

Fitness Landscape

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CS454 AI-Based Software Engineering

Recap

- We need three key elements for SBSE
 - Representation: how we express candidate solutions for storage
 - Fitness Function: how we compare candidate solutions for selection
 - Operators: how we modify candidate solutions for trial-and-error

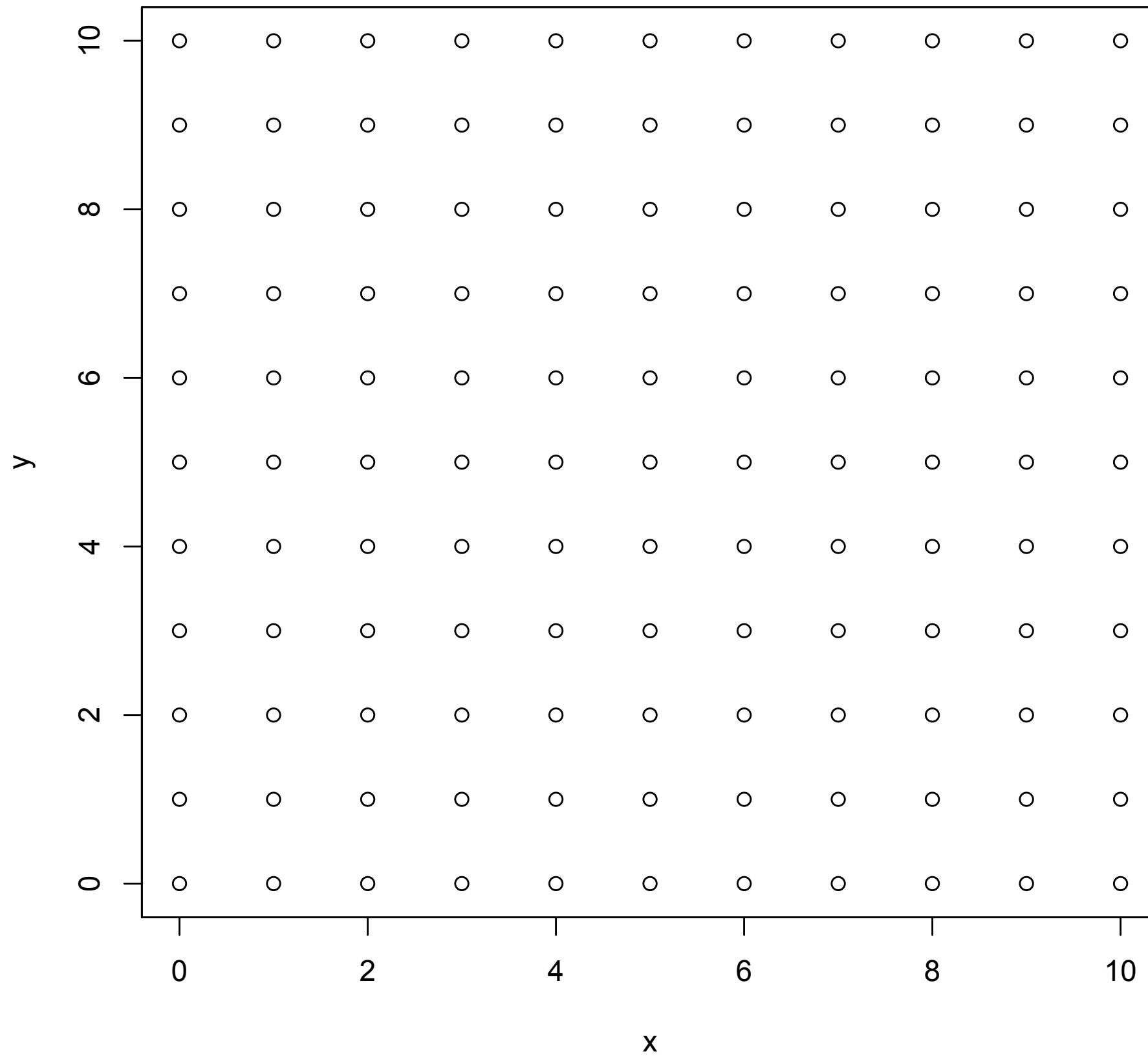
Fitness Landscape

- A spatial view of the search: there is no guarantee that the **actual** optimisation you are working on can be easily visualised spatially. However, this visual analogy is a useful tool when discussing the distribution of the fitness across possible solutions.
- Given a solution space S (a hyperplane), and a fitness function F , a fitness landscape is a hyperdimensional surface that represents $F: S \rightarrow \mathbb{R}$

