

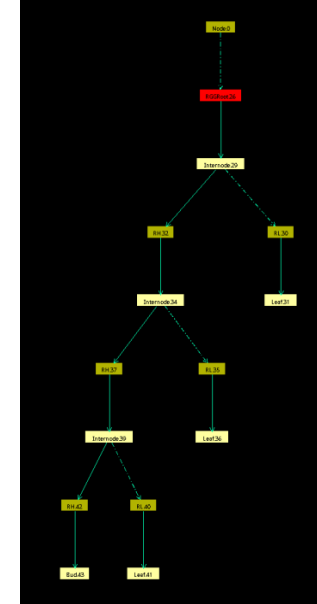
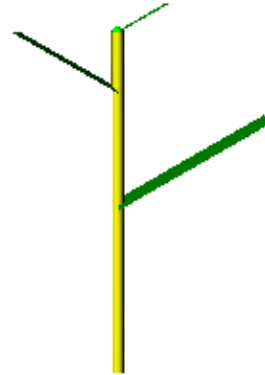
XL language: Queries & Co

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FSPM & GroIMP Workshop

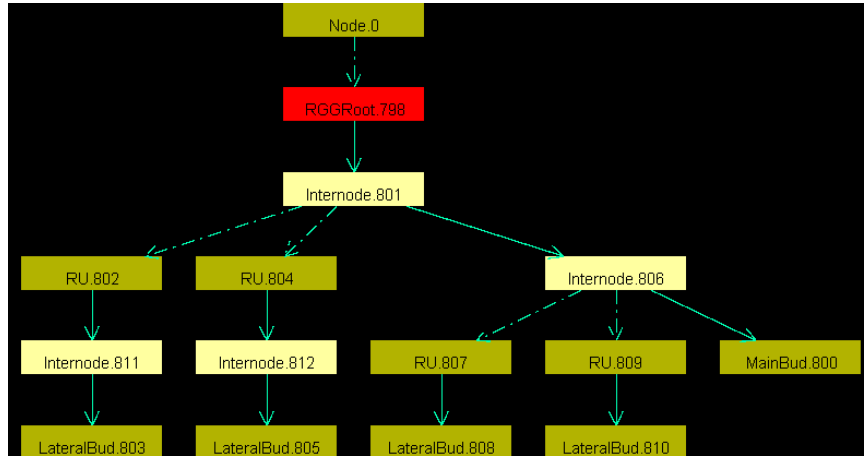
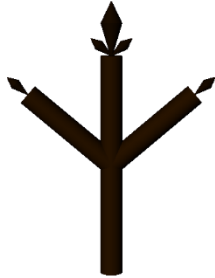
PMBDA 2025, Nanchang, China

November 1, 2025



Everything is represented as a graph...

- Plant structure described by a graph composed of **nodes** (plant organs), connected via **edges** (relations between organs)
- We can search for a specific pattern in the graph and collect information



Graph operators

- *Queries*
to search for a specific pattern
- *Aggregators*
to collect values
- Analyse *relations* between nodes

Find:

all leaves

total leaf area

stem length

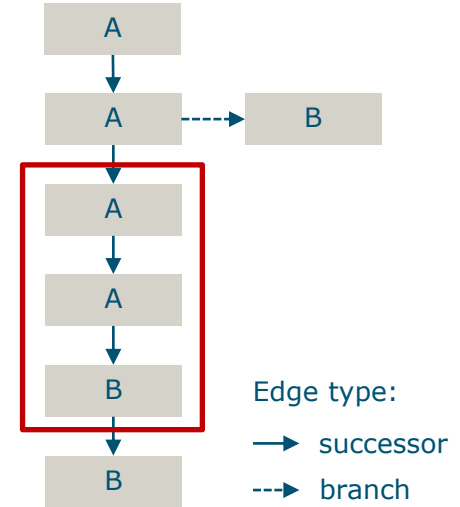
first internode below bud

etc.

