

# CSC 212: Data Structures and Abstractions

## Recursion

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# Recursion

# Recursion

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- Solve a task by reducing it to smaller tasks (**of the same structure**)
- Technically, a recursive function is one that **calls itself**
- General form:
  - ✓ **base case**
    - solution for a **trivial case**
    - it can be used to stop the recursion (prevents “*stack overflow*”)
    - every recursive algorithm needs at least one base case
  - ✓ **recursive call(s)**
    - divide problem into **smaller instance(s)** of the **same structure**

# General Form

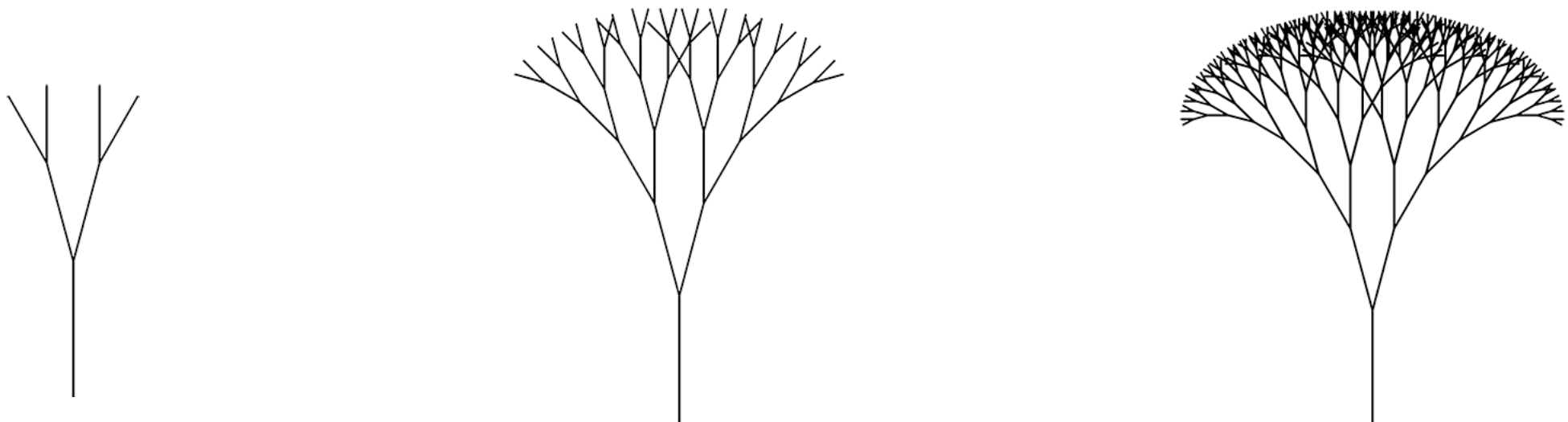
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```
function() {  
    if (this is the base case) {  
        calculate trivial solution  
    } else {  
        break task into subtasks  
        solve each task recursively  
        merge solutions if necessary  
    }  
}
```

# Why recursion?

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- Can we live without it?
  - ✓ yes, you can write “any program” with arrays, loops, and conditionals
- However ...
  - ✓ some formulas are explicitly recursive
  - ✓ some problems exhibit a natural recursive solution



```
int sum_array(int *A, int n) {  
    // base case  
    if (n == 1) {  
        return A[0];  
    }  
  
    // solve sub-task  
    int sum = sum_array(A, n-1);  
  
    // return sum  
    return A[n-1] + sum;  
}
```

# Recursion call tree

---

```
int sum_array(int *A, int n) {  
    // base case  
    if (n == 1) {  
        return A[0];  
    }  
  
    // solve sub-task  
    int sum = sum_array(A, n-1);  
  
    // return sum  
    return A[n-1] + sum;  
}
```

# Example: power of a number

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$$b^n = \underbrace{b \cdot b \cdot \dots \cdot b}_{n \text{ times}}$$

```
double power(double x, int n) {  
    // base case  
    if (n == 0) {  
        return 1;  
    }  
    // recursive call  
    return x * power(x, n-1);  
}
```



# Recursion call tree

---