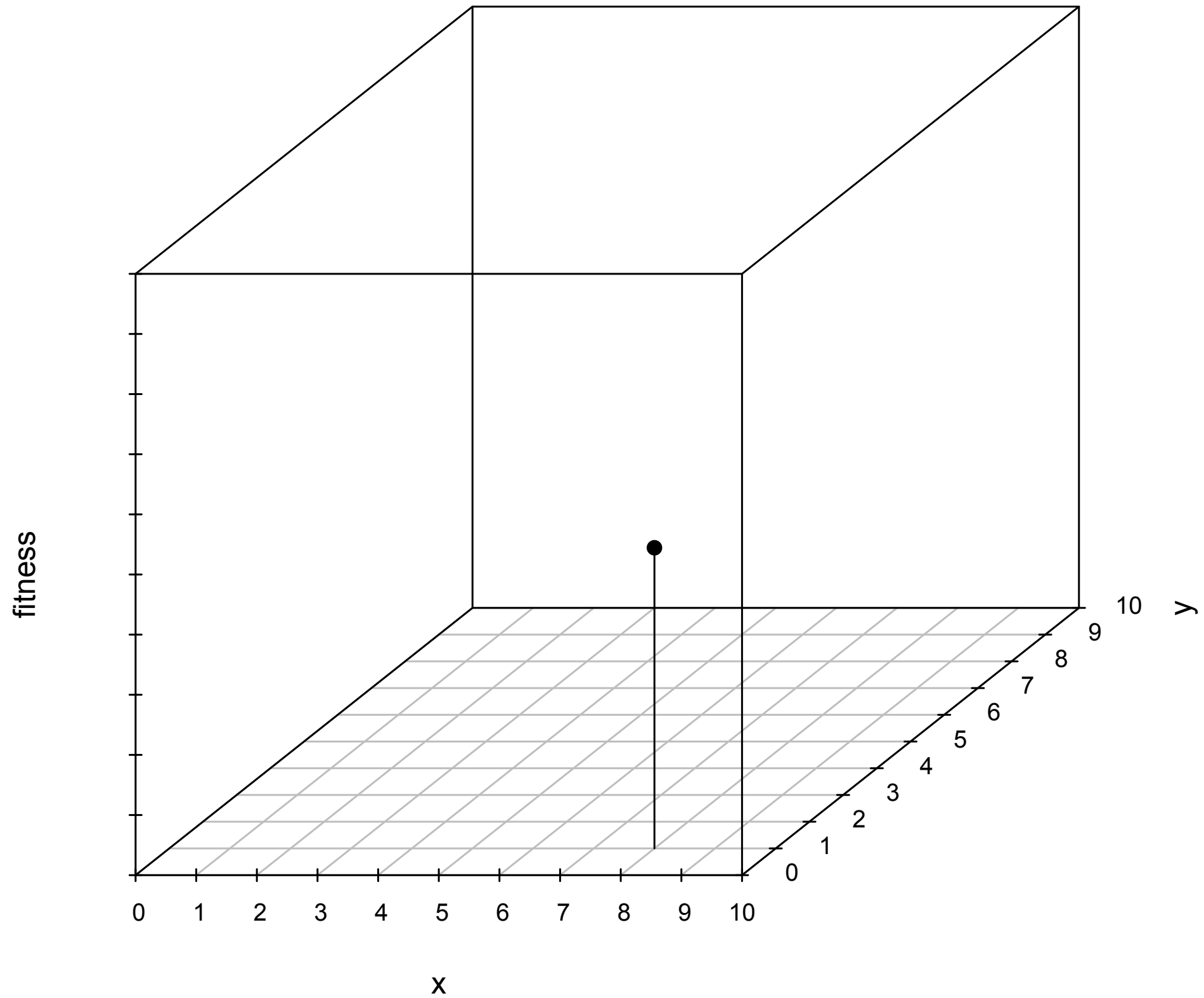
Fitness Landscape

- Let's use a fake problem:
 - Given $0 \leq x \leq 10$, $0 \leq y \leq 10$, find (x, y) such that $x + y = 10$.

