

Cardan's Solution with All Real Roots

Consider the standard form of the cubic equation $x^3 + px + q = 0$ with the discriminant (possible when $p < 0$)

~~When~~ $D = \frac{q^2}{4} + \frac{p^3}{27}$. When $D < 0$ write $D = -(-D)$

Now $y = \left(-\frac{q}{2} + \sqrt{D}\right)^{1/3}$, $z = \left(-\frac{q}{2} - \sqrt{D}\right)^{1/3}$

Defining $A = -\frac{q}{2}$ and $B = \sqrt{-D}$, we get,

$y = (A + iB)^{1/3}$ and $z = (A - iB)^{1/3}$ when $D < 0$.

Now write $1 \cos \theta = A$, $1 \sin \theta = B$

$\therefore 1^2 (\cos^2 \theta + \sin^2 \theta) = 1^2 = A^2 + B^2 = \frac{q^2}{4} + (-D)$

$\Rightarrow 1^2 = \frac{q^2}{4} - \frac{q^2}{4} - \frac{p^3}{27} \Rightarrow 1^2 = -\frac{p^3}{27} = \left(-\frac{p}{3}\right)^3$

Further $\cos \theta = \frac{A}{1} = \frac{-q}{\sqrt{-4(p/3)^3}}$ Also $1^{1/3} = \sqrt{-\frac{p}{3}}$
 $\theta = \arccos\left(\frac{A}{1}\right)$

The solutions are $x_1 = 2^{1/3} \cos\left(\frac{\theta}{3}\right)$,

$x_2 = 2^{1/3} \cos\left(\frac{\theta + 2\pi}{3}\right)$, $x_3 = 2^{1/3} \cos\left(\frac{\theta + 4\pi}{3}\right)$

These are set as for $j = 1, 2, 3$

$x_j = 2 \sqrt{-\frac{p}{3}} \cos\left[\frac{\theta + 2\pi(j-1)}{3}\right]$ All roots are real.