

Introduction Functional-Structural Plant Modelling and Lindenmayer-Systems

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崖州湾国家实验室

PIFI Summer Workshop on Systems Modelling of Plant Factory for
Excellent Young Scientist
中欧植物工厂系统建模暑期学校
Shanghai, 2025 Oct. 29

Process-based models
plant functioning
(功能)

K. de Wit *et al.* 1965

Architectural models
plant structure
(结构)

A. Lindenmayer *et al.* 1968

Functional-Structural Plant Models
(功能-结构植物模型 FSPM)

Room, Hanan, Prusinkiewicz 1996: 'Virtual Plants'

Kurth 1994, Perttunen *et al.* 1996: trees
Fournier and Andrieu 1998: cereal crops
Pagès *et al.* 1994: root systems

FSPM acknowledging that structure and function are deeply intertwined and that understanding a plant's life fully requires a model that can simulate both aspects dynamically over time.

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(结构)

A. Lindenmayer *et al.* 1968

French
school

Forestry

Theoretical
computer
science

Computer
graphics

Others

Theoretical
biology

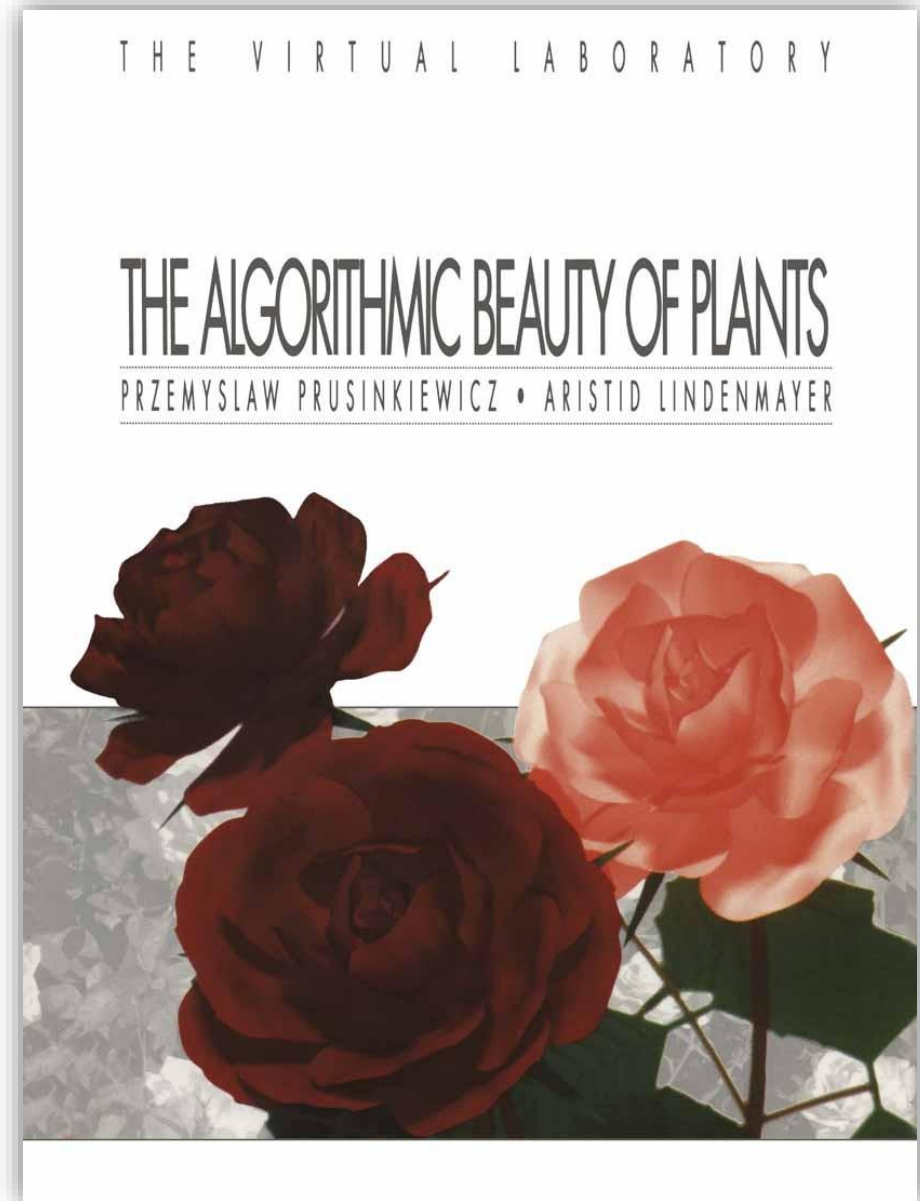
Functional-Structural Plant Models
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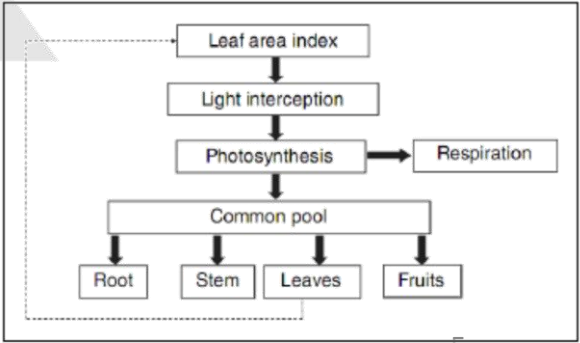
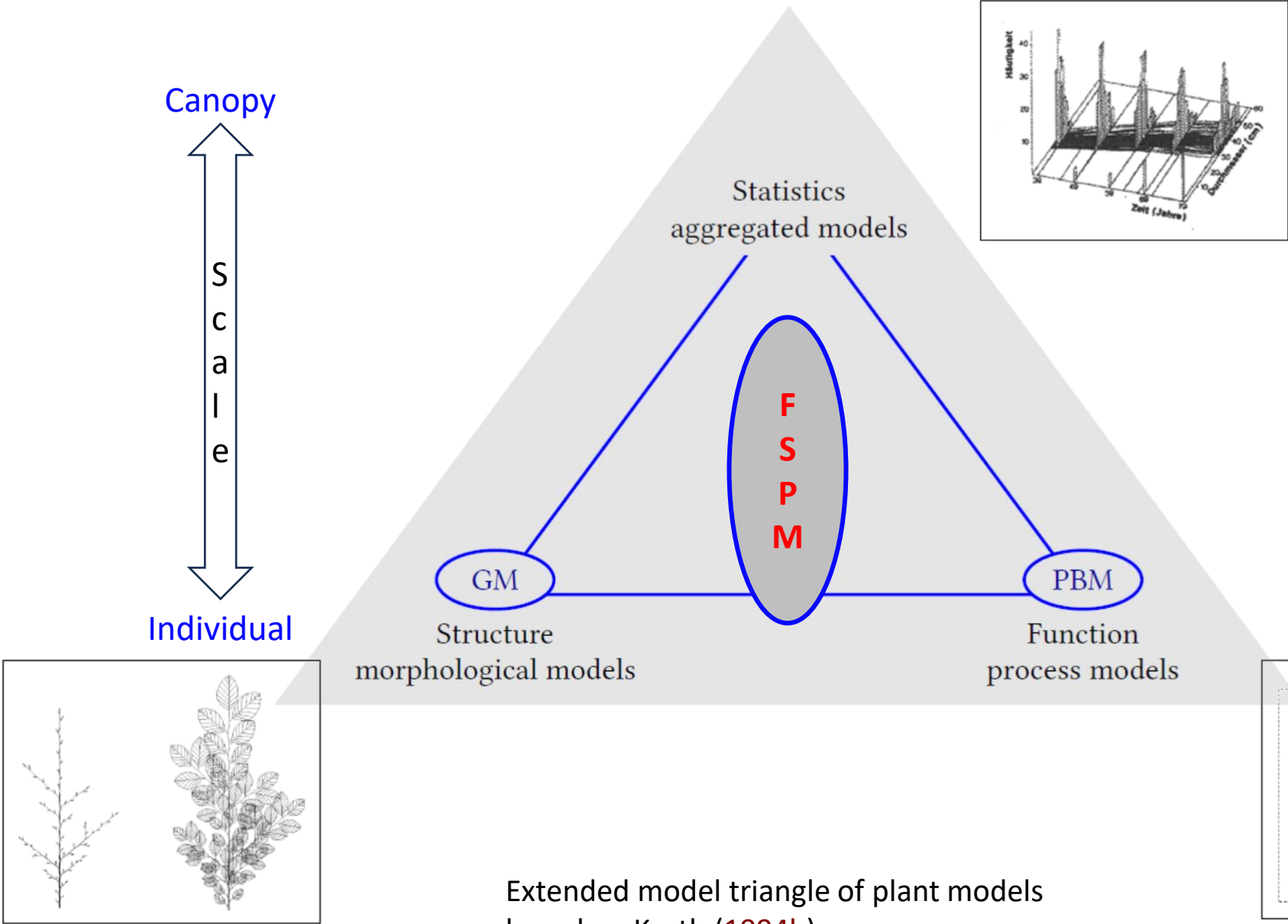
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“The Algorithmic Beauty of Plants” by Prusinkiewicz and Lindenmayer (1990)



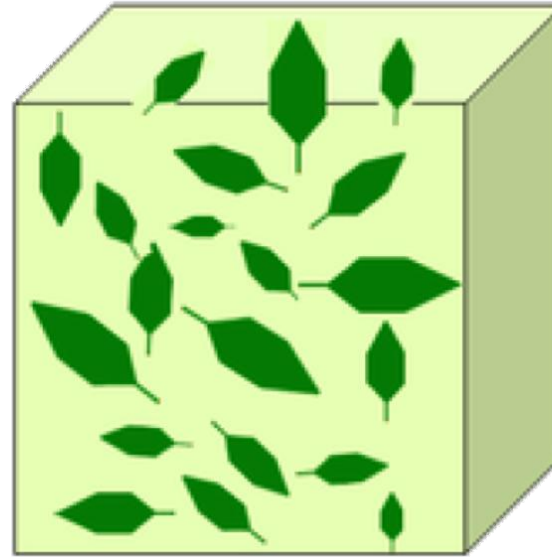


Source and sink principle

The organ compartments are usually limited to organ types in **PBM**, competing for a common biomass pool, while in **FSPM**, each organ is individualised.