Solution Space

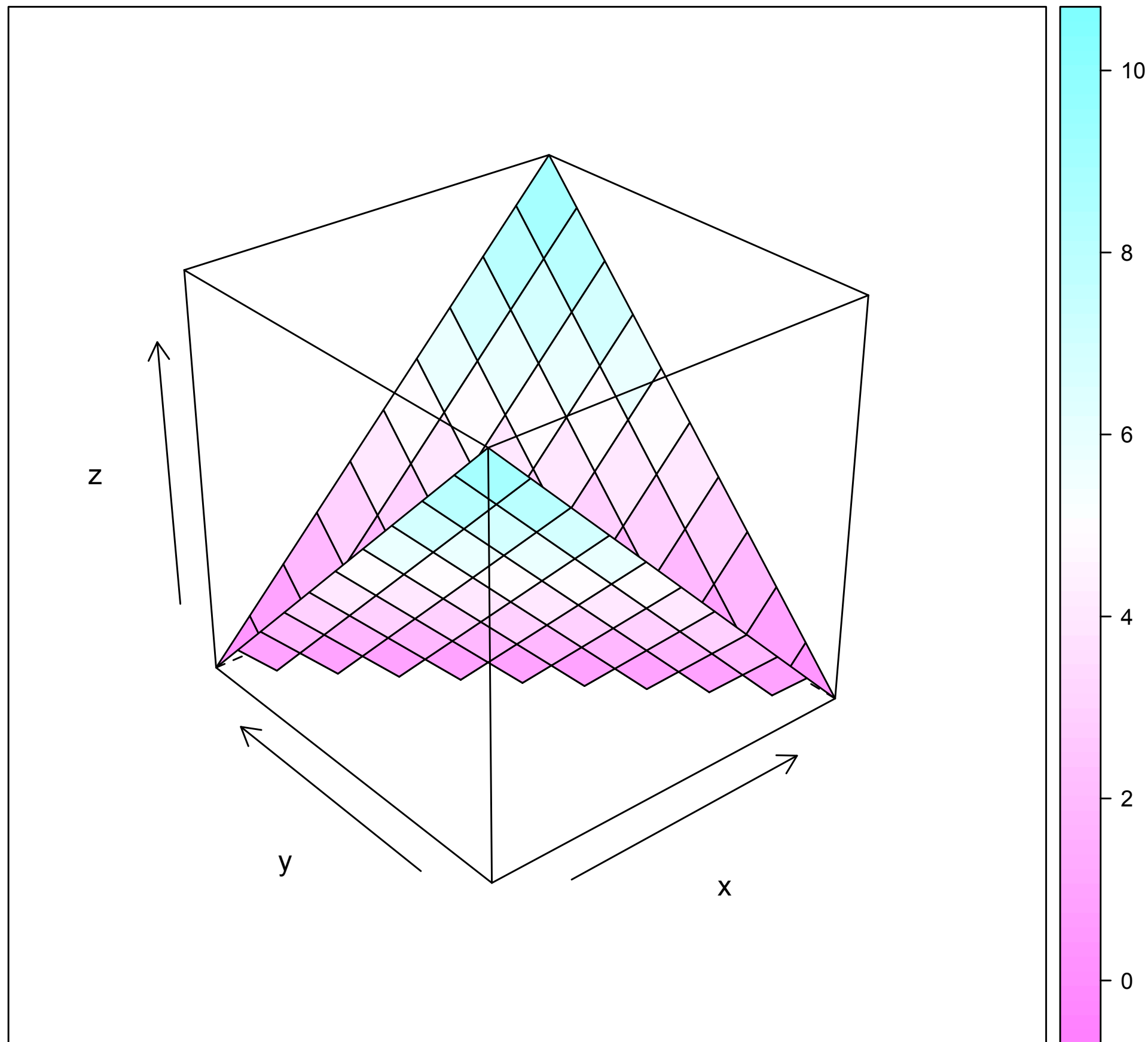


A single point in fitness landscape



Fitness for Fake Problem

- Given (x, y) , **how far** are we from **solving the problem**?
- We solve the problem when $x + y == 10$
- If the current sum of x and y are s , we are $|10 - s|$ far away from solving the solution
- $f(x, y) = |10 - (x + y)|$
- Minimise the above function until it becomes 0.

