweat glands actively contribute to heat dissipation. Sebum's lipid content keeps the body from losing heat in cold weather.

#### 6) Water And Electrolyte Balance Regulation:

By sweating off salts and water, the skin maintains electrolyte and water balance.

#### 7) Excretory Function:

Small amounts of waste products, such as urea, salts, and fatty substances, are expelled by the skin.

#### 8) Absorptive Function:

Certain ointments and fat-soluble compounds are absorbed by the skin.

### Topical Drug Delivery System

Topical drug delivery systems are specialized drug delivery methods used to treat cutaneous disorders by locally delivering therapeutic agents through the skin. Local skin infections are typically treated with these systems. The formulations are offered in a variety of forms, including liquid, semisolid, and solid.

Drug absorption is improved through the skin if the drug substance in the solution has a favorable lipid/water partition coefficient and is a non-electrolyte. Although the most widely used derma products are semisolid dosage forms such as creams, lotion, dermatological products come in a variety of formulations and consistency levels.



**Fig. 2: Topical Drug Delivery System**

### Skin Aging:

We use a range of cosmetics to tone up our skin and reduce wrinkles, acne, pimples, skin tan, blackheads, and other ageing symptoms since we all want to seem young and appealing. First, Damage to proteins and cellular DNA is the source of the ongoing deterioration process that is the result of skin ageing.

- (i) Sequential skin ageing
- (ii) Photoaging skin ageing.

They alter the physiological characteristics and function of the skin, making sequential skin ageing a universal and predictable process. The stratum corneum reduces the production of neutral lipids throughout the ageing process, leading to dry, pale skin and wrinkles, as a result of inadequate keratinocyte synthesis in the skin layer. On the other side, too much UV exposure results in photoaging.

In addition to enhancing skin's beauty and appeal, cosmetics shield the skin against both endogenous and external pollutants. Cosmetics are used to cure a range of skin diseases and to give us a beautiful exterior appearance in addition to being utilized for development. By reducing type I collagen and offering UV protection, natural chemicals in skin formulations improve the skin's elasticity while also improving its health, texture, and moisture content. Longer durations of skin protection are made possible by the natural ingredients in cosmetic preparations, which help to stop the skin's production of free radicals. Using cosmetic products with natural components is the best option for minimizing skin problems including wrinkles, acne, rough skin texture, hyperpigmentation, ageing, and skin tanning.

As we grow older, our skin naturally loses elasticity, becomes thinner, and develops wrinkles. Skin aging happens in two main ways.

Wrinkles are the part of aging. Wrinkles are folds of skin that are formed through the process of skin deformation. They can be classified into two types:

1. Shallow wrinkles
  2. Deep wrinkles.
- **Shallow wrinkles** are usually the end result of the distortion of the epidermis caused by water loss.
  - **Deep wrinkles** are mainly formed by the distortion of the dermis due to loss of elasticity induced by decrease of collagen and elastin fibers.

Natural aging occurs due to internal factors such as genetics, gravity, hormonal changes, and immune system function things we cannot control.

Environmental aging, is caused by external factors like UV radiation, pollution, and harsh weather, which speed up the aging process. Wrinkles are the part of aging. Wrinkles are folds of skin that are formed through the process of skin deformation.

### Herbal Cream

Herbal cream is a type of cosmetic that is made using a basis of different synthetic components and one or more natural ingredients to give skin care advantages. Because herbal components contain anti-aging, antioxidants, and other qualities, herbal creams are beauty treatments with a variety of activities including healing, smoothing, conditioning, and attractiveness enhancement. Several cosmetic goods contain herbs that have a greater impact than those made by other producers. Demand for herbal cosmetics is high. Using herbal cosmetics is part of a personal care regimen. Cosmetics may be used to promote appearance, beautify, and cleanse without impairing bodily processes. However, synthetic cosmetics, which include chemicals, synthetic compounds, and dyes that are bad for the body over time, might provide different.

#### • Advantages of herbal cream

1. No harsh chemicals are used.
2. Fewer adverse effects and inflammation.
3. Help in the fight against free radicals.
4. Maintains supple and moisturized skin.
5. decreases fine lines and wrinkles.
6. Delays the onset of sagging.
7. There is little chance of injury.
8. Sustainable and biodegradable.