Graph query

- *XL syntax:*
enclosed in asterisked parentheses **(* *)**
- The elements are given in their expected order, e.g.:
(* A A B *)
searches for a subgraph that consists of a sequence of nodes of the types **A A B**, connected by *successor* edges

([blank] – successor edge notation)



Query: Examples

- Find all nodes B, connected to A with a branch edge (+>)
- Find all internodes
- ... and print them out

A query can contain a condition

- Find all newly created leaves (with age 0)
- Search for all leaves with length > 0.05
- Find all pairs of F-s with distance < 1

```
(* A +> B *)
```

```
(* Internode *)
```

```
println((* Internode *));
```

```
(* l:Leaf, (l[age] == 0) *)
```

```
(* l:Leaf, (l[length] > 0.05) *)
```

```
(* f:F, g:F, ((f != g) && (distance(f, g) < 1)) *)
```

Aggregators

- Collect multiple values when traversing the graph and return one single value as a result
- Standard aggregate operations:

count, sum, empty, exist, forall, first, last, max, min, mean, selectRandomly, selectWhereMin, selectWhereMax, ...

- Applied to the results of a query:

count((* Leaf *))

Aggregators: Examples

- *Get stem length:*

Search for all internodes and sum up their lengths

- *Get total leaf area:*

Search for all leaves and sum up their surface areas

- *Get total absorbed light by a plant:*

Search for all leaves and sum up the amount of light they absorbed

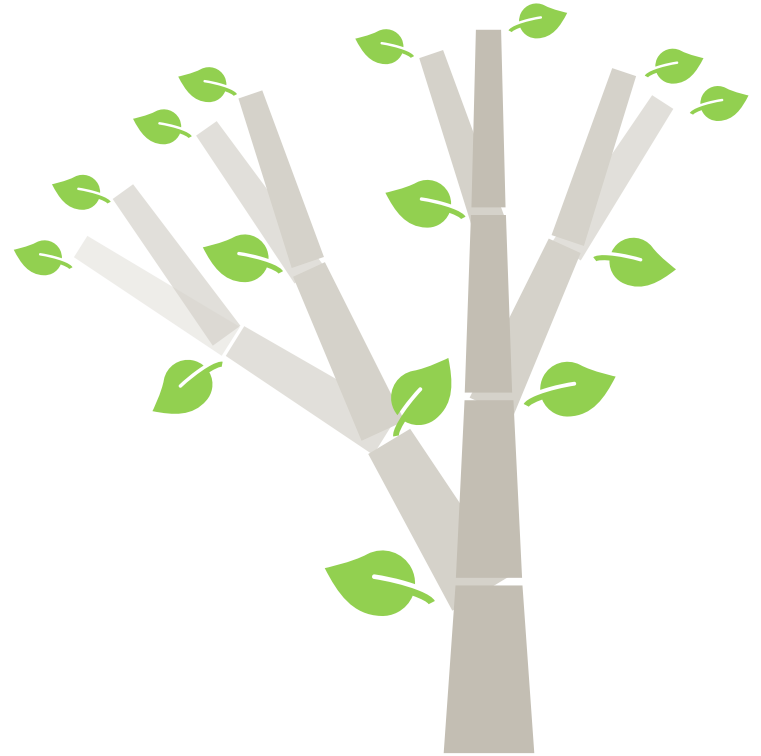
```
sum((* Internode *)[length])
```

```
sum((* Leaf *)[area]) I
```

```
sum((* Leaf *)[absLight]);
```

Aggregators: More examples

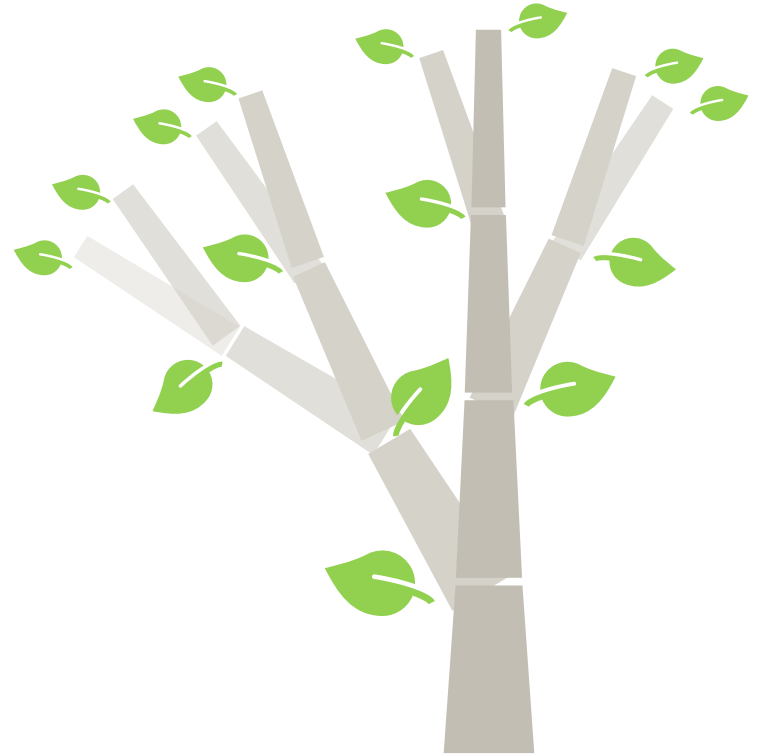
```
selectRandomly((* F *))  
selectWhereMax((* f:F *), (f[diameter]))  
first((* l:Leaf, (l[order] == 1 && l[rank] == 1) *))
```