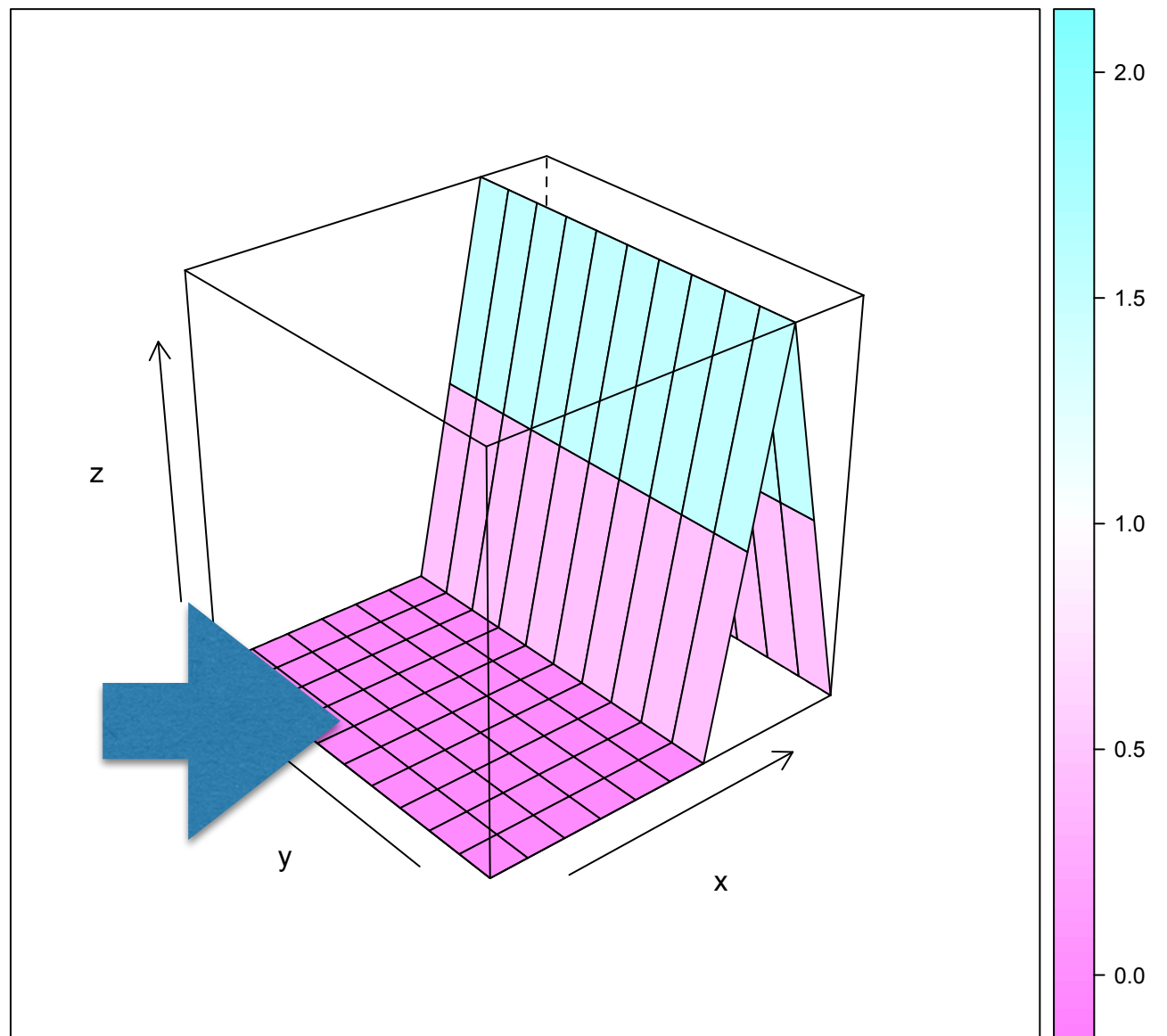


Properties of Landscape

- Size: small/large but also finite/(effectively) infinite
- Flatness: is there a large plateau?
- Ruggedness: how many local optima should we expect?
- Discreteness: continuous numeric, discrete numeric, combinatoric