9. Evens and brightens the complexion.

10. Promotes General Health by nourishing the body from the inside out.

• **Preparation of Herbal Antiaging Cream from custard apple leaves:**

The health advantages of custard apple plant leaves, which are assigned to a significant variety of phytochemicals, have been investigated. These substances include phenol-based substances, such as the substances, which are composed of 18 distinct phenolic substances, primarily flavonoids and alkaloids. The biological activity of *Annona squamosa* leaf extracts, such as their hepatoprotective, lipid-lowering, antioxidant, antibacterial, anticancer, and antidiabetic properties,



**Fig.3: Annona Squamosa Leaves**

have been investigated. In the current article, we discussed the antiaging property of *Annona Squamosa* Leaves.

**Uses:**

○ **Anticancer**

The leaf extract of *Annona squamosa*, which is abundant in bioactive chemicals, has demonstrated the ability to cause cancer cells to undergo apoptosis and die by causing damage to their DNA, producing toxic reactive oxygen species, and activating proteins linked to apoptosis.

○ **Antidiabetic**

Significant antidiabetic benefits are demonstrated by *Annona squamosa* leaf extracts (ASLs), which also improve lipid profiles, raise glucose absorption, and reduce blood glucose levels, indicating a possible natural option for diabetes treatment.

○ **Antioxidant**

ASLs (*Annona squamosa* leaf extracts) have demonstrated strong antioxidant activity because of their diverse phytochemical makeup. They have the ability to decrease oxidative stress, which is connected to degenerative illnesses including cancer, diabetes, and neurodegeneration. The maximum antioxidant activity was found in methanolic extracts, but water extracts had good antioxidant activity.

○ **Antimicrobial**

The antimicrobial qualities of *Annona squamosa* leaf extracts (ASLs) make them a promising substitute for synthetic antimicrobials. These extracts have antibacterial and antifungal properties against pathogens such as *Escherichia coli* and *Staphylococcus aureus*. They are made from secondary metabolites such as phenols, flavonoids, and acetogenins.

○ **Hepatoprotective**

Leaf extracts from *Annona squamosa* (ASL's) have been shown to have strong hepatoprotective qualities, preventing oxidative stress and drug-induced injury from damaging the liver. These extracts lower bilirubin levels, lipid peroxidation, liver enzymes, and flavonoids, glycosides, saponins, alkaloids, and phenolic compounds.

• **Advantages:**

A. **Natural cure:**

By providing a natural medicine for several conditions, such as diabetes, inflammation, and infections, custard apple leaves help people become less reliant on artificial drugs.

B. **Economical:**

Due to their accessibility and low cost, these leaves are a cost-effective choice for wellness and medical treatment.

C. **Versatility:**

These substances may be used in a variety of ways, including teas, extracts, poultices, and essential oils, providing many kinds of applications according to specific requirements.

D. **Health advantages:**

The antibacterial, anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and anticancer activities of custard apple leaves are potent chemicals that promote general health.



**MATERIAL AND METHODS:****List of material used:**

Sr. No.	Ingredients	F1	Function
1.	Annona squamosa leaf extract	2.0 g	Anti-aging, antioxidant, collagen booster
2.	Aloe Vera	3.0 g	Hydration, soothing, skin healing
3.	Green tea extract	1.0 g	Antioxidant, reduces wrinkles
4.	Stearic acid	1.5 g	Emulsifier, gives creamy texture
5.	Ethanol	1.0 g	Preservative, helps dissolve herbal extracts
6.	Polyethylene glycol (PEG)	1.0 g	Enhances absorption, moisturizing
7.	Glycerin	2.5 g	Moisturizer, retains skin hydration
8.	Triethanolamine	0.5 g	pH balancer, emulsifying agent
9.	Methyl Paraben	0.2 g	Antimicrobial preservative
10.	Rose Water	3.0 g	Fragrance, refreshing, skin toner
11.	Distilled Water	Q.s	Base solvent
	Total	25 gm	

**Drug Profile:****1) Annona Squamosa**

A *Annona squamosa* leaves are high in vitamins and antioxidants, custard apples have several advantages for the skin, such as increased collagen synthesis, decreased pigmentation, and alleviation of irritated skin. Additionally, it may remove dead skin cells for a smoother complexion by acting as a natural exfoliator.