Aggregators: More examples



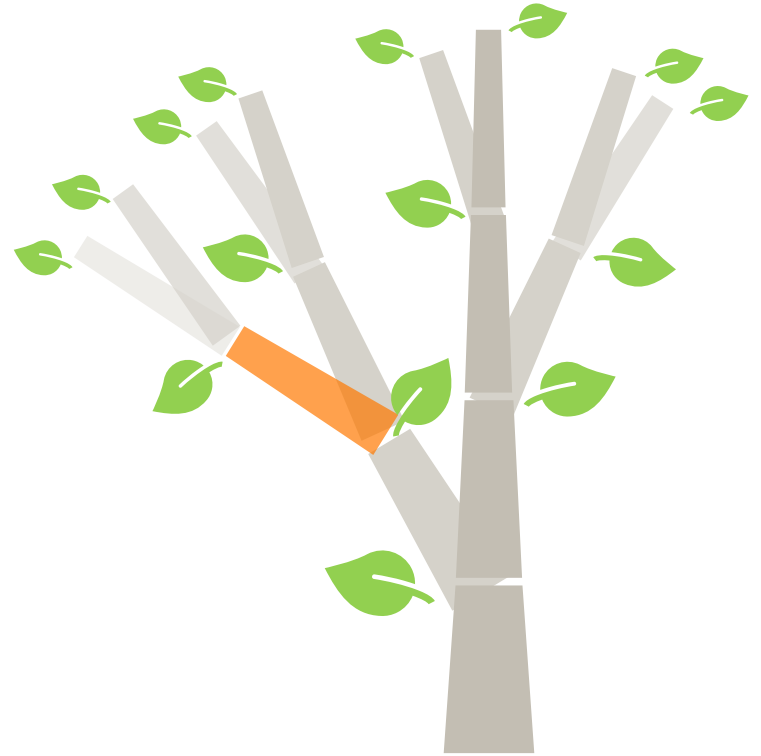
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Aggregators: More examples



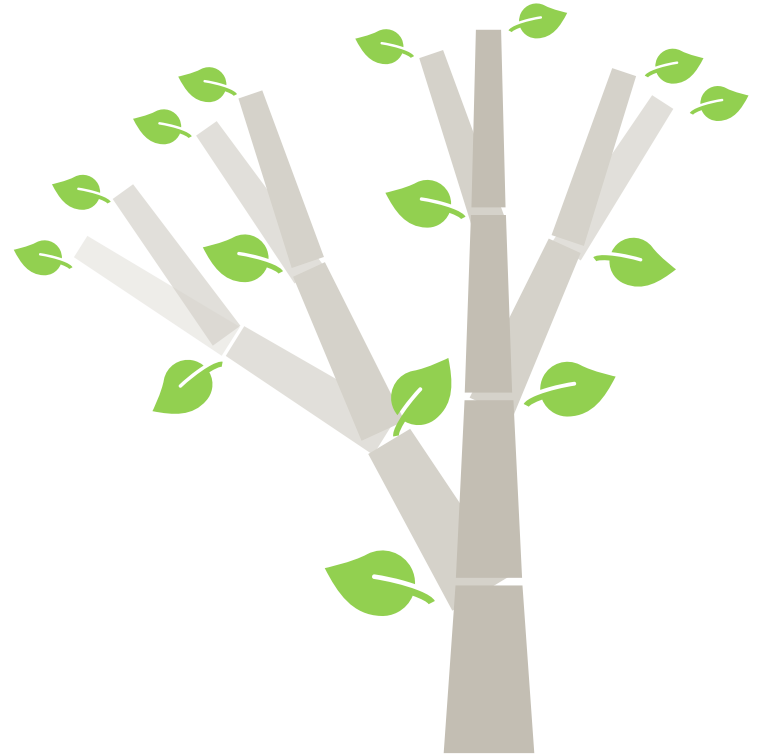
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Aggregators: More examples