The assimilates produced by local sources are transported in the direction of sinks according to their sink strength.

➔ Major drawback of PBMs have their origin in the total neglect or oversimplification of 3d plant architecture and its plasticity.



Common pool
of biomass

PBM: Organs gathered
in compartments



topological structure
transport-resistance system

FSPM: organs are
connected together

Drawing: de Reffye, CIRAD,

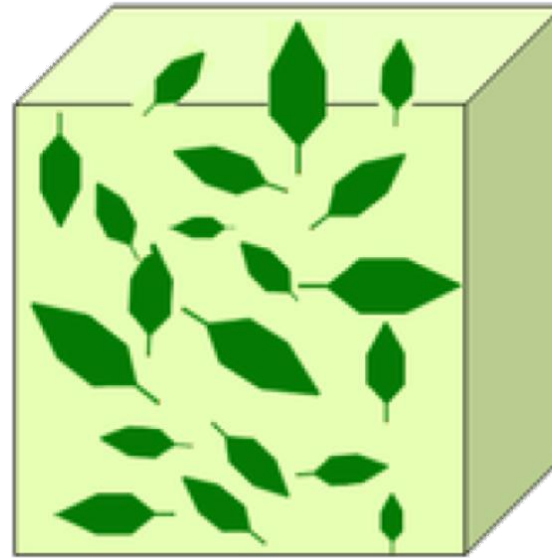
http://greenlab.cirad.fr/GLUVED/html/P1_Prelim/Model/Model_FSPM_001.html

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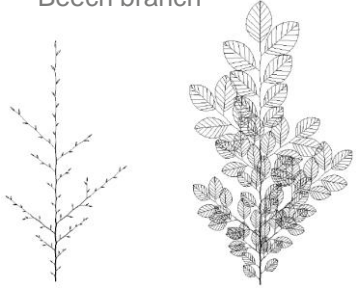


topological structure
transport-resistance system

FSPM: organs are
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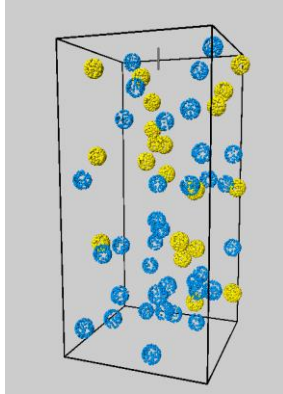
Functional-Structural Plant Models – Scales 规模影响因素算力与研究目标

Kurth 1999
Beech branch



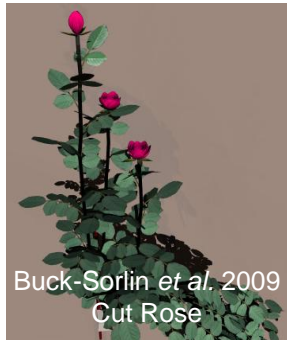
Organ level
器官

Henke *et al.* 2009
Root plasticity



Groer *et al.* 2009
Rapeseed Oil

Individual plants
单株植物

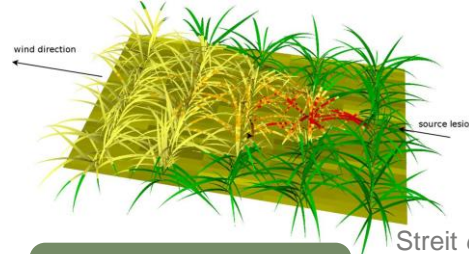


Buck-Sorlin *et al.* 2009
Cut Rose



Evers *et al.* 2009
Arabidopsis

Small plant stands
小群体



Streit *et al.* 2017
Wheat



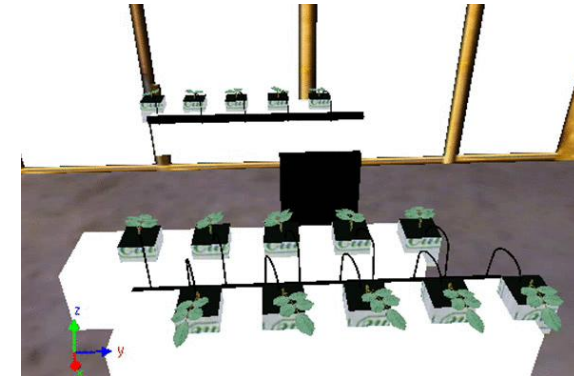
Evers *et al.* 2011
Wheat

Zhu *et al.* 2015
Grape Wine



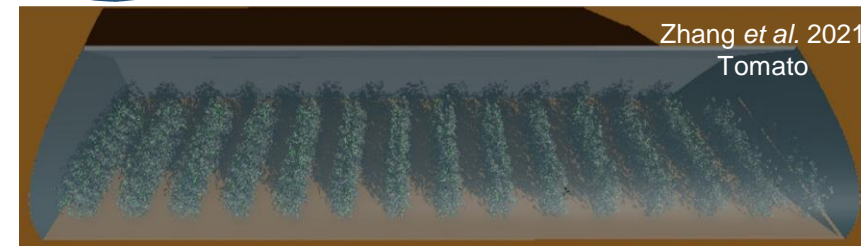
Zhu 2015
Maize and wheat intercropping

Canopy level
冠层群体

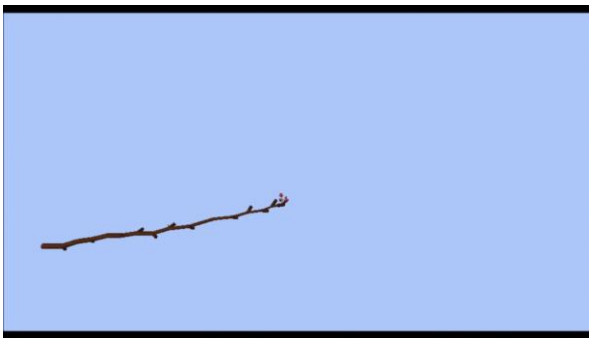


Buck-Sorlin *et al.* 2009
Cut Rose

Zhang *et al.* 2021
Tomato



Buck-Sorlin *et al.* 2009
Apple branch and fruit



Functional-Structural Plant Models – Components (1/7) 重构植物结构

Architecture Modelling

Plant morphology

Lindenmayer-System (L-System)

Physiological Processes

Uptake & Transport

Photosynthesis (sources)

Leaf-gas exchange

Model Parameterization

Validation

Data acquisition

Phenotyping

Environmental Interactions

Light modelling

Sun & Sky

Artificial light sources

Growth and Development

Organ formation & extension

Allocation (sinks)

Genetic Control

'Virtual Breeder'

Phenotype prediction



Modelling Environment

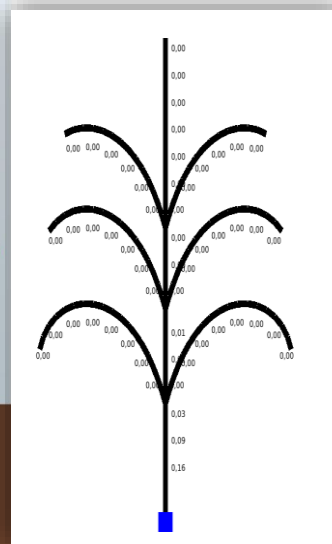
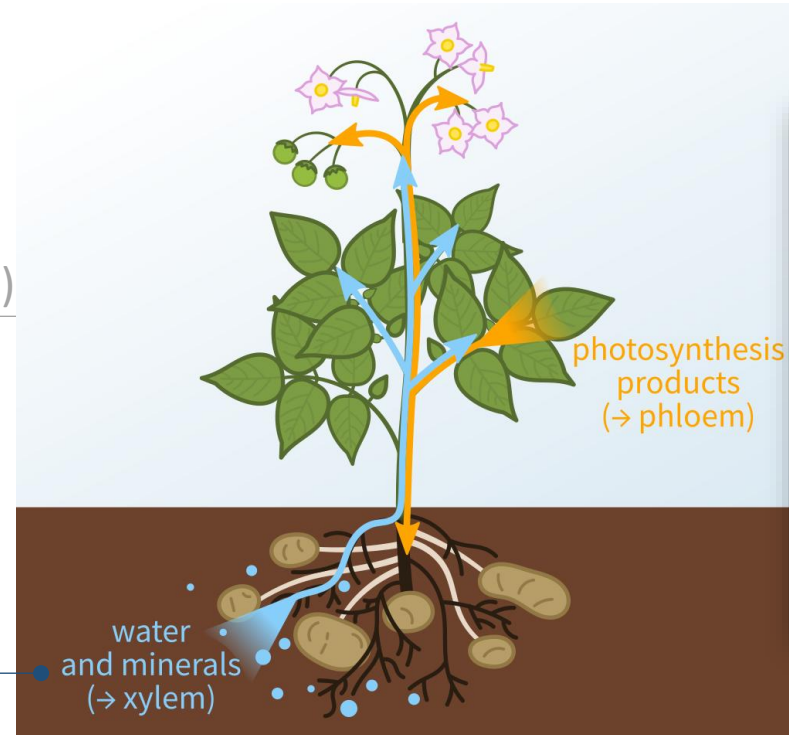
Simulation platform

Functional-Structural Plant Models – Components (2/7) 模拟生理功能

Architecture Modelling

Plant morphology

Lindenmayer-System (L-System)