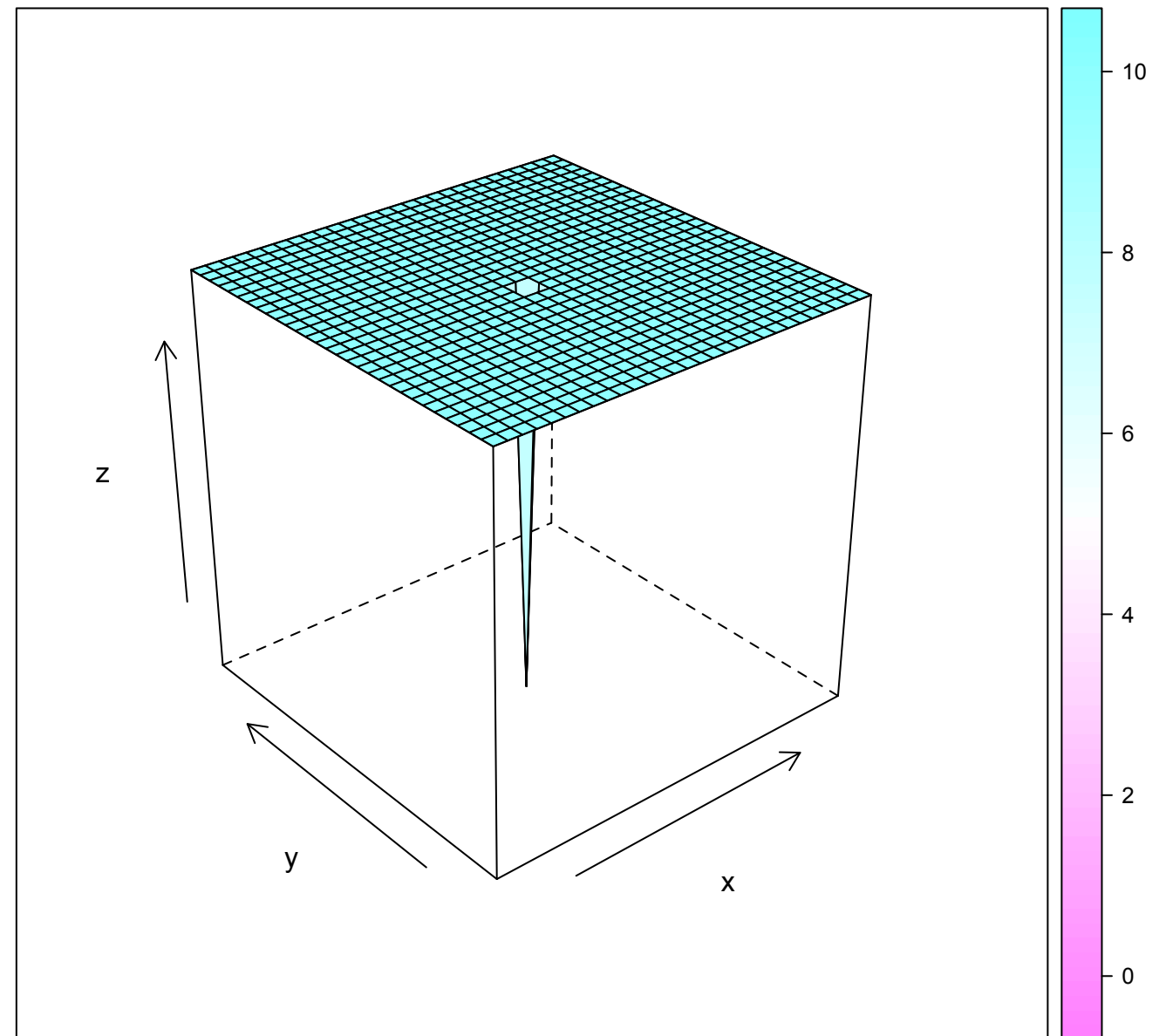
Plateau

- Large, flat region that does not exhibit any gradient.
- Suppose current solution as well as others generated by operators all fall in a plateau.
- There is no guidance; hard to escape.