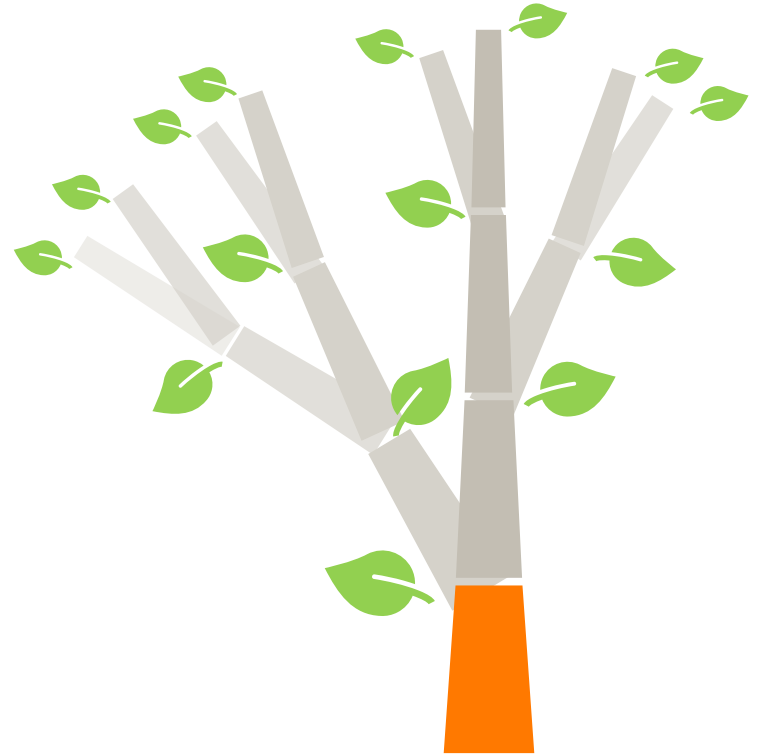
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Aggregators: More examples



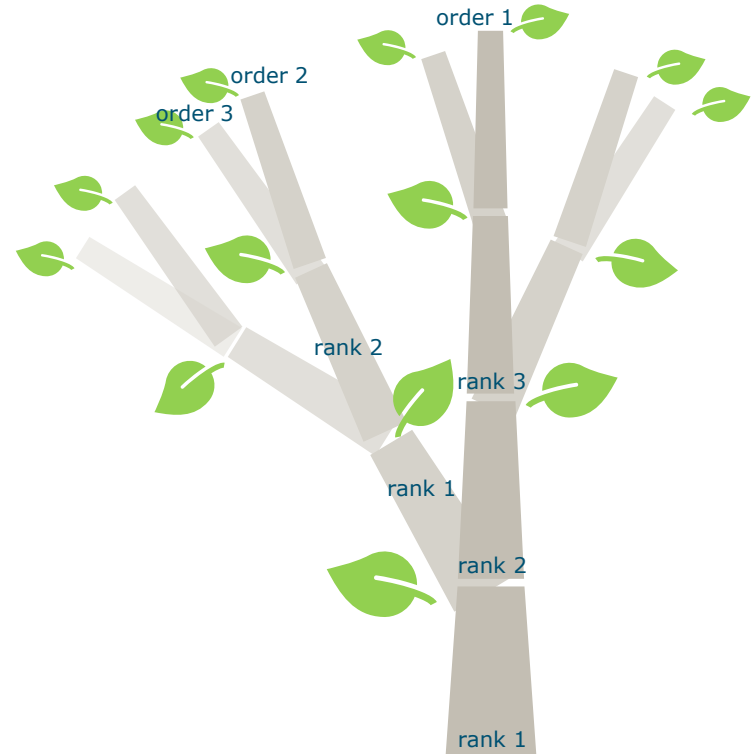
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```



Aggregators: More examples

selectRandomly((* F *))
selectWhereMax((* f:F *), (f[diameter]))
first((* l:Leaf, (l[order] == 1 && l[rack] == 1) *))