Environmental Interactions

Light modelling

Sun & Sky

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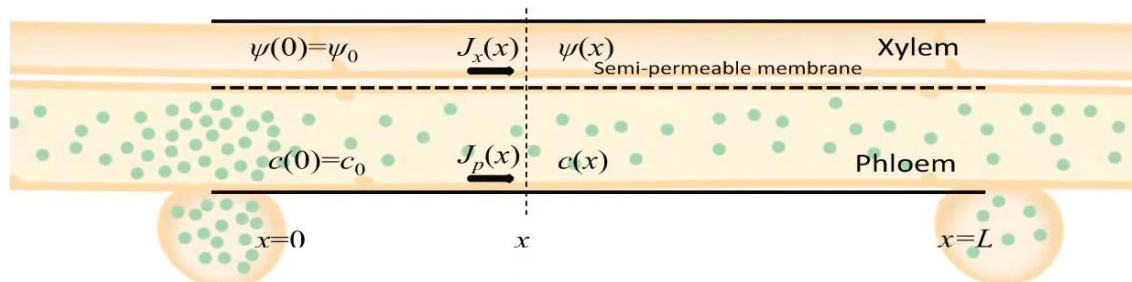
Allocation (sinks)

Model Parameterization

Validation

Data acquisition

Phenotyping



Genetic Control

'Virtual Breeder'

Phenotype prediction

$$\begin{cases} J_x(x) = -\frac{1}{R_x} \frac{d\psi(x)}{dx} \\ J_p(x) = -\frac{1}{R_p(c(x))} \frac{d(\psi(x) - \Pi(c(x)))}{dx} \end{cases} \quad \begin{cases} J_{tot} = J_x(x) + J_p(x) = const \\ J_s = c(x)J_p(x) = const \end{cases}$$

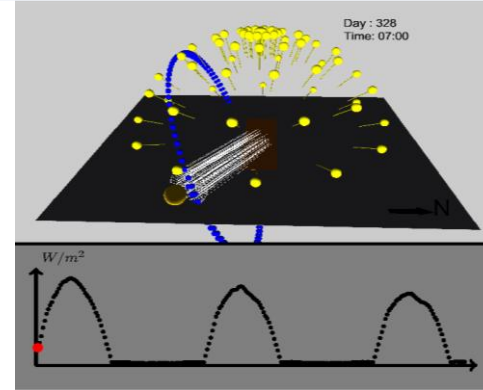
Simulation platform

Functional-Structural Plant Models – Components (3/7) 模拟环境交互

Architecture Modelling

Plant morphology

Lindenmayer-System (L-System)



Environmental Interactions

Light modelling

Sun & Sky

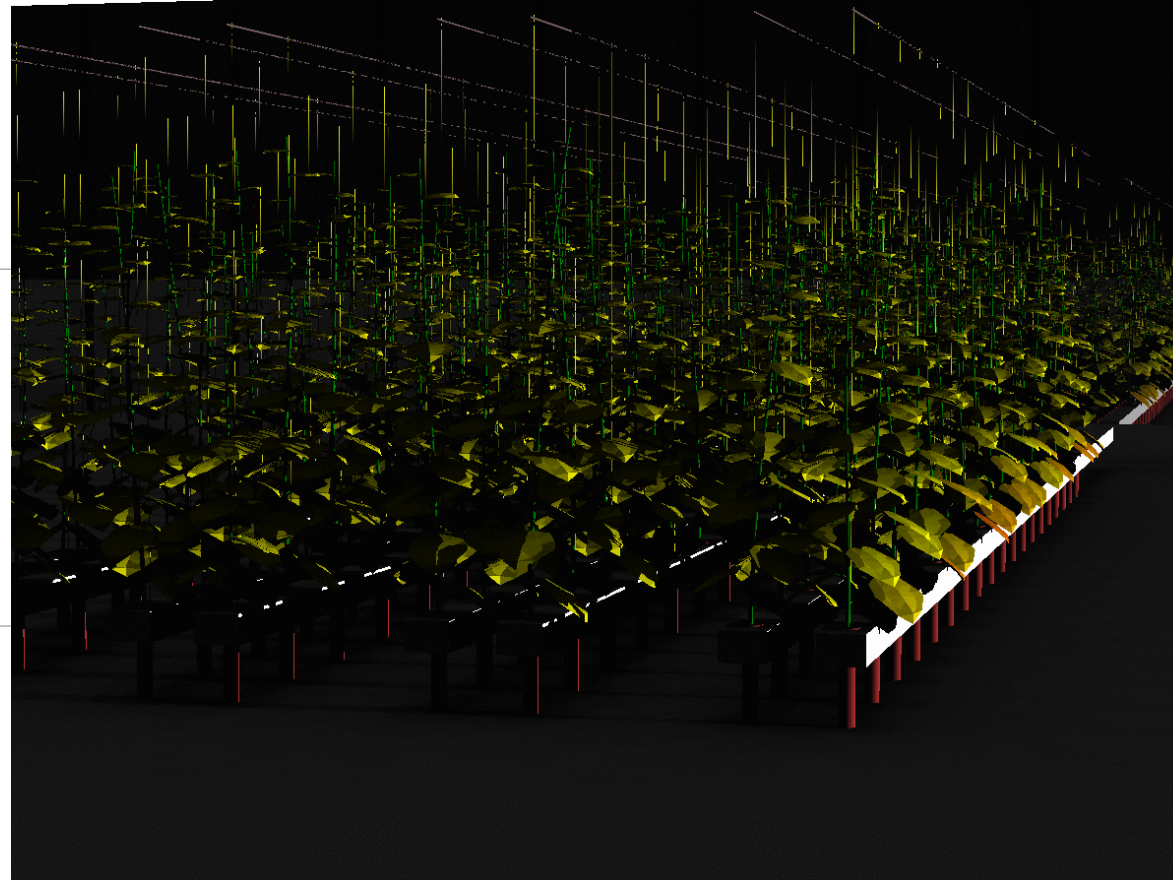
Artificial light sources

Physiological Processes

Uptake & Transport

Photosynthesis (sources)

Leaf-gas exchange



Growth and Development

Organ formation & extension

Allocation (sinks)

Model Parameterization

Validation

Data acquisition

Phenotyping

Genetic Control

‘Virtual Breeder’

Phenotype prediction

Functional-Structural Plant Models – Components (4/7) 生长发育模式

Architecture Modelling

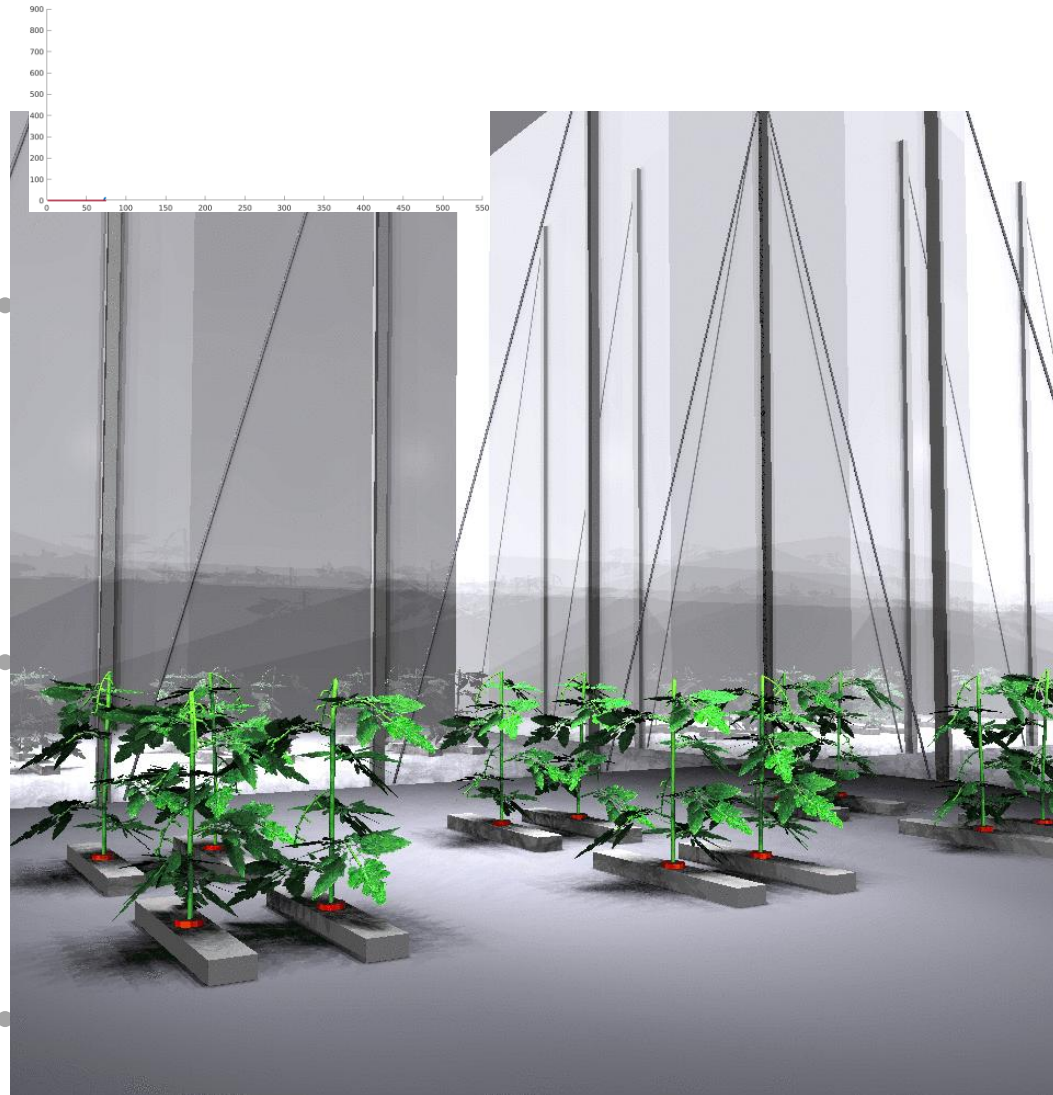
Plant morphology
Lindenmayer-System (L-System)

Physiological Processes

Uptake & Transport
Photosynthesis (sources)
Leaf-gas exchange

Model Parameterization

Validation
Data acquisition
Phenotyping



Environmental Interactions

Light modelling
Sun & Sky
Artificial light sources

Growth and Development

Organ formation & extension
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Genetic Control