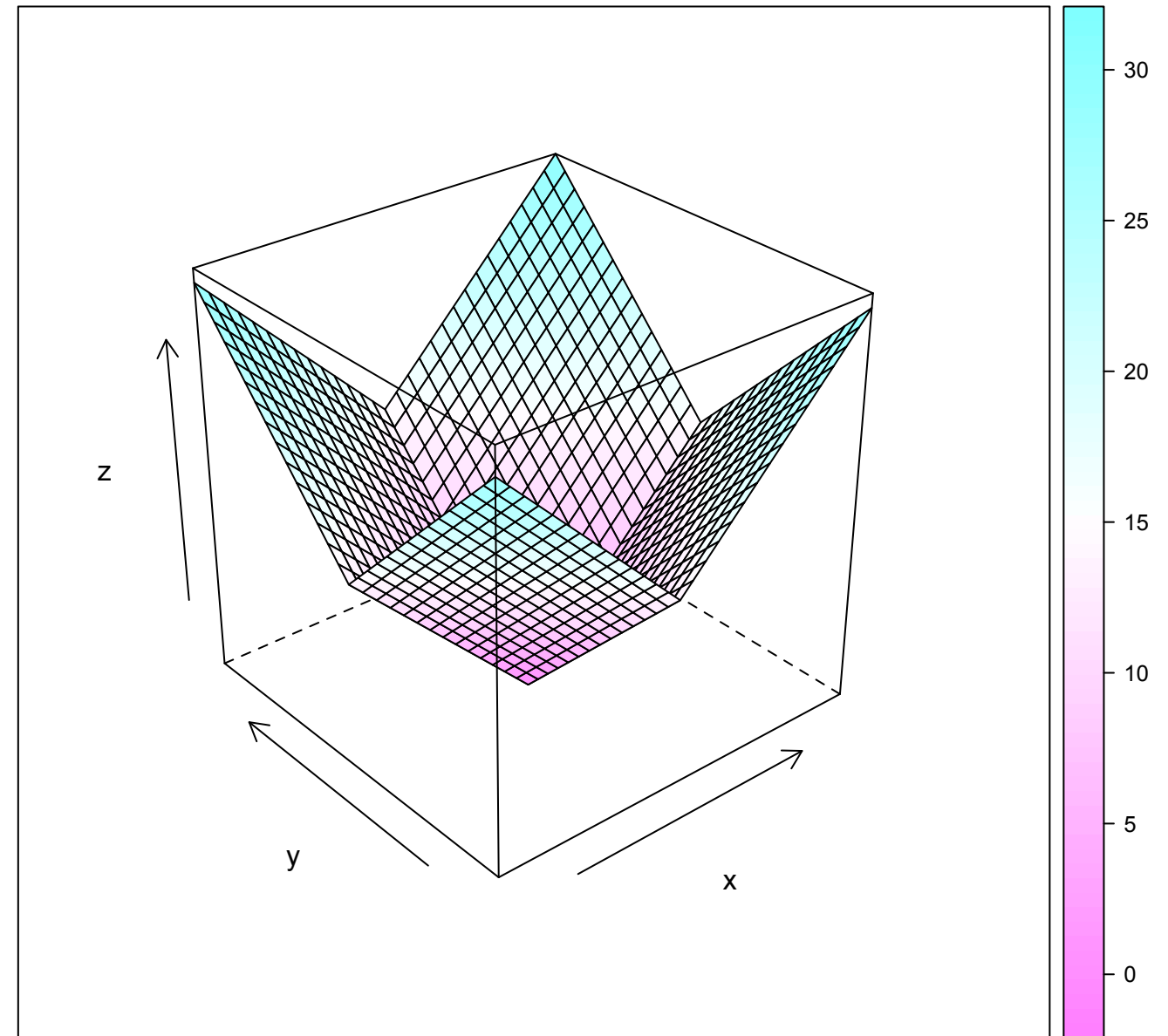
Needle in the Haystack

- Worst landscape to search.
- Can be avoided by transforming the problem and/or designing better fitness functions
- To search for $(x, y) = (15, 15)$:
 - $f1(x, y) = (x == 15 \ \&\& \ y == 15) ? 0 : 10$



Needle in the Haystack

- $f_2(x, y) = |x-15| + |y-15|$



(..later application in testing)

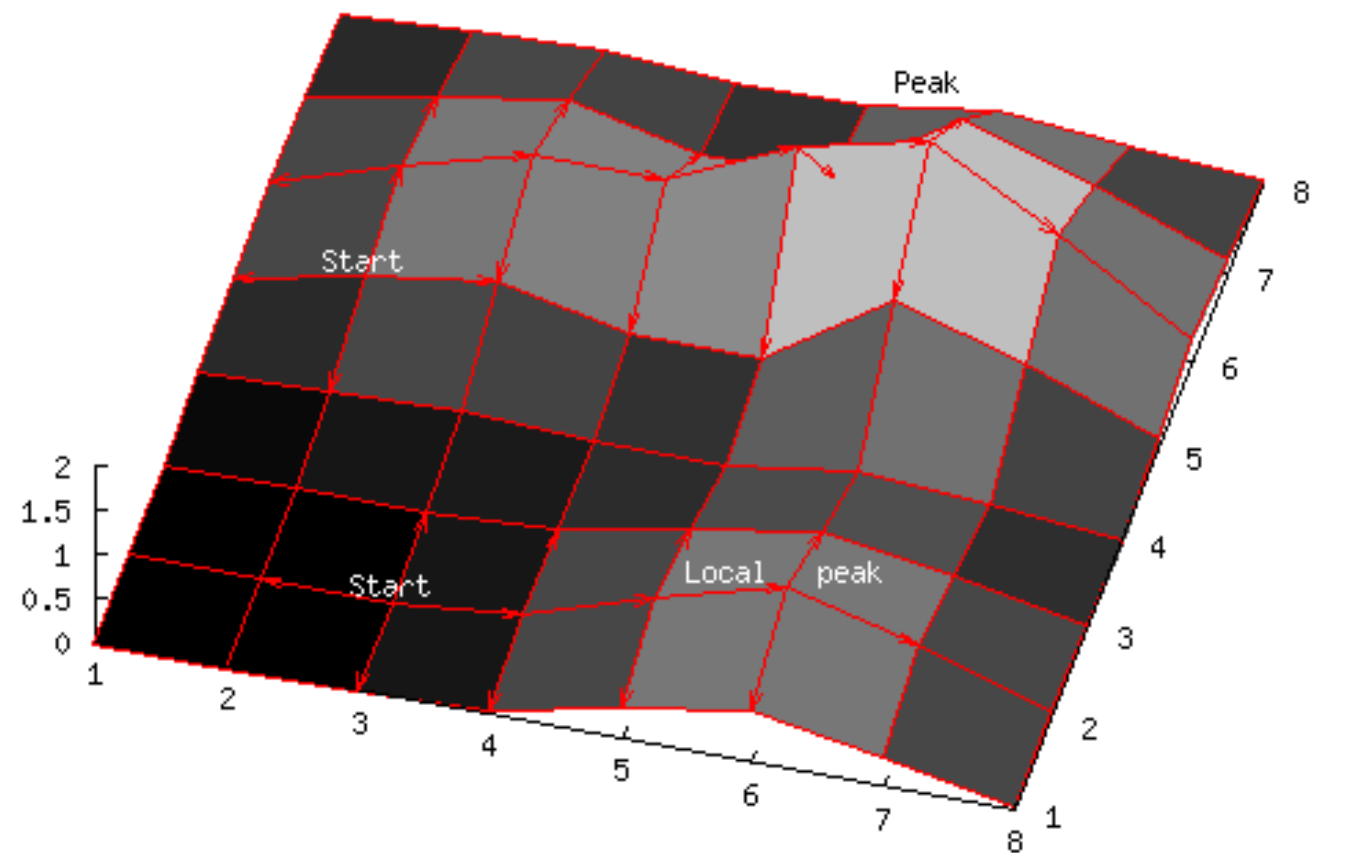
```
bool flag = (x == 42);  
...  
if(flag){  
    //do some computation  
    //that needs to be tested  
}
```

```
...  
if(x == 42){  
    //do some computation  
    //that needs to be tested  
}  
  
...  
if(|x - 42| == 0){  
    //do some computation  
    //that needs to be tested  
}
```

