

# Nurturing an Open Source community is like tending a garden

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ASF member  
Pig, Parquet, Arrow, Marquez, OpenLineage, ...

# Is this the right analogy?

- You can't force plants to grow
- You can only create the space and plant the seeds
- You aren't in control of the environment, just your garden
- Gardens can get out of control really quickly if they aren't tended



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# Agenda

- What is Open Source?
- Why do I need to tend to my community?
- How to nurture.
- And it's all worth it!



# What is Open Source?



Site of the Reformers' Tree, Hyde Park, London  
By August Schwerdfeger - Own work, CC BY 4.0,  
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# Open Source comes in different shapes and sizes

- License
- Governance
- Foundations



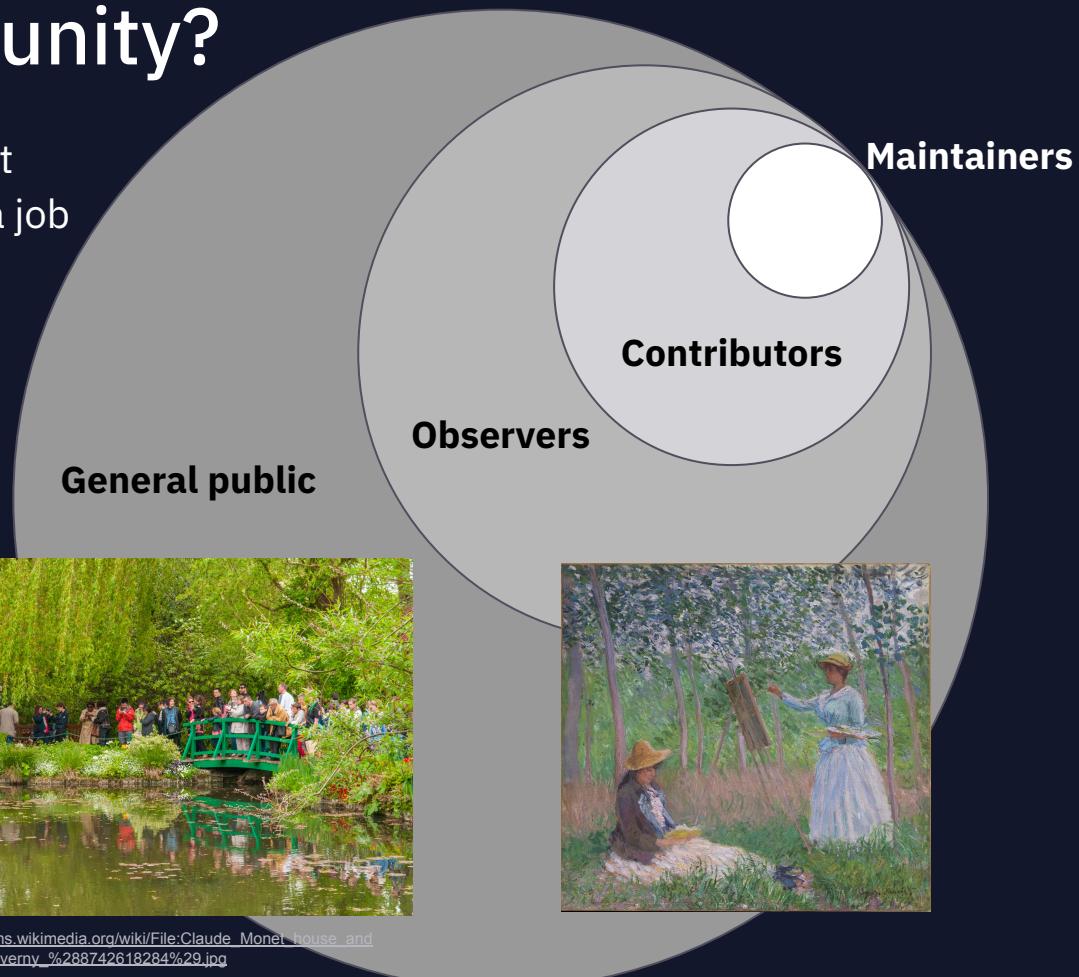
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# What makes a community?