'Virtual Breeder'
Phenotype prediction

Modelling Environment

Simulation platform

Functional-Structural Plant Models – Components (5/7) 设置模型参数

Architecture Modelling

Plant morphology

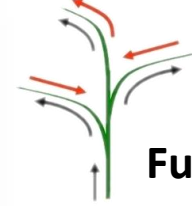
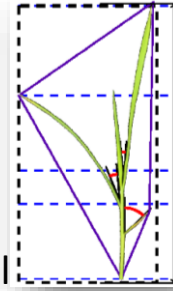
Lindenmayer-System (L-System)

Structural

Architecture

Developmental

Plasticity



Functional

Physiological processes

Biomass allocation

Growth Curves

Environmental Interactions

Light modelling

Sun & Sky

Artificial light sources

Physiological Processes

Uptake & Transport

Photosynthesis (sources)

Leaf-gas exchange

DATA

Genotypic

Growth and Development

Organ formation & extension

Allocation (sinks)

Model Parameterization

Validation

Data acquisition

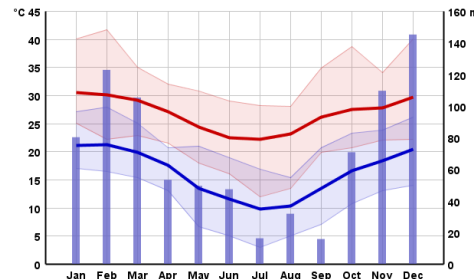
Phenotyping

Environmental

Climate

Soil

Stressors



Experimental

Management

Treatment

Greenhouse

Genetic Control

'Virtual Breeder'

Phenotype prediction

Modelling Environment

Simulation platform

Architecture Modelling

Plant morphology

Lindenmayer-System (L-System)

Physiological Processes

Uptake & Transport

Photosynthesis (sources)

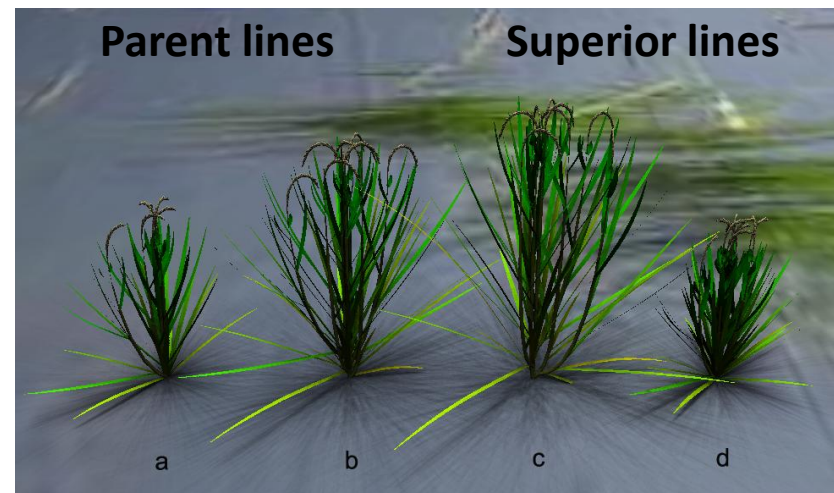
Leaf-gas exchange

Model Parameterization

Validation

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Phenotyping



Simulated population with different
QTL genotype for plant height



Environmental Interactions

Light modelling

Sun & Sky

Artificial light sources

Growth and Development

Organ formation & extension

Allocation (sinks)

Genetic Control

‘Virtual Breeder’

Phenotype prediction

Integrate genetics into FSPM

G×P×E plant model

Architecture Modelling

Plant morphology
Lindenmayer-System (L-System)

Physiological Processes

Uptake & Transport
Photosynthesis (sources)
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Environmental Interactions

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Modelling Environment

Simulation platform

Interactive Modelling Platform GroIMP 交互式3D建模平台



- Developed by the group Prof. Kurth, Göttingen, Germany
- 2021 20th Anniversary
- Numerous PhD, master and bachelor thesis
- Over 680 hits on Google Scholar
- Free & Open-source
- Continuously maintained and further developed



GroIMP WeChat Group



Hosted on GitLab: <https://gitlab.com/grogra/groimp>

Valid until 11/5



Selected User
著名用户代表

Agriculture (农学)

- Optimize crop yield
- Plant architecture
- Planting strategies
- Management tactics

Breeding (育种)

- Output prediction
- Trait selection
- Identifying desirable traits

Plant Biology (生物学)

- Fundamental research,
- Exploration of processes
- Phenotypic plasticity
- Monitoring and reporting

Horticulture (园艺学)

- Design of desired aesthetic qualities
- Design of desired growth characteristics, such as compactness
- Design of desired branching patterns

Urban Planning (城市农业)

- Design green spaces that optimize plant growth, contribution to urban climate

Ecology (生态学)

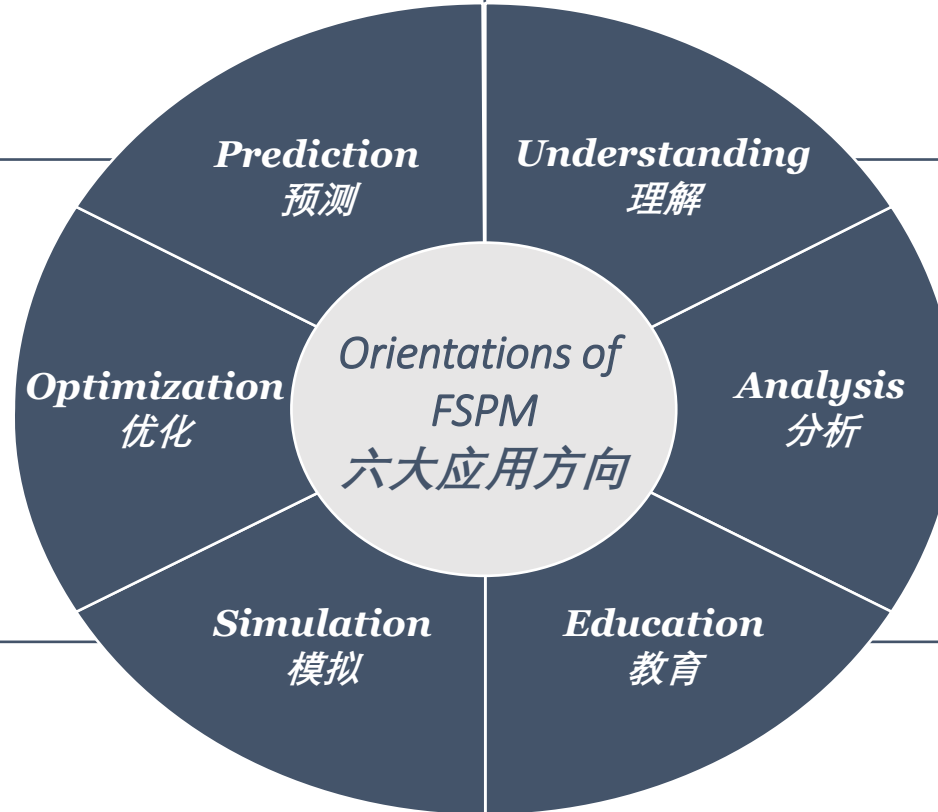
- Interactions between plants and their environment
- Competition for resources, plant-animal interactions
- Dynamics of plant communities

Forestry (林业学)

- Simulate forest stand dynamics
- Simulate management strategies

Education (教育学)

- Teaching about plant biology and the complexity of plant-environment interactions



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- Optimize crop yield
- Plant architecture
- Planting strategies
- Management tactics

Breeding (育种)

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- Trait selection
- Identifying desirable traits

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- Fundamental research,
- Exploration of processes
- Phenotypic plasticity
- Monitoring and reporting

Invaluable in any field where **understanding** and **predicting** plant growth is crucial.

Horticulture (园艺学)

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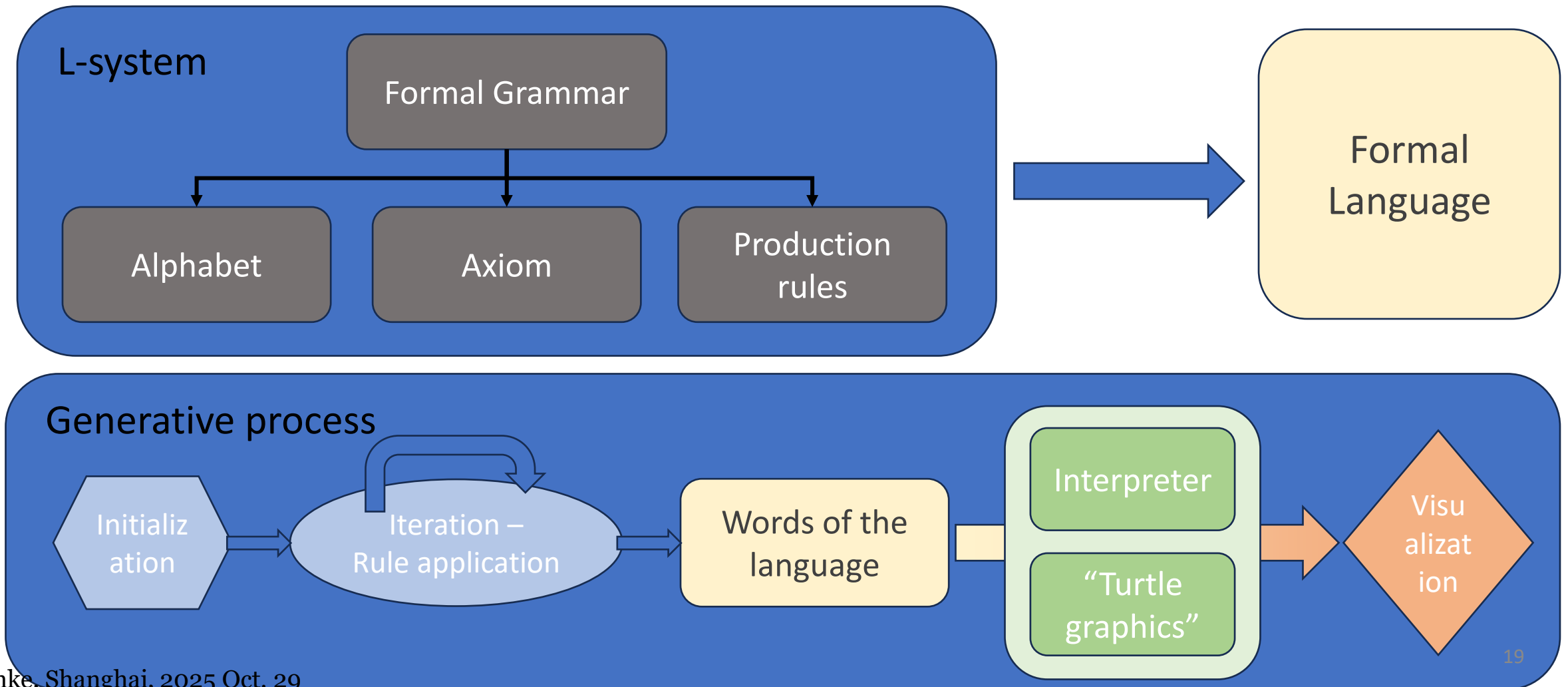
可被应用到任何涉及**理解**和**预测**植物生长发育相关的研究领域