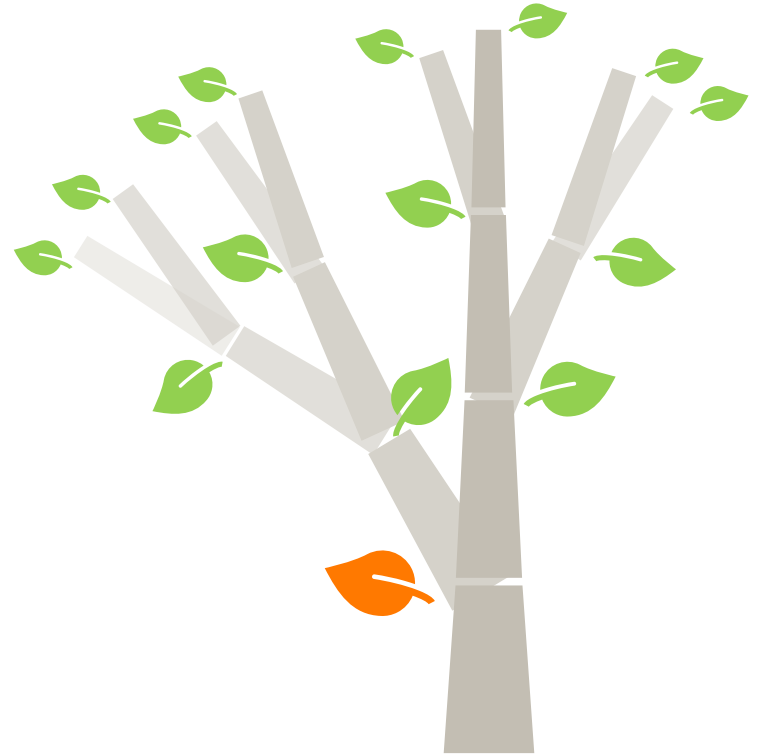
(order refers to branching order; main stem has order 1;
each branch has one order higher;
rank refers to organ number within a branch)



Aggregators: More examples

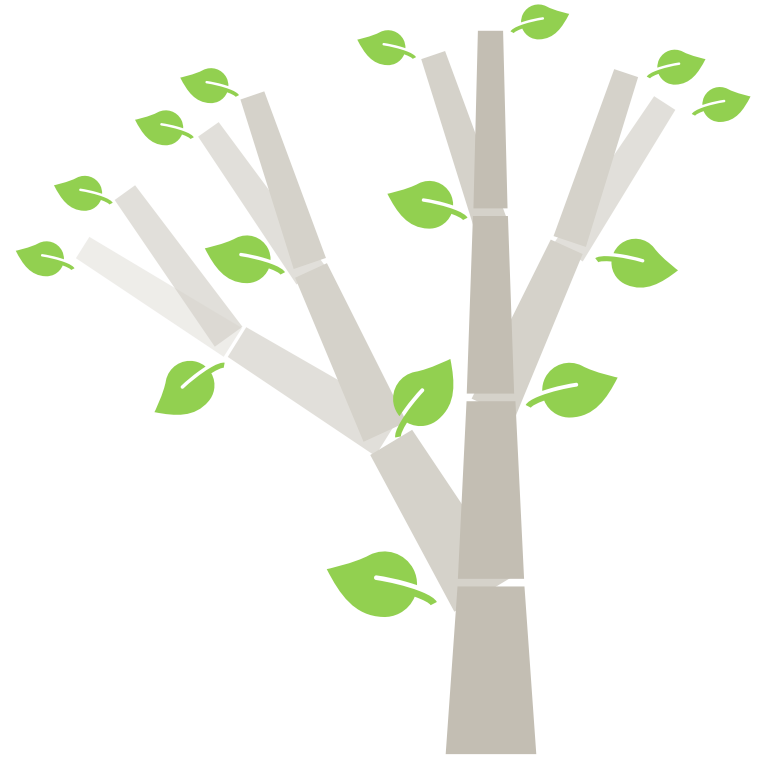


```
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selectWhereMax((* f:F *), (f[diameter]))  
first((* l:Leaf, (l[order] == 1 && l[rank] == 1) *))
```