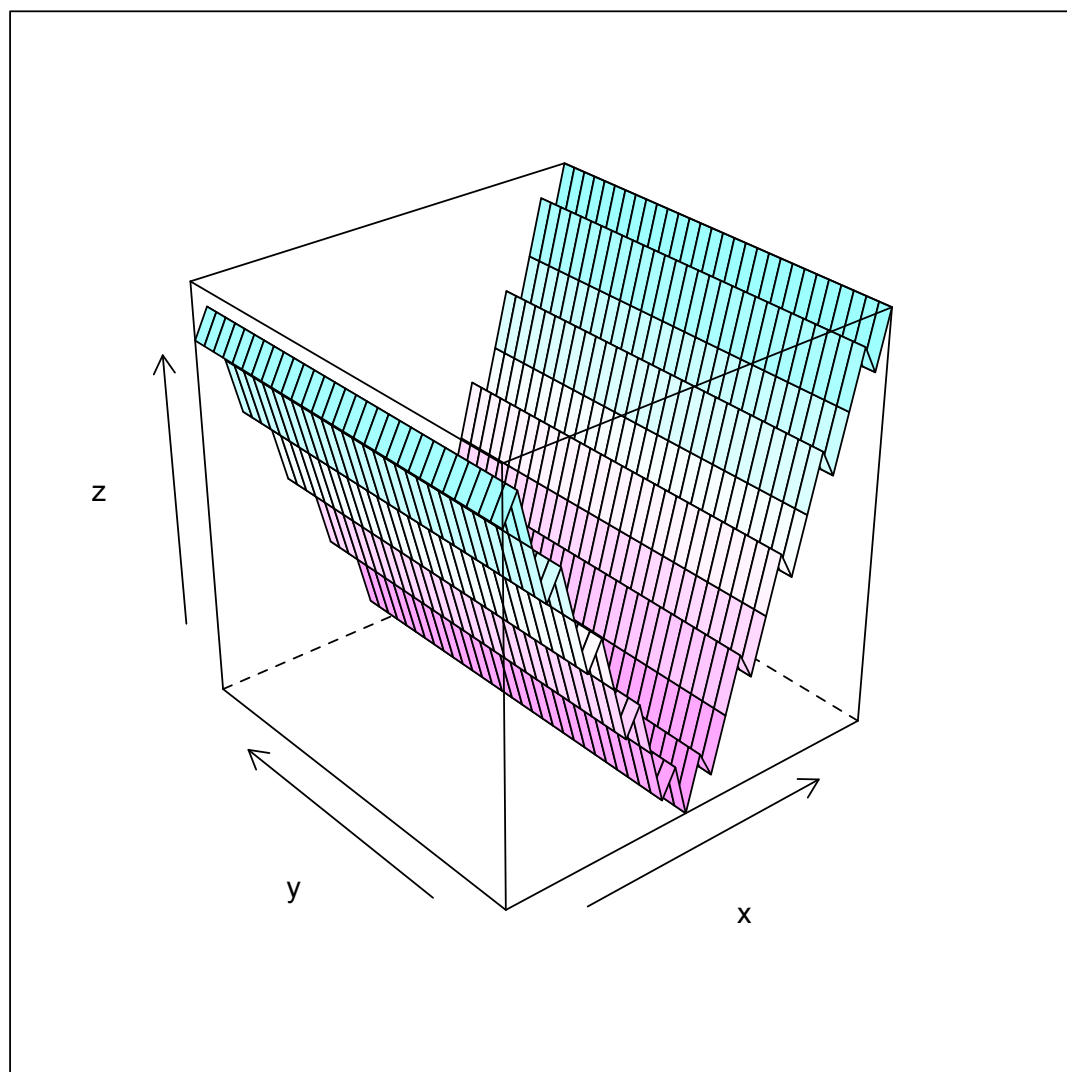
M. Harman, L. Hu, R. Hierons, J. Wegener, H. Sthamer, A. Baresel, and M. Roper. Testability trans- formation. IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering, 30(1):3–16, Jan. 2004.