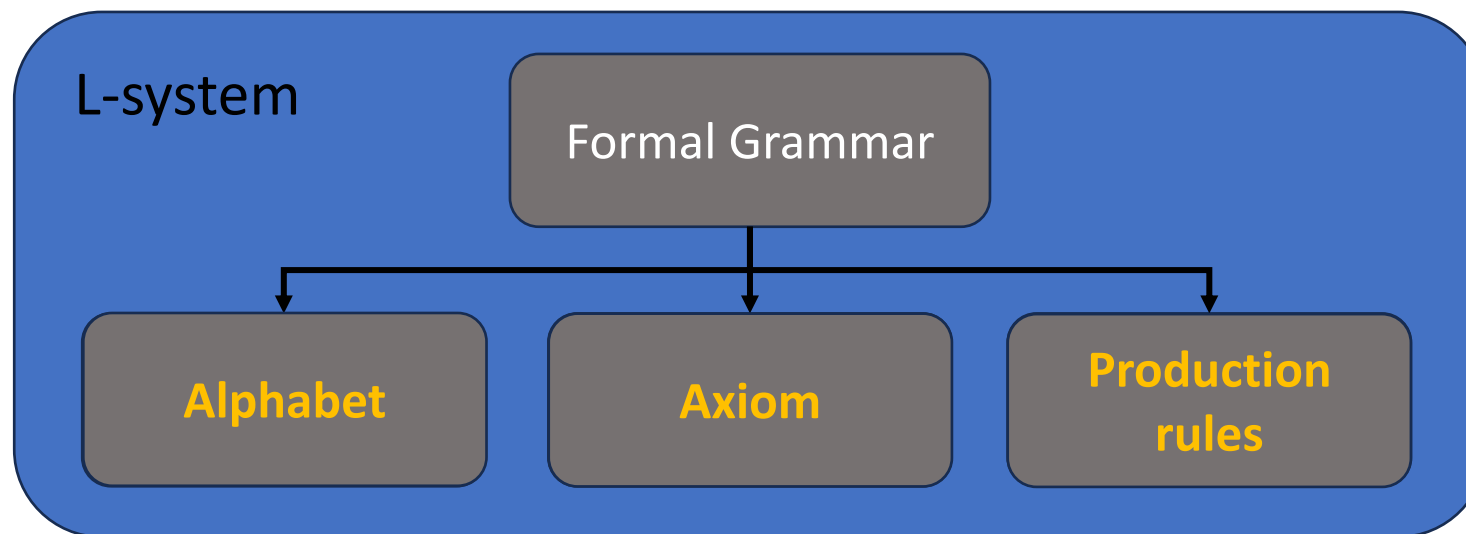
特别是 Key technology for advancing fields like:
smart agriculture 智能农业,
greenhouse management 温室管理,
decision support 决策系统,
etc.



Lindenmayer-Systems – Definition

A Lindenmayer-system, or L-system, is a **parallel string rewriting system** and **formal grammar** used to generate complex structures and to model the growth of biological organisms, such as plants.





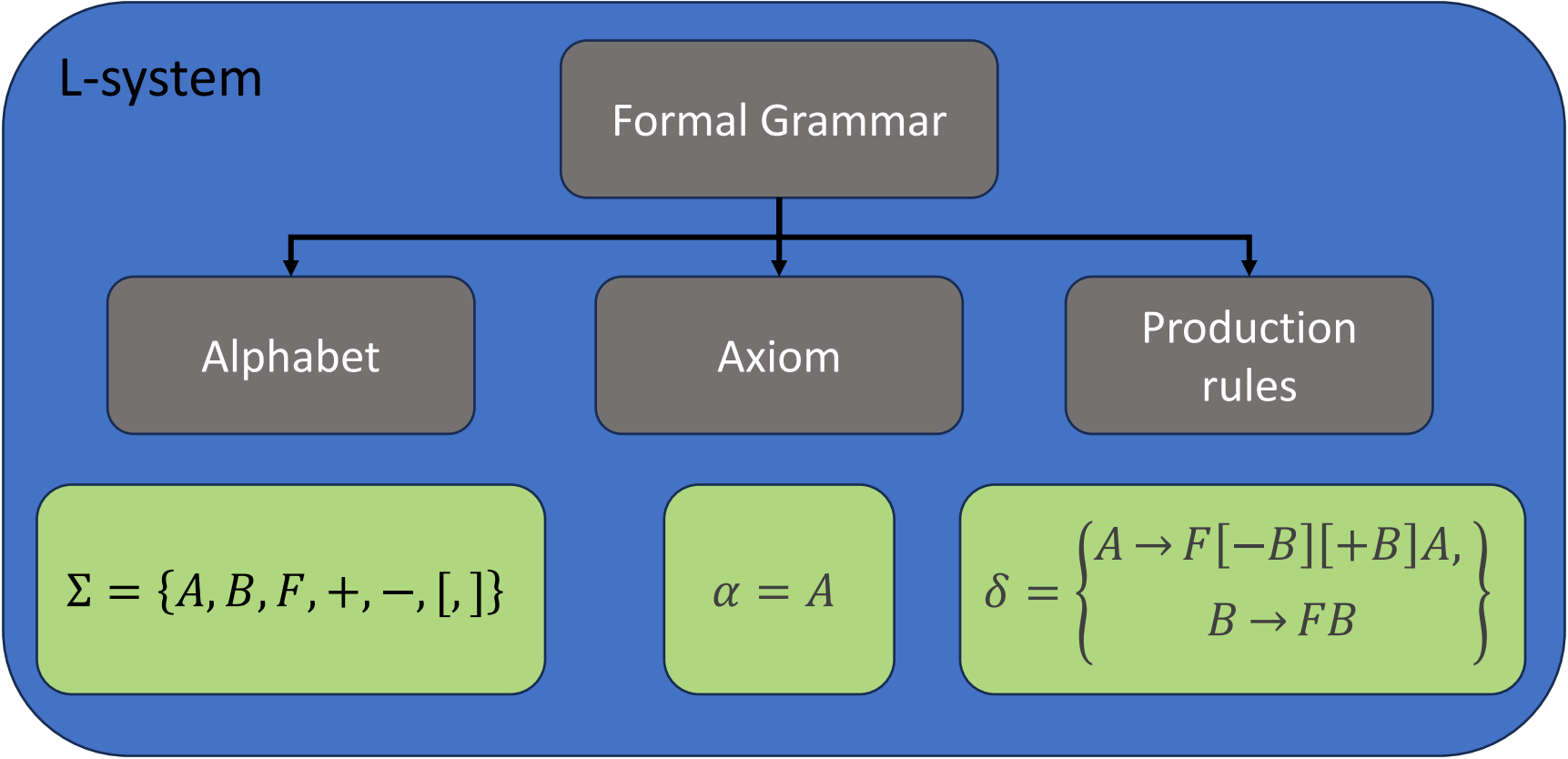
Alphabet: Σ , set of symbols (terminals and non-terminals)

Axiom: α , start symbol, element of the alphabet

Production rules: δ , set of rules

left-hand side \rightarrow right-hand side

search pattern \rightarrow replacement



L-system $G = \{\Sigma, \alpha, \delta\}$

$$\Sigma = \{A, B, F, +, -, [,]\}$$

$$\alpha = A$$

$$\delta = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} A \rightarrow F[-B][+B]A, \\ B \rightarrow FB \end{array} \right\}$$

Production rules: δ , set of rules

left-hand side \rightarrow right-hand side

search pattern \rightarrow replacement

$$A \rightarrow F[-B][+B]A$$

- Parallel string rewriting system
- Matching & rewriting:
 - searching for all occurrences of the search pattern, and simultaneously replacing them by the right-hand side of the rule
- Iterative (production/generation) process
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matching & rewriting

Step		String
0	$\alpha =$	A

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matching & rewriting

Step		String
0	$\alpha =$	A
1		F[-B][+B]A

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matching & rewriting

Step		String
0	$\alpha =$	A
1		F[-B][+B]A
2		F[-FB][+FB]F[-B][+B]A

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Step		String
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matching & rewriting

Step		String
0	$\alpha =$	A
1		F[-B][+B]A
2		F[-FB][+FB]F[-B][+B]A
3		F[-FFB][+FFB]F[-FB][+FB]F[-B][+B]A

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Step		String
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2		F[-FB][+FB]F[-B][+B]A
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4		F[-FFF B][+FFF B]F[-FF B][+FF B]F[-F B][+F B]F[- B][+ B] A

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4		F[-FFF B][+FFF B]F[-FF B][+FF B]F[-F B][+F B]F[- B][+ B] A
5		F[-FFF FB][+FFF FB]F[-FF FB][+FF FB]F[-F FB][+F FB]F[-F B][+F B] $F[-B][+B]A$

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5		F[-FFFFB][+FFFFB]F[-FFFB][+FFFB]F[-FFB][+FFB]F[-FB][+FB]F[-B][+B]A
...		...