**Fig.4: Annona Squamosa Leaves**

- Botanical Classification**

Kingdom: Plantae

Clade: Tracheophytes

Order: Magnoliales

Family: Annonaceae

Genus: *Annona*

Species: *A. squamosa*

Binomial name: *Annona squamosa*

Synonym: Sugar apple, Sitaphal, Custard apple.

Biological source: *Annona squamosa* is a small and well-branched tree belonging to Annonaceae that gives edible fruits known as sugar apple

- Macroscopical studies of leaf:**

Size-10-15 cm long , 3-5cm width

Shape-Alternate, Bilateral, Petiolate, Ovate to Lanceolate

Taste - Bitter

Base- Asymmetric

Margin- Simple

Color - Dark Green Surface Glossy Smooth

Odor- Aromatic

- Morphological character**

The tree, standing 6 meters tall, has oblong-lanceolate leaves, pubescent sepals, and globose

fruits with a glaucous bloom. Its fruits are yellowish-green and easily breakable.

- **Chemical Constituents:**

*Annona squamosa* consist of alkaloids, phenolic compounds, flavonoids, saponins, tannins, phytosterols, carbohydrates, proteins and amino acids. It also contains fixed oils, fats, gum and mucilage. Leaves contain anonaine, borneol, camphene, carvone, eugenol, geraniol, menthone, rutin and  $\beta$ - sitosterol. Fruits consist of 28% of sugar, iron, calcium, carotene, thiamine, ascorbic acid. Root and stem give Borneol, Car-3-ene, Farnesol, Geraniol and Limonene

- **Microscopical character**

The internal structure of *Annona squamosa* leaves is well-organized, with a top surface covered in protective thick-walled cells and a bottom surface with microscopic apertures for gas exchange. They have distinct cells for mucilage and calcium oxalate crystals, two main layers for air movement and photosynthesis, and a robust support system in the middle vein.



Fig 5 : Aloe Vera

## 2) Aloe vera

Aloe Vera is a kind of plant belonging to the Aloe genus. It is grown for agricultural and medicinal purposes and grows wild in tropical regions all over the world. Aloe is a plant that grows well in pots inside and is often used as decoration.

- **Botanical Classification**

Kingdom: Plantae  
Clade: Tracheophytes  
Order: Asparagales  
Family: Asphodelaceae  
Subfamily: Asphodeloideae

Genus: Aloe

Species: *A. vera*

Binomial name: *Aloe vera* (L.) Burm.f.

Synonyms:

- ✓ *Aloe barbadensis* Mill.
- ✓ *Aloe barbadensis* var. *chinensis* Haw.
- ✓ *Aloe chinensis* (Haw.) Baker
- ✓ *Aloe elongata* Murray

- **Biological Source:**

Aloe is the dried latex of leaves of various species of *Albes*, namely: *Aloe barbadensis* Miller (or Curacao Aloe).

- **Chemical Constituents:**

- Phytochemicals: Anthraquinones, chromones, anthrones, phenolic compounds, flavonoids, tannins, steroids, and alkaloids
- Polysaccharides: Stimulate skin growth and repair
- Glycoproteins: Speed up the healing process by reducing pain and inflammation
- Vitamins: A (beta-carotene), C, E, B12, folic acid, and choline
- Minerals: 27 elements, including P, K, Mg, Na, Ca, Cr, Mn, Fe, Co, Ni, Cu, Zn, Mo, B, As, Ga, In, Ag, Cd, Pb, Hg, V, Bi, Se, Sn, Ba, and Rh
- Other constituents: Sugars, organic acids, lignins, lipids, saponins, phytosterols, protein, and amino acids.

- **Microscopical character**

The thick-walled epidermis of aloe vera contains a vascular system, mesophyll, mucilage cells, waxy cuticle, and paracytic stomata. Its properties, such as calcium oxalate crystals and latex cells, help with authenticity and identification in pharmacognosy.

- **Morphological character**

A succulent perennial herb, aloe vera has a short stem, thick, lance-shaped leaves, yellow to orange blossoms, and a triangular capsule that contains flat seeds. With its shallow, fibrous root structure that is appropriate for arid conditions, its morphology assists in botany and pharmacognosy.