- All community members are important
- Contributing or Maintaining might be a job
- What are maintainer roles?
  - Committer vs PMC



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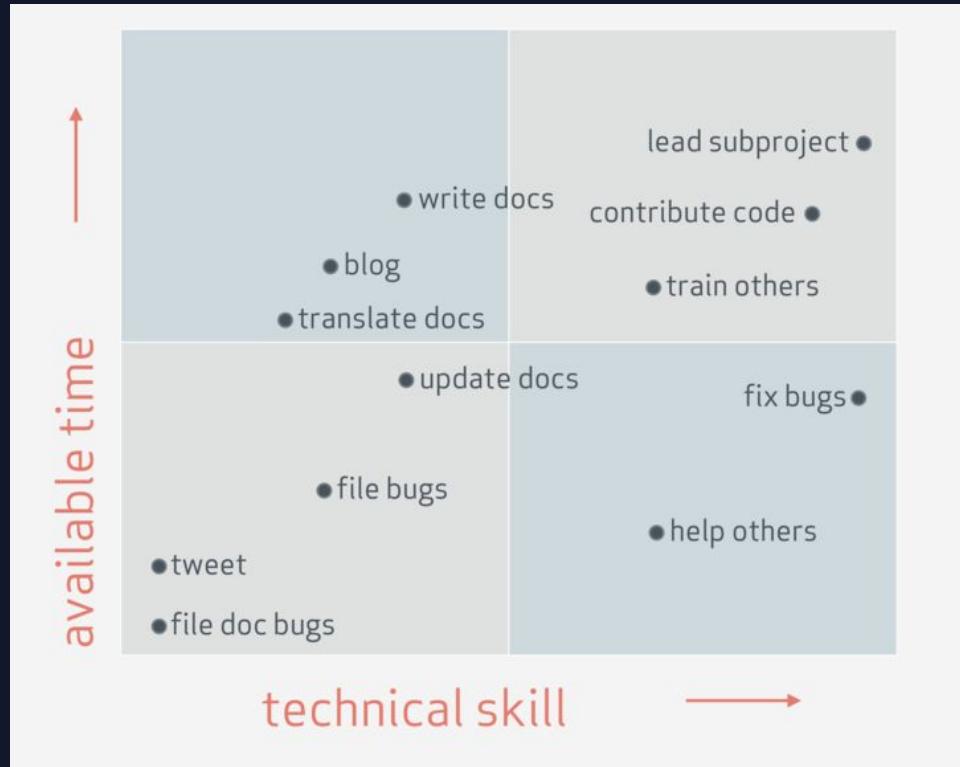


# What's a contribution?

- Asking or answering questions
- Bug reports
- Documentation
- Bug fixes
- Code contributions

From Ross Turk

<https://www.linkedin.com/feed/update/urn:li:activity:7099823227295686657/>



# Why do I need to tend to my community?



# Why does the community need caring for?

- Friction inherent in async global communication
- Lack of attention?
- Uncertainty: Is the energy I spend on the project worthwhile?



# Contributor's perspective

- Am I allowed to chime in?
  - Some people might show up with a PR
  - Some people need to be given permission
- How hard is it to get my first contribution in?



# Maintainer's perspective

- Overwhelming: The entire world can have input on this.
- Do I have the time to give attention to every contributor?



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<https://www.flickr.com/photos/argonne/17265401886>



# How to nurture



# Setting expectations

- Contributing:
  - What to do before submitting a PR?
  - How does a PR get merged?
  - What makes sense to contribute?
- Release cadence:
  - How often?
  - How does the decision of releasing happen?
- Governance:
  - How does one become or stop being a maintainer?



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# Reduce friction to contribution

- Tooling and processes:
  - Are weeds taking over?
  - Is your CI always green?
  - Is setting up a local environment easy?
  - Is your release process clear?
  - Do you have CODEOWNERS?