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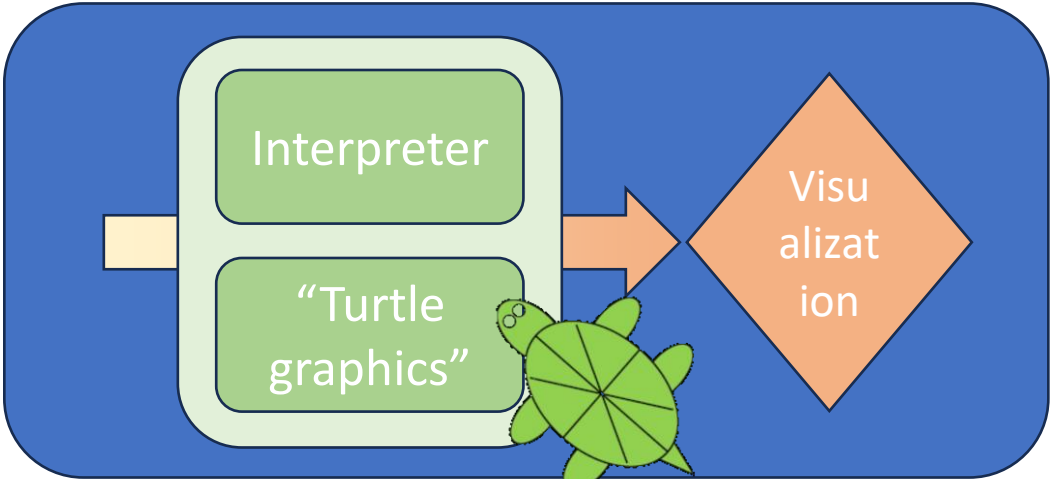
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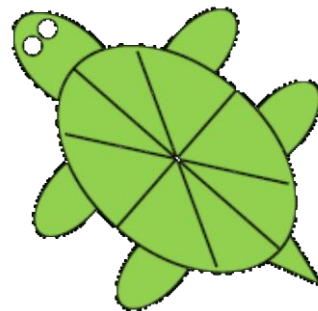
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0	$\alpha =$	A
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...		...

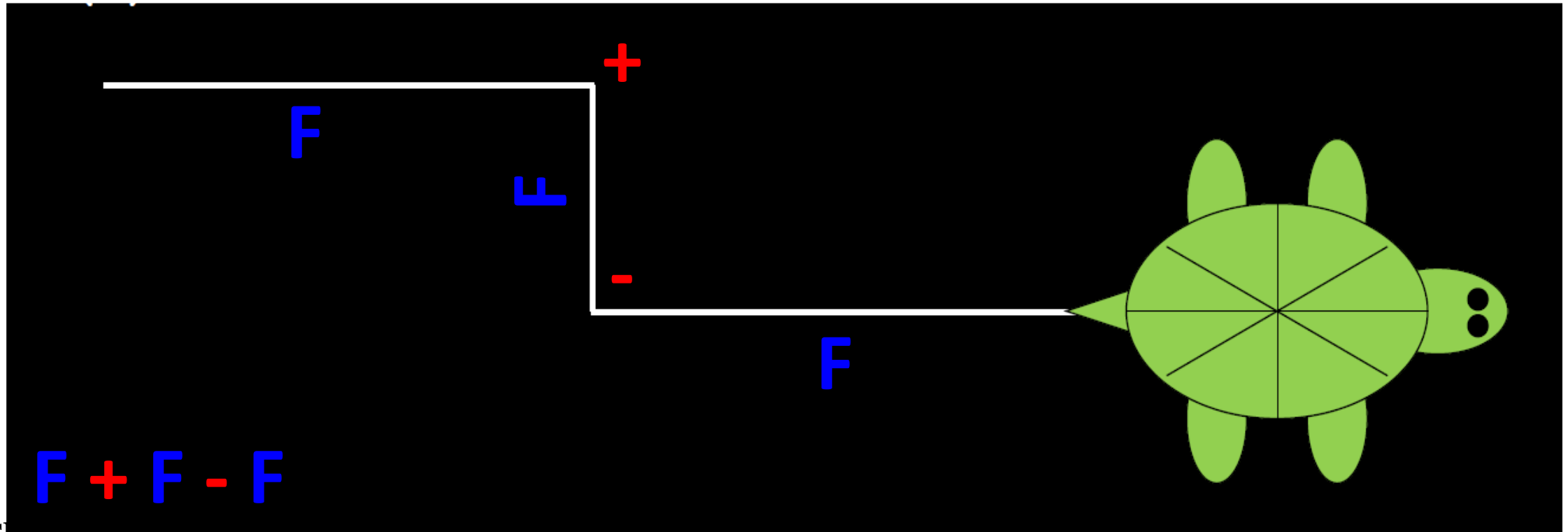
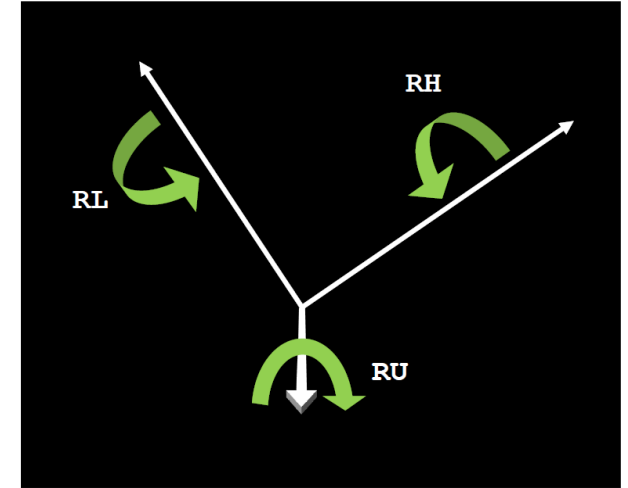


- Turtle = **Interpreter**, that listens to commands and executes them, e.g., interprets them as geometry → **visualization**
- **Virtual pen**, that can be moved, oriented, and draw
- Turtle has three properties:
 - a position (x, y, z)
 - an orientation (roll, pitch, yaw)
 - a pen in its tail with attributes such as colour and line width



Turtle graphics

- Turtle = **Interpreter**, that listens to commands and executes them, e.g., interprets them as geometry → **visualization**
- **Virtual pen**, that can be moved, oriented, and draw
- Turtle has three properties:
 - a position (x, y, z)
 - an orientation (roll, pitch, yaw)
 - a pen in its tail with attributes such as colour and line width



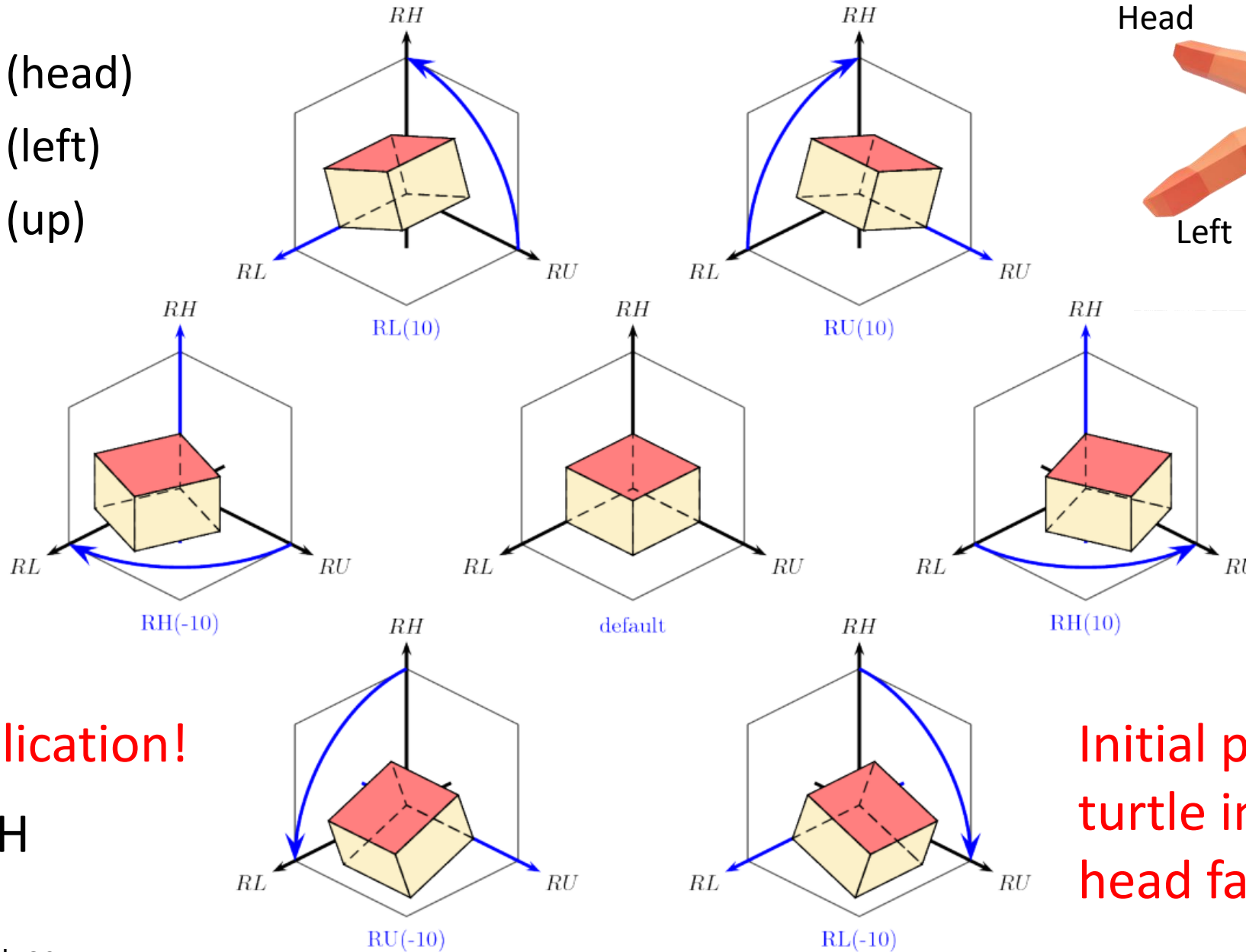
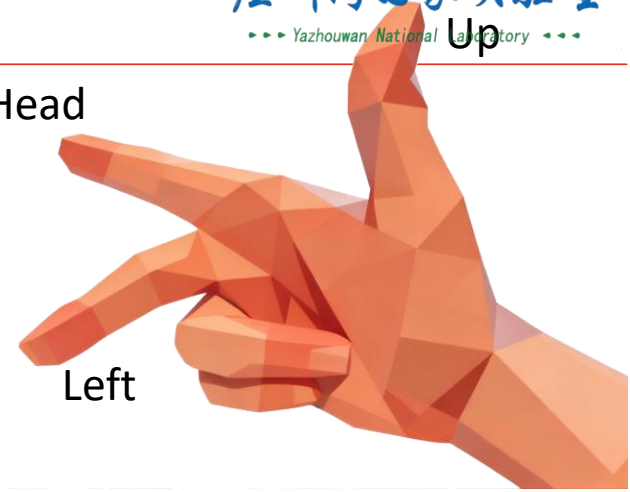
Turtle graphics – Euler angles

