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algebraic and geometric multiplicity do not coincide

 ${\bf Canonical\ name} \quad {\bf Algebraic And Geometric Multiplicity Do Not Coincide}$

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Author matte (1858) Entry type Example Classification msc 15A18 Zero is an eigenvalue of

$$A = \begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix}$$

with algebraic multiplicity 2 and geometric multiplicity 1.

Indeed, as

$$\det(A - \lambda I) = \lambda^2$$

it follows that 0 is an eigenvalue of A with algebraic multiplicity 2. To find the geometric multiplicity of A we need to calculate ker A. Thus, suppose

$$\begin{pmatrix} 0 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 \end{pmatrix} \begin{pmatrix} a \\ b \end{pmatrix} = \begin{pmatrix} 0 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix}.$$

This implies b = 0, so

$$\ker A = \operatorname{span} \begin{pmatrix} 1 \\ 0 \end{pmatrix},$$

and the geometric multiplicity of 0 is 1.