```
double power(double x, int n) {  
    // base case  
    if (n == 0) {  
        return 1;  
    }  
    // recursive call  
    return x * power(x, n-1);  
}
```

# Is this faster?

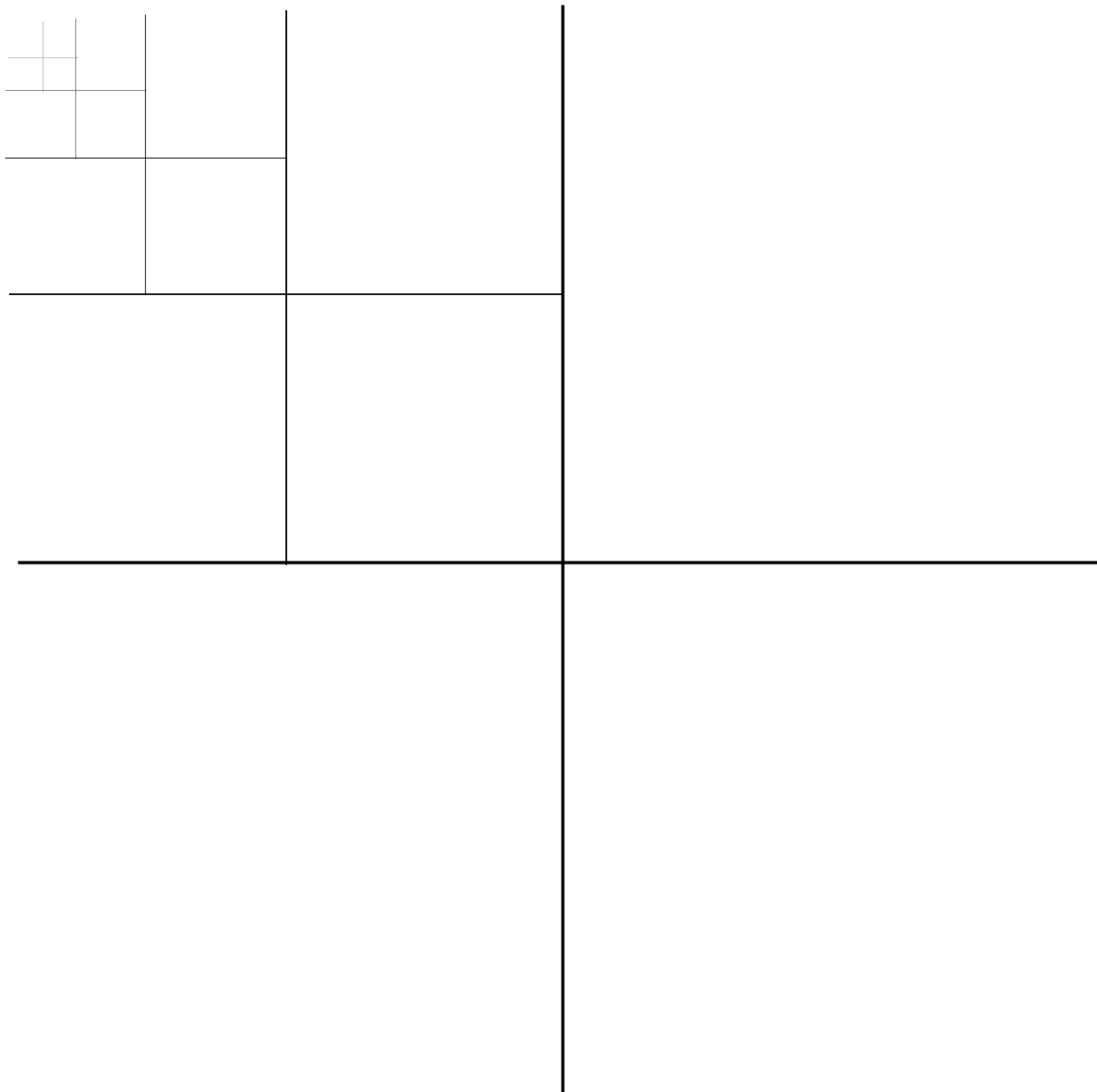
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```
double power(double x, int n) {  
    if (n == 0) {  
        return 1;  
    }  
    double half = power(x, n/2);  
    if (n % 2 == 0) {  
        return half * half;  
    } else {  
        return x * half * half;  
    }  
}
```