- **Uses**

- 1) Due to its anti-inflammatory, antibacterial, and wound-healing qualities, aloe vera has long been used to treat digestive issues as well as skin injuries (burns, cuts, insect bites, and eczemas).
- 2) Aloe Vera may help with blood sugar regulation, wrinkle prevention, wound healing, and dental plaque reduction.

- 3) For thousands of years, people have utilized the aloe vera plant to treat a range of ailments, including burns, wounds, skin irritations, and constipation.
- 4) Aloe Vera is frequently used to treat burns because of its cooling, moisturizing, and calming qualities.
- 5) Aloe Vera helps soothe skin that is sensitive or inflamed.
- 6) Even the most delicate wounds can be healed with aloe vera.
- 7) Aloe Vera aids in hastening the healing of burns and other injuries.

### 3) Green tea

Green tea offers several benefits for the skin due to its rich antioxidant content, particularly catechins, and anti-inflammatory properties. These properties can help reduce inflammation, treat acne, protect against sun damage, and improve overall skin health.



Fig 6 : Green tea

#### • Botanical Classification

Scientific name: *Camellia sinensis*  
 Family: Theaceae  
 Common name: green tea  
 Subkingdom: Tracheobionta  
 Super division: Spermatophyta  
 Division: Magnoliophyta  
 Class: Magnoliopsida  
 Subclass: Dilleniidae  
 Family: Theaceae  
 Genus: *Camellia* L.  
 Species: *Camellia sinensis*

#### • Chemical constituents:

Polyphenols, including catechins like epigallocatechin gallate (EGCG), as well as amino acids, carbohydrates, minerals, and trace amounts of lipids and vitamins.

#### • Uses:

- 1) Rich in antioxidants like catechins that help fight free radicals and reduce cell damage.

- 2) Can aid in weight loss by increasing fat burning and improving metabolic rate.
- 3) Contains caffeine and L-theanine, which can enhance focus, alertness, and cognitive function.
- 4) Helps lower bad cholesterol (LDL) and improves blood vessel function.
- 5) Some studies suggest green tea's antioxidants may reduce the risk of certain cancers.
- 6) Its anti-inflammatory properties help reduce acne and protect against sun damage.

#### ❖ Plant Collection:

Fresh *Annona squamosa* leaves weighing 1 kg were collected and carefully cleaned twice with running water and once with sterile distilled water. Shade drying was the next step. Materials from plants were routinely inspected for rotting or fungal development. They ground up the dry leaves.



Fig 7: Extraction of *Annona squamosa* leaves

#### ❖ Extraction of the selected plants:

##### 1) Extraction of *Annona squamosa* leaves:

*Annona squamosa* leaves were collected, cleaned with distilled water, and allowed to dry in the shade. Leaves were ground into a powder after being properly dried. Next, a beaker was filled with powdered *Annona squamosa* leaves. After that, the solution was concentrated and heated to 80–100 °C. To get rid of contaminants, it was filtered through muslin cloth. Next, a clear solution or extract of *Annona squamosa* leaves the filtrate was utilized in the process.



Fig 7: Extraction of Aloe Vera Gel

## 2) Extraction of Aloe Vera Gel:

Aloe Vera leaves that were fresh, mature, and in good health collected and cleaned with distilled water. The outer portion of the leaf was then longitudinally dissected using a sterile knife following the appropriate drying of the leaves in a hot air oven. The sterile knife was then used to cut away the colorless parenchymatous tissue, which is aloe vera gel. The fibers and contaminants are then eliminated by filtering it through muslin fabric. The preparation was then done using the filtrate, which is a transparent aloe vera gel.

### Formulation of herbal antiaging cream:

The cream was made using a cream base of Stearic acid, triethanolamine, methyl paraben, distilled water, Annona squamosa leaves, and aloe vera gel extracts. The slab technique/extemporaneous approach was used to geometrically and homogeneously blend all of the excipients and aloe extracts in the cream. Using the slab approach, we developed herbal cream. They were tested for appearance, pH, viscosity, and phase separation.

#### • Procedure:

- ✓ This cream is formulated by oil in water type of emulsion.