- Roll – RH (head)
- Pitch – RL (left)
- Yaw – RU (up)

Head

Left

Up



Order of application!

$RH\ RL \neq RL\ RH$


Initial position of the turtle in GroIMP is head facing the Z-axis!


Alphabet


$$\Sigma = \{A, B, F, +, -, [,]\}$$

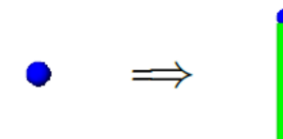
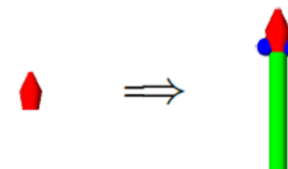
Rules

$$\delta = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} A \rightarrow F[-B][+B]A, \\ B \rightarrow FB \end{array} \right\}$$

A : 

B : 

F : 



- [Open a branch: remember the position
-] Close a branch: jump back to the position where the branch was opened

Process-based models
plant functioning
(功能)

K. de Wit *et al.* 1965

Architectural models
plant structure
(结构)

A. Lindenmayer *et al.* 1968

Functional-Structural Plant Models
(功能—结构植物模型 FSPM)

Room, Hanan, Prusinkiewicz 1996: 'Virtual Plants'

Kurth 1994, Perttunen *et al.* 1996: trees
Fournier and Andrieu 1998: cereal crops
Pagès *et al.* 1994: root systems

FSPM acknowledging that structure and function are deeply intertwined and that understanding a plant's life fully requires a model that can simulate both aspects dynamically over time.

Alphabet

$$\Sigma = \{A, B, F, +, -, [,]\}$$

Rules

$$\delta = \left\{ \begin{array}{l} A \rightarrow F[-B][+B]A, \\ B \rightarrow FB \end{array} \right\}$$

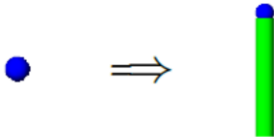
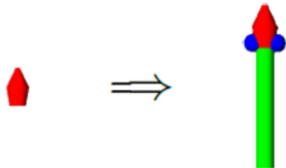
A:



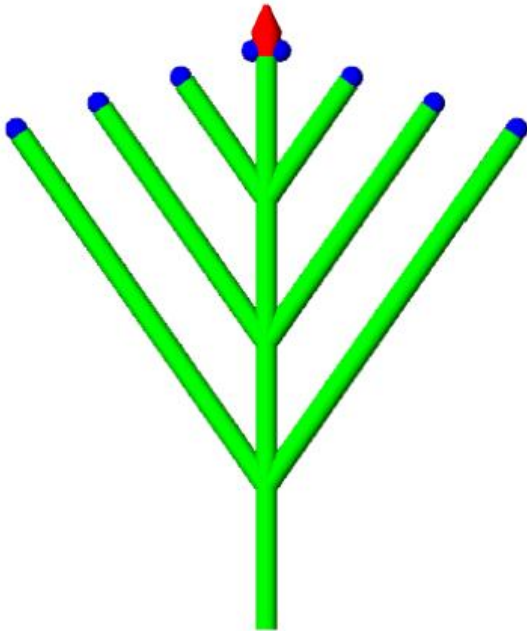
B:



F:



Step		String
0	$\alpha =$	A
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
...		



Basic turtle commands:

M	Move forward default distance
F	Go forward default distance and draw a line of default length and width
F(x)	Go forward distance x and draw a line of length x and default width
F(x, y)	Go forward distance x and draw a line of length x and width y
RU(x)	Rotate x degrees around the up axis
RL(x)	Rotate x degrees around the left axis
RH(x)	Rotate x degrees around the head axis
+	Turn left by $n/90$ degree (2D)
-	Turn right by $n/90$ degree (2D)
[Open a branch, remember the position
]	Close a branch, jump back to the position where the branch was opened

XL turtle geometry and graph construction

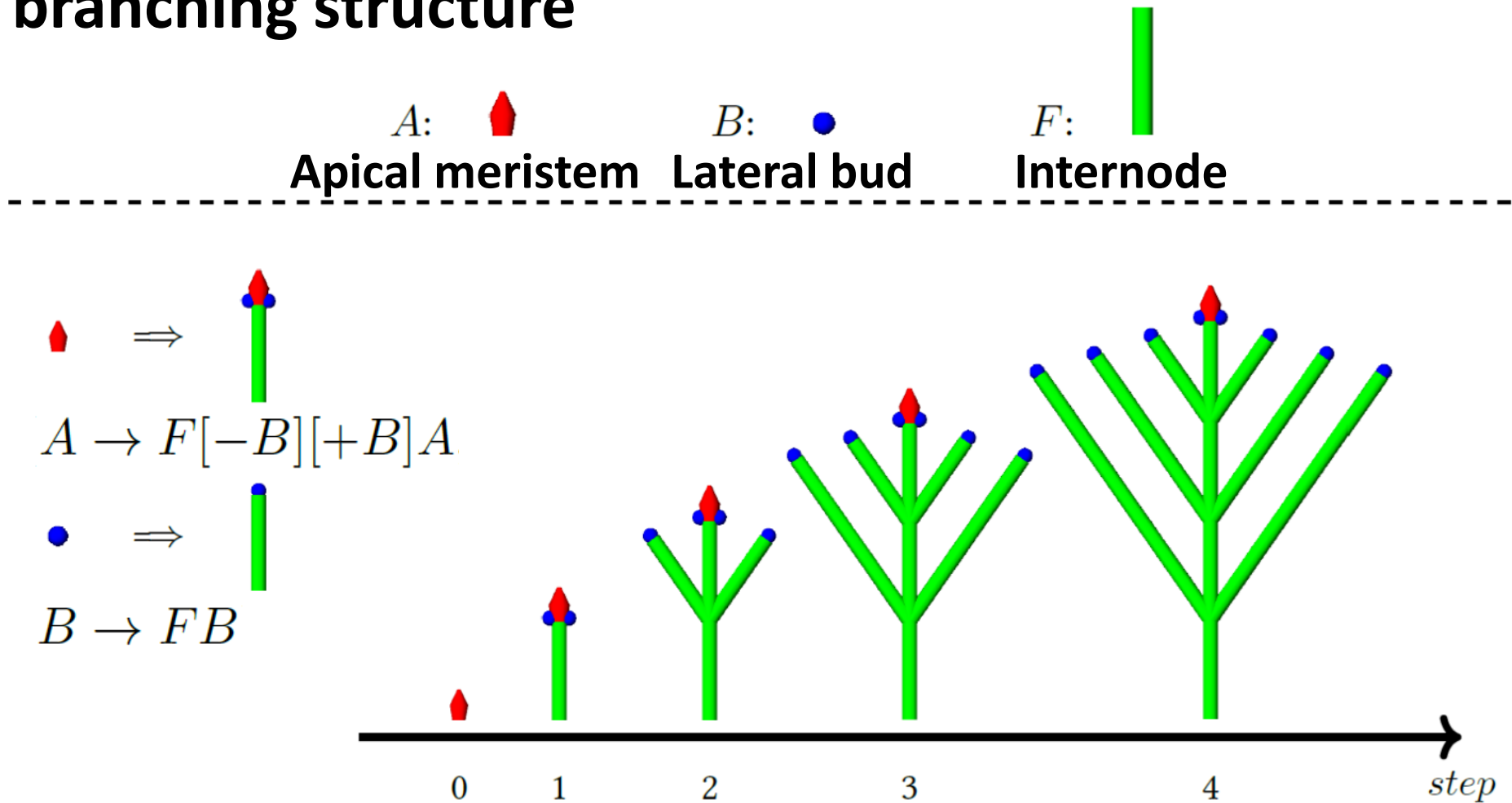
<https://wiki.grogra.de/doku.php?id=tutorials:xl-turtle-geometry>

List of Turtle commands

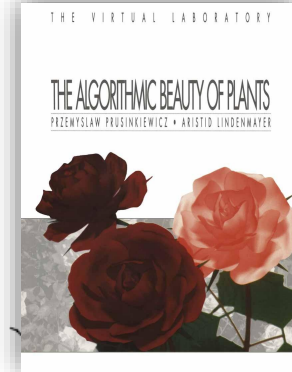
https://wiki.grogra.de/doku.php?id=groimp-platform:turtle_commands

Associating symbols with “real-world”, e.g., biological-related meanings.