# Recursion call tree

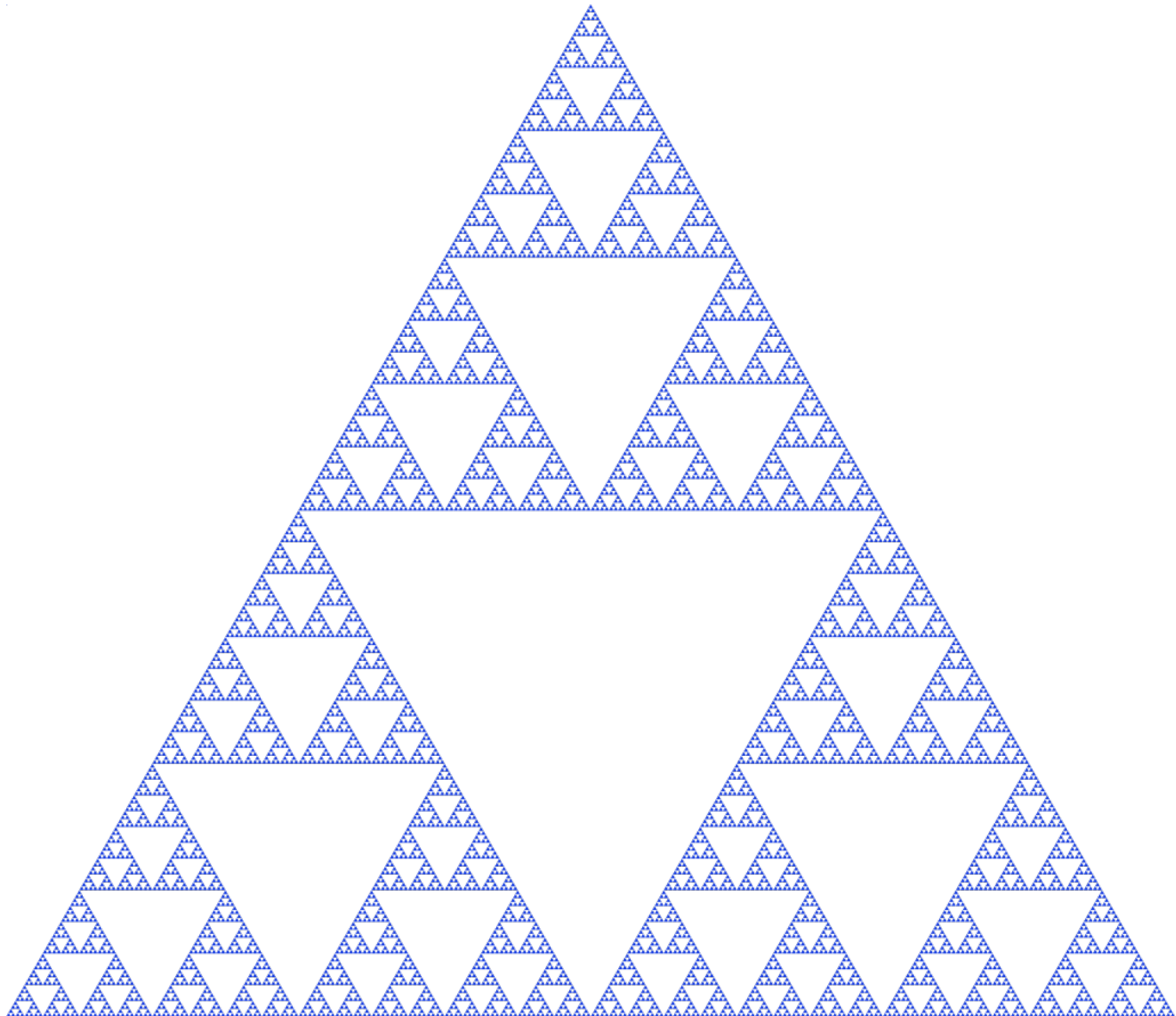
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```
double power(double x, int n) {  
    if (n == 0) {  
        return 1;  
    }  
    double half = power(x, n/2);  
    if (n % 2 == 0) {  
        return half * half;  
    } else {  
        return x * half * half;  
    }  
}
```



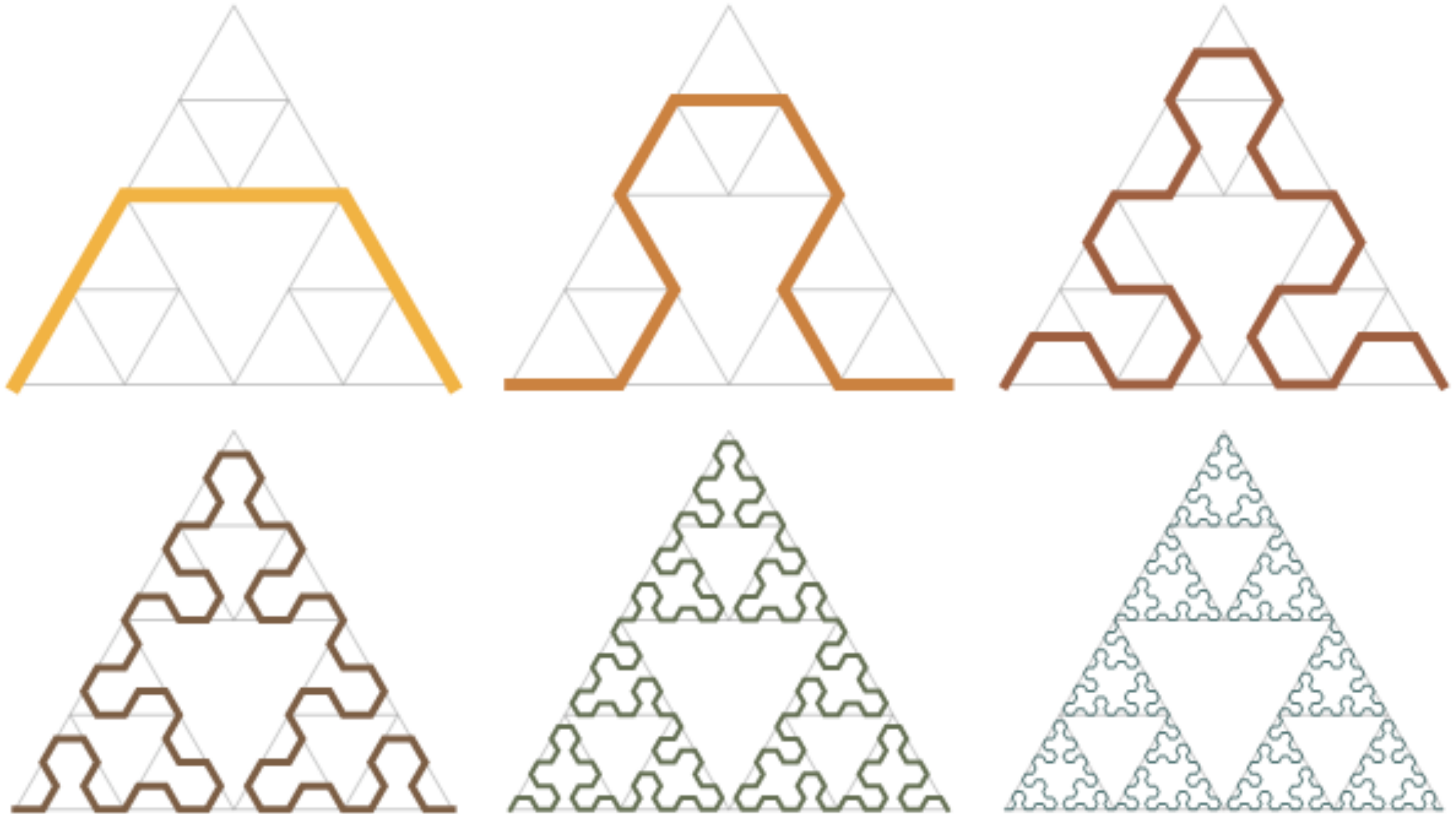
# Sierpinski triangle

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credit: wikipedia