Local vs. Global Optima

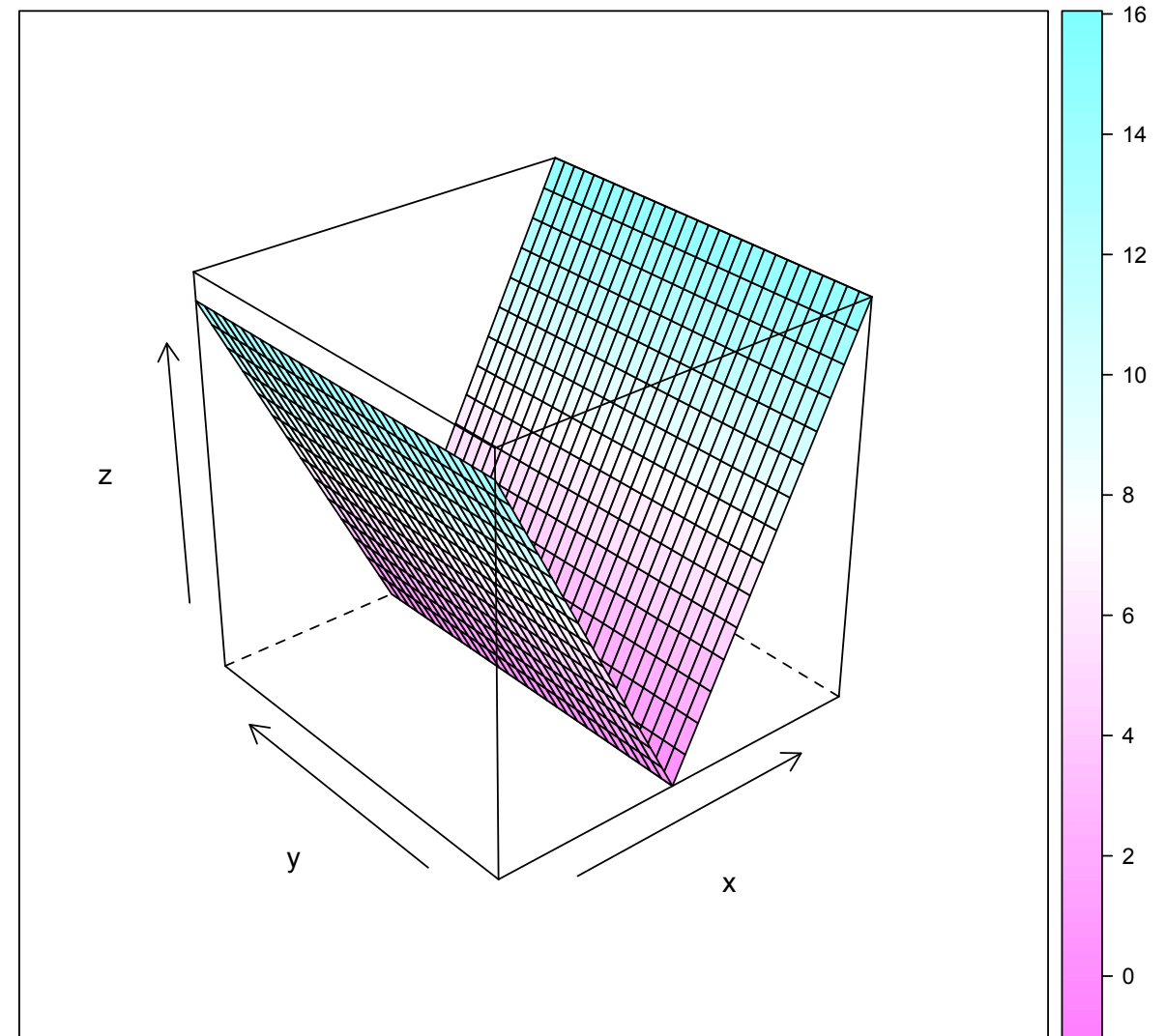
- Local optima: better fitness than any surrounding region, but not the best possible fitness
- Global optima: better fitness than any other point in the landscape



Ruggedness



Easy to get stuck
in one of many local optima



Smooth descent

Discrete Fitness Landscape

- In case of $(x, y) = (15, 15)$, it is (relatively) obvious what the neighbouring solutions are.
 - $(14, 15), (16, 15), (15, 14), (15, 16)$
 - $(16, 16), (14, 14), (16, 14), (14, 16)$
- What if we are searching for non-numeric solution?
 - Set membership (e.g. Do I include this requirement or not?, Do I execute this test case or not?)
 - Permutations (e.g. In which order should I execute this test suite?)
 - Highly structured data (e.g. To test this compiler, which program should I use as input?)