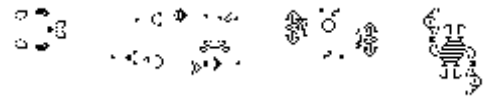# Life Pattern Catalog

Like the color of my skin,
Or the day that I grow old,
My life is made of patterns
That can scarcely be controlled.
-- Paul Simon

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Overview

The Game of Life is well known to almost anyone who has ever programmed a computer, yet far fewer realize the level of sophistication that has been achieved in the design of Life patterns over the past 25 years by a dedicated core of enthusiasts. The Game of Life has a rich mathematical structure that can only be appreciated fully by watching the intricate behavior that arises from such a simple set of rules. However, the patterns that exhibit such behavior must be designed carefully, as most Life patterns merely explode chaotically for a while and then stabilize. All the patterns in this catalog were carefully chosen by Alan Hensel from the vast array of results that have accumulated in the years since Conway first proposed the Game of Life. *Note: If your browser supports Java, then each selected pattern will invoke a Life applet automatically.*

Those readers familiar with published work on the Game of Life may be surprised at the developments that have occurred in recent years. A taste of this can be seen in the spacefiller pattern [max.lif](#), sure to astonish anybody with a "classical" intuition of how Life patterns are supposed to behave.

About the catalog

This catalog presents Life patterns in several different forms: as gif images, as Java animations for those browsers that support it, and as ascii text files in a format that many Life implementations can interpret and run. Patterns are cross-referenced whenever such cross-references could be derived from Alan Hensel's comments. Because these were generated automatically, a few are spurious, but fun to follow anyway; every pattern in this collection is worth a look. You may also [download](#) the complete archive, which is under 200k in zip-compressed form. Links to several Life implementations are given in the resource list found on the main Life page.

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