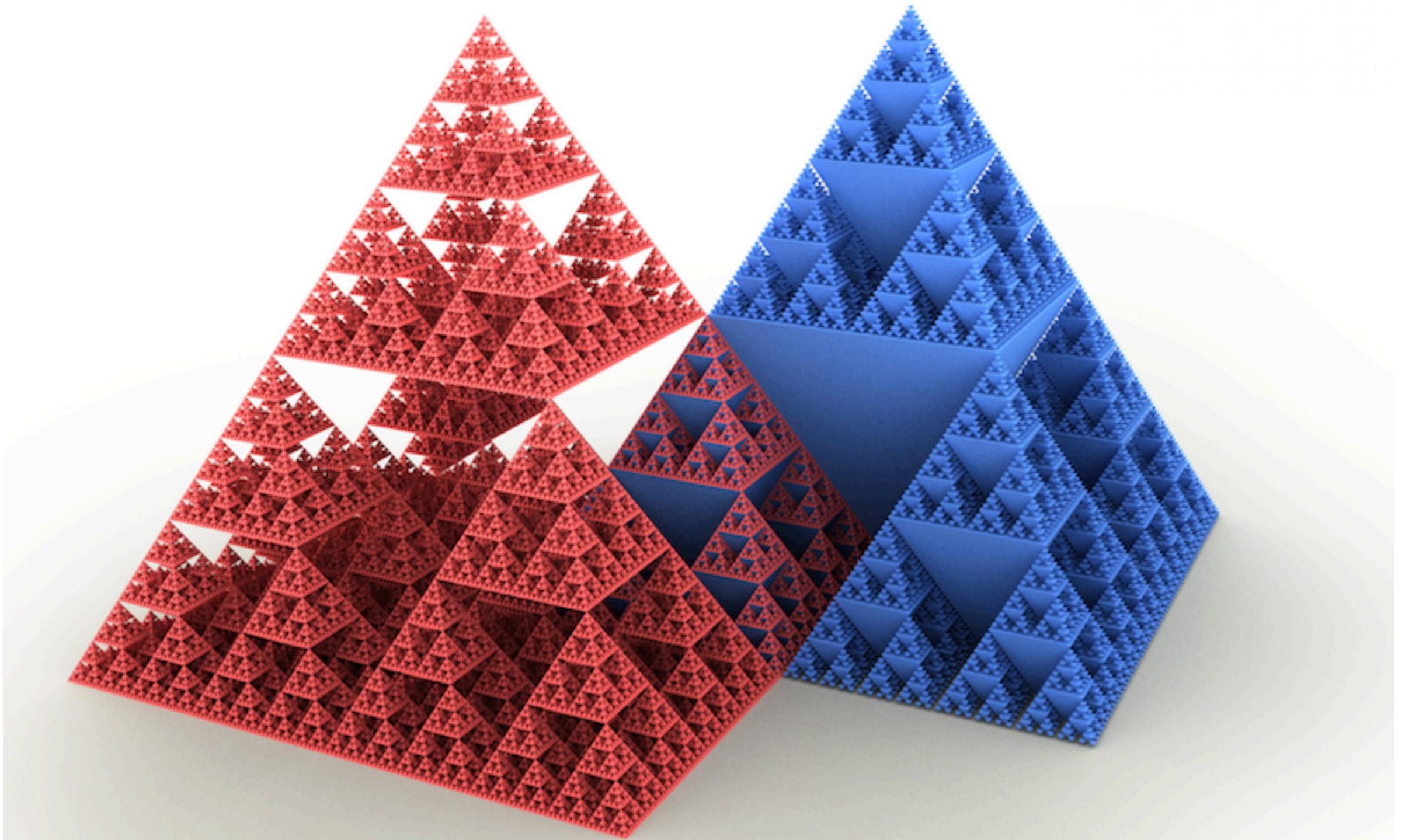
# Sierpinski arrowhead





# Sierpinski pyramid

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# Binary Search



# Binary Search

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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	2	5	10	15	20	22	30	35	40	43	48	51

low

high

$k = 48?$

# Binary Search

---

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	2	5	10	15	20	22	30	35	40	43	48	51

low

mid

high

k = 48?