In a beaker heat stearic acid, polyethylene glycol and triethanolamine to 70-75°C.



In another beaker heat Distilled Water, Methyl Paraben, Rose Water, glycerin, aloe vera gel to 70-75°C.



Slowly add the aqueous phase to the oil phase under continuous stirring to form a smooth cream.



Allow the mixture to cool to about 40°C, then add Annona squamosa extract, green tea extract, and ethanol while stirring.



Stir until the cream becomes uniform and reaches room temperature. Store in sterile containers.



Fig 18: Prepared Cream

### Evaluation of herbal antiaging cream:

#### 1) Physical evaluation:

The formulation was examined visually for their appearance, color, and odor.

#### 2) pH

pH of the formulation were measured by using pH meter. 50 ml of distilled water were used to dissolve 0.5 gram of cream. Next, use a digital pH meter to determine its pH.

#### 3) Skin Irritation Test:

A small patch of skin (about 1cm<sup>2</sup>) on the back of left hand was cleaned and marked. The cream was gently applied in this area, and time was noted. Over the next 24hrs the skin was checked regularly to see if there were any sign of reported irritating effects, erythema, and oedema. All the changes observed and recorded.

#### 4) Phase Separation:

The prepared cream was stored in a closed container at a temperature range of 25 to 100°C, kept away from light. It was monitored for 1 day to check for any separation of its components. Any visible changes were carefully observed and recorded.

#### 5) Spreadability:

To test how easily the cream spreads, a small amount was placed between two glass slides. A set amount of weight (70 grams) was placed on top to press the slides evenly. The time it took for the top slide to move or slip due to the cream's texture was measured. This time helped



calculate how spreadable the cream is, using the formula:

Formula:

$$S = M \times L / T$$

Where:

S = Spreadability

M = Weight applied

L = Distance moved

T = Time taken

**6) Viscosity:**

The thickness (viscosity) of the cream was measured using a Brookfield viscometer, set at 2.5 RPM with spindle number 63, at a controlled temperature of 25°C.

**7) Wash Ability:**

A small amount of cream was applied to the hand and then rinsed with tap water to see how easily it could be washed off. The test also

checked whether the cream left any residue behind.

**8) Stability Study:**

Stability testing of drug products is done from the early stages of drug development until the end of its shelf life. To check how stable the cream and its ingredients are over time, the study followed ICH guidelines. The cream was stored in bottles and placed in a humidity chamber set at  $40 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$  and  $75 \pm 5\%$  relative humidity for three months. After the testing period, the samples were examined for changes in their physical appearance, pH, and thickness (viscosity).

**9) Greasiness:**

To check for greasiness, the cream was applied to the skin in a thin layer and observed to see whether it left behind an oily or greasy feel.

**RESULTS:**

Sr. No.	Test	Observation
1.	<b>Visual Appearance :</b>	Semi-solid
	a) Appearance	
	b) Color	
	c) Odor	
	d) Texture	
2.	pH	6.0
3.	<b>Irritancy</b>	No
	a) Irritant Effect	
	b) Erythema	
	c) Edema	
4.	Wash Ability	Easily Washable
5.	Phase Separation	No Phase Separation
6.	Spread Ability(gm×cm/sec)	2.14
7.	Greasiness	Non-Greasy

**SUMMARY:**

Natural botanicals like *Annona squamosa* leaf extract are included in herbal anti-aging creams, which are a safe and natural substitute for synthetic skin care procedures. These products increase collagen formation, lessen oxidative stress, and enhance skin texture. They shield the skin from damage caused by free radicals and other environmental causes. The cream was compatible with the skin's natural balance since its pH stayed near 6. Additional investigation is required to evaluate long-term advantages and enhanced anti-aging effectiveness.

**CONCLUSION:**

The goal of the study was to develop a herbal anti-aging cream with organic components and leaf extract from *Annona squamosa*. The cream's homogeneity, stability, pH, spreadability, and appearance were all evaluated. The findings revealed no evidence of deterioration, microbial contamination, or phase separation. Superior antioxidant activity and skin feel were demonstrated by the cream with the greatest concentration of *Annona squamosa* extract. Future advancements in topical anti-aging medicines and herbal cosmetics may be possible with this plant-based approach.

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