# Recognizing contributions



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# Reduce friction to use

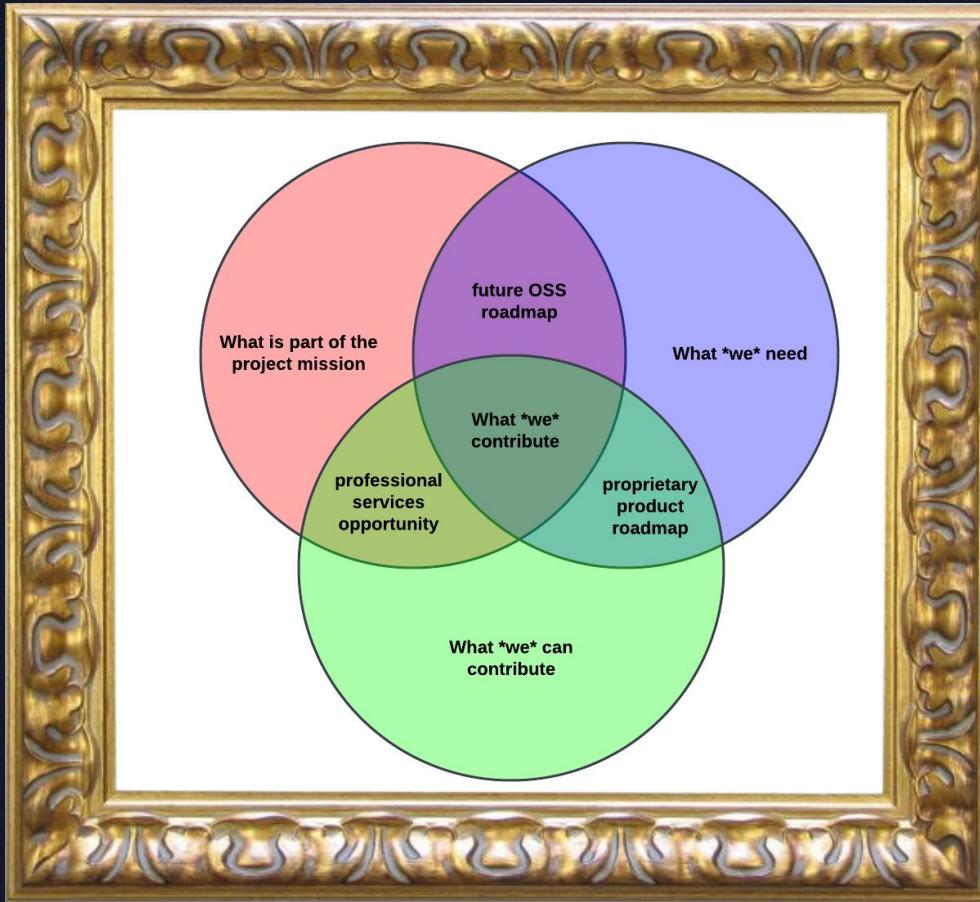
- Regular releases:
  - Monthly
  - Main always shippable
  - Allowing community to request releases
- Documentation



# Contributors become stakeholders



# What's an open source project road map?



# Community requires communication, building trust and connections

- **Async** communication is **necessary** in a distributed global community
- However async communication is **not the most natural** or efficient form of communication
- Synchronous communication excludes people in incompatible timezones
- In-person communication excludes people in different locations
- Spoken languages also get in the way



# Augmenting async communication by adding synchronicity

- Video conferencing helps getting remote people together.
- In-person meetups help forming connection
- Regular sync meetings:
  - Define agenda async or on the spot
  - Be accessible to the community (vary time for video calls, vary location for in person meetups, English as most spoken language)
  - Open to anyone
  - Publish notes and recordings for people who couldn't join
  - Follow up async



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First Lady Michelle Obama joins school children and chefs for the annual fall harvest of the White House Kitchen



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# And it's all worth it!



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