# Binary Search

---

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	2	5	10	15	20	22	30	35	40	43	48	51

low

high

k = 48?

# Binary Search

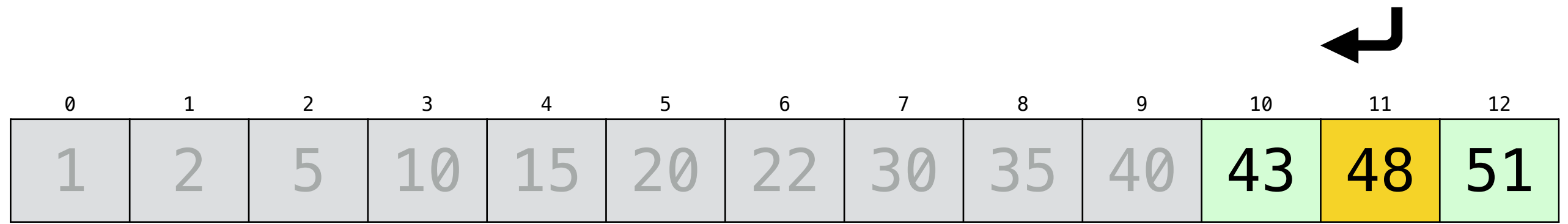
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0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	2	5	10	15	20	22	30	35	40	43	48	51
							low	mid		high		

k = 48?

# Binary Search

---



0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1	2	5	10	15	20	22	30	35	40	43	48	51

low mid high

k = 48?