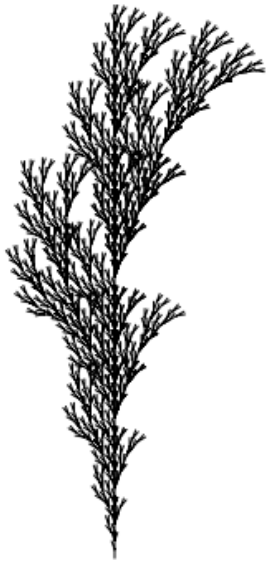
Simple branching structure



“The Algorithmic Beauty of Plants” by Prusinkiewicz and Lindenmayer (1990)



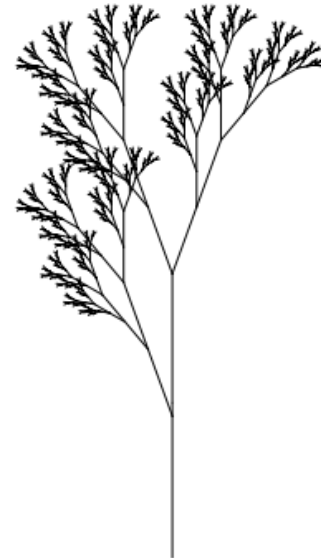
a
 $n=5, \delta=25.7^\circ$
F
 $F \rightarrow F[+F]F[-F]F$



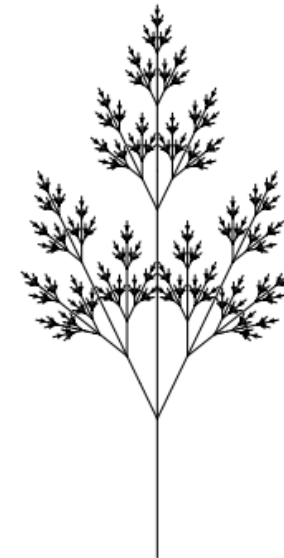
b
 $n=5, \delta=20^\circ$
F
 $F \rightarrow F[+F]F[-F][F]$



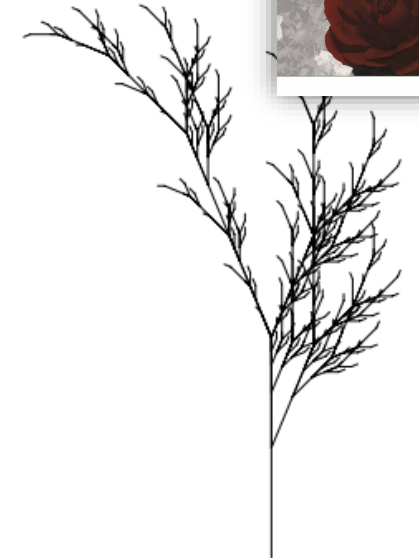
c
 $n=4, \delta=22.5^\circ$
F
 $F \rightarrow FF - [-F+F+F] +$
 $[+F-F-F]$



d
 $n=7, \delta=20^\circ$
X
 $X \rightarrow F[+X]F[-X]+X$
 $F \rightarrow FF$



e
 $n=7, \delta=25.7^\circ$
X
 $X \rightarrow F[+X][-X]FX$
 $F \rightarrow FF$



f
 $n=5, \delta=22.5^\circ$
X
 $X \rightarrow F - [[X]+X] + F[+FX] - X$
 $F \rightarrow FF$

P. 25, Figure 1.24: Examples of plant-like structures generated by bracketed OLsystems. L-systems...

- Restricting rule application to the context of the symbol (within the word).
- The targeted symbol only replaced, if the context is fulfilled.

Example rule:

B<**A**>**C** → **AA**

Transform “**A**” to “**AA**”, but only if the “**A**” occurs between “**B**” and “**C**” in the input word/string.

- Adding a list of parameters to the symbols
- Parameters could be, e.g., strings, numbers, etc.
- Symbols coupled with parameter are called **modules**

Production rules can use the parameters in two ways:

1. as conditional statement determining whether the rule will apply
2. to modify the actual parameters

Example rule:

$B(x), x < 5 \rightarrow FB(x+1)$



Bud break conditions:
Only if condition is met, a new
phytomer is built.

Transform “**B**” to “**FB**”, but only if “ **$x < 5$** ” (condition), and initialize the new “**B**” with “ **$x+1$** ” (parameter update).

Conditions to control rule application

```
b:Bud(rank, order, indiID), (b.isGrowingConditions()) ==>  
  RV(-0.15)  
  Internode(rank, order, indiID)  
  [Leaf(rank, order, indiID)]  
  if (b.isBranchingConditions()) (  
    [RL(30) Shoot0(indiID) Bud(rank+1, order+1, indiID)]  
  )  
  Rotate(random(-5,5), random(-5,5), PHYLLOTAX + random(-5, 5))  
  Bud(rank+1, order, indiID);
```

Growing Conditions:

```
1 public boolean isGrowingConditions() {  
    ...  
3 return  
    // architectural conditions  
5 rank<11 && order<=2 &&  
    // absorbed sensed power  
7 absorbedSensedPower &&  
    // average SSR as growth regulation  
9 (indi.getAverageSourceSinkRatio()>0.66) &&  
    // plastochron  
11 plastochron<=0 ||  
    // average SSR as growth regulation: building new sinks,  
13 // if avgSSR is to big and the bud is old enough  
    (indi.getAverageSourceSinkRatio()>MAX_AVERAGE_SOURCE_SINK_RATIO  
        && tempsum>200);  
15 }
```

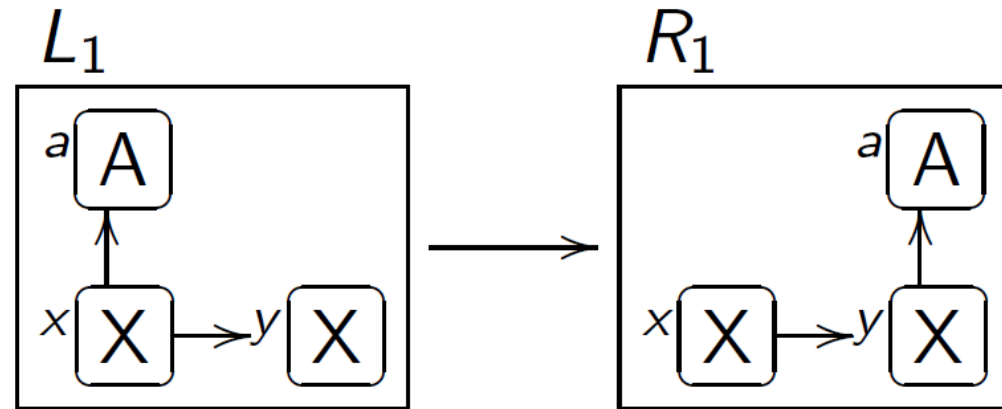
FSPM: Bud break conditions

- Age, temperature sum
- Temperature
- Hormone concentration, e.g., auxin
- Water content
- etc.

- L-systems are quite successful but based on plain strings.
- **Relational growth grammars** (RGG) combining L-systems and graphs
→ Graph manipulation rules

Example rule (simplified):

$x:X[a:A][y:X] \rightarrow x[y[a]]$



Move the “**A**” from the frist “**X**” to the second “**X**”.

- Parallel string rewriting systems and formal grammar
- Iterative generation process
- Turtle graphics for visual interpretation
- Extensions
 - Context-sensitive grammars
 - Parametric grammars
 - RGG: Graph-based L-systems

Where to find more information?

GroIMP Wiki pages:

<https://wiki.grogra.de>

- User guides
- Tutorials
- Example Gallery
- Developer Guides
- ...
- FAQ
- Where to find Information
- Workshops

workshops:summer_school_sh_25

Sion-Europe summer workshop on systems modelling of plant factory for excellent young scientist

GroIMP at the 'Sion-Europe summer workshop on systems modelling of plant factory for excellent young scientist' Oct 27~31, 2025, Shanghai, China ([link](#)).

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- GroIMP
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GroIMP platform (the fun part)

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To Contribute to this wiki please reach out to us so we can create you an account. Sadly, it is not possible for us to maintain an open registration.

Description

The modelling platform GroIMP is designed as an integrated platform incorporating modelling, visualization and interaction. It exhibits several features that make it suitable for the field of biological and ALife modelling:

The "modelling backbone" consists in the language XL. It is fully integrated, e.g., the user can interactively select the rules to be applied. GroIMP provides classes that can be used in modelling: Turtle commands, further geometrical classes like bicubic surfaces, the class Cell, which has been used in the Game Of Life implementation, and so on. The outcome of a model is visualized within GroIMP. In the visual representation of the model output, users can interact with the dynamics of the model, e.g., by selecting or deleting elements. A networked mode is available, allowing different users to interact with the modelled world synchronously. This may be an interesting feature to be used in the field of e-learning.

Features

- Interactive editing of scenes
- Rich set of 3D objects, including primitives, NURBS curves and surfaces, and height fields
- Material options like colors, and textures
- Java + L-System grammar support
- Real-time rendering using OpenGL
- Support of several import and export formats
- Build-in raytracing implementations (CPU and GPU-based)
- Full spectral raytracing (down to 1nm buckets)

Documentation

This wiki contains the documentation of the GroIMP software for both users and developers.

Find more information on L-Systems, growth grammar, and the XL language at the [grogra website](#)

Find the latest version of the GroIMP [API](#) documentation [here](#)

Contribute

GroIMP is not only an open source project, but it also tries to be an open source community, meaning we try to share knowledge and models as freely as code.

Special thanks to GroIMP User Groups!

感谢观看 Thank you!

GroIMP WeChat Group



Valid until 11/5



Jochem Evers
Katarína Smoleňová
Leo Marcelis
Pieter de Visser



Zhu Junqi



Dai Zhanwu



Hartmut Stützel
Magnus Adler



Evgeny Gladilin



Xu Lifeng



Winfried Kurth
Ole Kniemeyer
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GroIMP Developer Team



Chen Tsu-Wei



Chen Ming



Kathrin Kahlen
Christopher Bahr



Sebastian Munz



Gerhard Buck-Sorlin



Michel Renton



Kathy Steppe
Jonas Coussement



Ma Yuntao
Zhang Lizhen



Qian Tingting