```
int bsearch(int *A, int lo, int hi, int k) {  
    // base case  
    if (hi < lo) {  
        return NOT_FOUND;  
    }  
    // calculate midpoint index  
    int mid = lo + ((hi-lo)/2);  
    // key found?  
    if (A[mid] == k)  
        return mid;  
    // key in upper subarray?  
    if (A[mid] < k)  
        return bsearch(A, mid+1, hi, k);  
    // key is in lower subarray?  
    return bsearch(A, lo, mid-1, k);  
}
```

# Recursion Tree (binary search)

---

```
int bsearch(int *A, int lo, int hi, int k) {  
    // base case  
    if (hi < lo) {  
        return NOT_FOUND;  
    }  
    // calculate midpoint index  
    int mid = lo + ((hi-lo)/2);  
    // key found?  
    if (A[mid] == k)  
        return mid;  
    // key in upper subarray?  
    if (A[mid] < k)  
        return bsearch(A, mid+1, hi, k);  
    // key is in lower subarray?  
    return bsearch(A, lo, mid-1, k);  
}
```

Complexity? Best-case, Worst-case, Average-case?

Table 1

n	time (days)	$\sim \log(n)$
1	0.000	0
10	0.000	3
100	0.000	7
1000	0.000	10
10000	0.000	13
100000	0.000	17
1000000	0.000	20
10000000	0.000	23
100000000	0.000	27
1000000000	0.000	30
10000000000	0.000	33
100000000000	0.000	37
1000000000000	0.000	40
10000000000000	0.000	43
100000000000000	0.003	47
1000000000000000	0.028	50
10000000000000000	0.281	53
100000000000000000	2.809	56
1000000000000000000	28.086	60
10000000000000000000	280.863	63
100000000000000000000	2808.628	66



Intel Core i9-  
9900K

412,090 MIPS  
at 4.7 GHz



Example: find peak in  
unimodal arrays

# Unimodal arrays

- An array is (**strongly**) **unimodal** if it can be split into an increasing part followed by a decreasing part

1	2	5	16	20	18	17	16	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

How to efficiently find the max?

1	2	5	16	20	18	17	16	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

# Find the **max** (strongly unimodal)

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	8	15	20	22	20	15	12	10	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

# Find the max (strongly unimodal)

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- Recursion Tree?
- Complexity? Best-case, Worst-case, Average-case?

```
int max_s_unimodal(int *A, int low, int hi) {  
    if (low == hi) {  
        return A[low];  
    }  
  
    int mid = (low + hi) / 2;  
  
    if (A[mid] < A[mid+1]) {  
        return max_s_unimodal(A, mid+1, hi);  
    } else {  
        return max_s_unimodal(A, low, mid);  
    }  
}
```

# Unimodal arrays

- An array is (**weakly**) **unimodal** if it can be split into a nondecreasing part followed by a nonincreasing part

1	2	5	5	15	20	22	22	35	38	13	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

How to efficiently find the max?

1	2	5	5	15	20	22	22	35	38	13	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

# Find the max (weakly unimodal)

1	2	5	5	15	20	22	22	35	38	13	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	5	15	20	22	22	35	38	13	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

1	2	5	5	15	20	22	22	35	38	13	8	5
---	---	---	---	----	----	----	----	----	----	----	---	---

Diagram illustrating the recursive calls for finding the maximum in a weakly unimodal array. The array is partitioned into two subproblems: the left subproblem (indices 1 to 7) and the right subproblem (indices 8 to 13).

Two recursive calls

```

int max_w_unimodal(int *A, int low, int hi) {
    if (low == hi) {
        return A[low];
    }

    int mid = (low + hi) / 2;

    if (A[mid] < A[mid+1]) {
        return max_w_unimodal(A, mid+1, hi);
    } else if (A[mid] > A[mid+1]) {
        return max_w_unimodal(A, low, mid);
    } else {
        int left = max_w_unimodal(A, mid+1, hi);
        int right = max_w_unimodal(A, low, mid);
        return std::max(left, right);
    }
}

```



# Find the max (weakly unimodal)

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- Recursion Tree?

- Complexity?