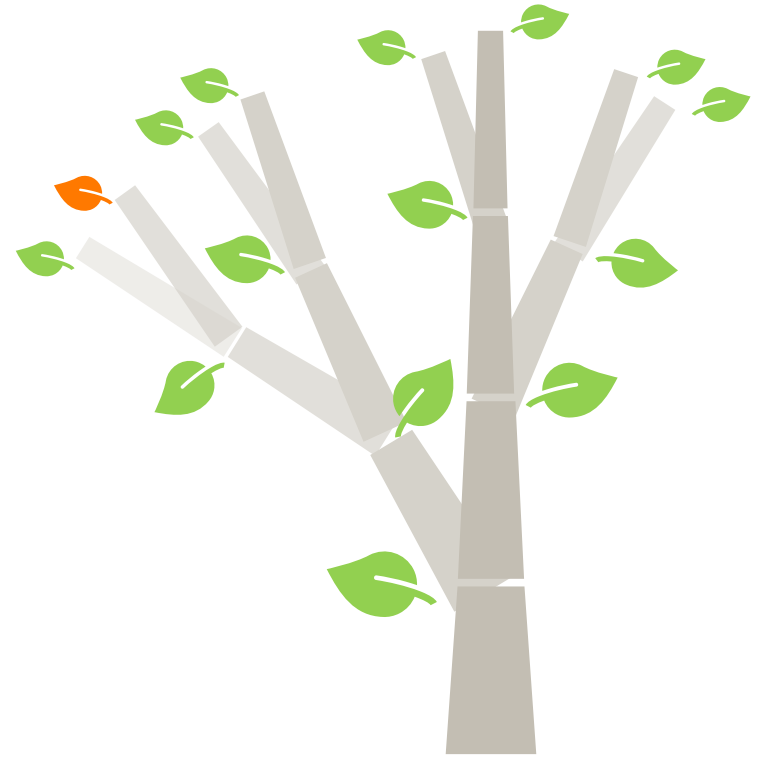
Aggregators: More examples

selectRandomly((* F *))
selectWhereMax((* f:F *), (f[diameter]))
first((* l:Leaf, (l[order] == 3 && l[rank] == 2) *))



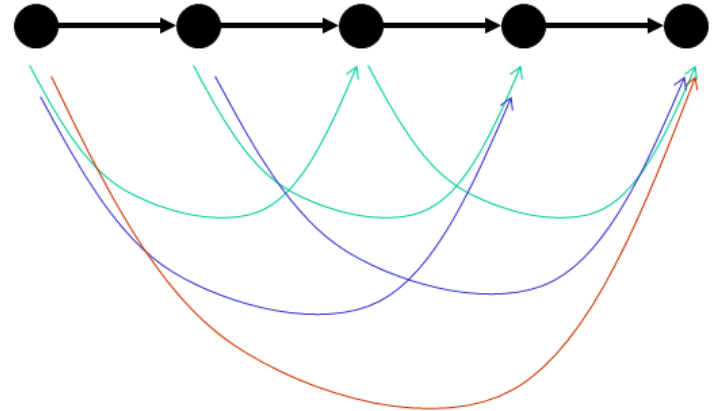
Aggregators: More examples

selectRandomly((* F *))
selectWhereMax((* f:F *), (f[diameter]))
first((* l:Leaf, (l[order] == 3 && l[rank] == 2) *))



Derived relations

- Relation between nodes connected by several edges (one after the other) of the same type
- *Example:*
find *all descendants* of some given node that are of type *Internode*
- “*Transitive closure*” of the original relation (iteration of edges)



XL syntax for the transitive closure

- 1-to-n repetitions: +

A (-edgetype->)+ B

- 0-to-n repetitions: *

A (-edgetype->)* B

- Minimal elements
(stop searching once a match has been found):

A (-edgetype->)+ :(B)

A (-edgetype->)* :(B)

- Examples:*

Find **all** the internodes connected to the bud

```
(* Bud (<--)+ Internode *)
```

Find **the first** internode connected to the bud

```
(* Bud (<--)+ :(Internode) *)
```

Edge types

r = relation

■ Edge notation:

Arbitrary	-->	
Successor	(blank)	or > or -successor->
Branch	+>	or [or -branch->
Decomposition	/>	
User-defined	-r->	

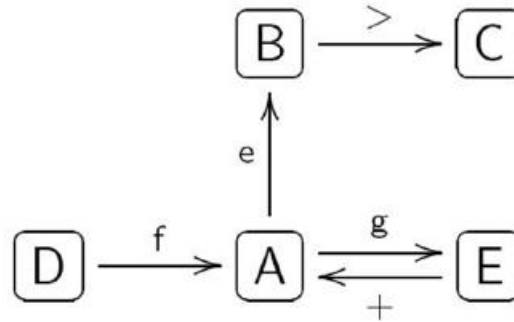
■ Edge direction:

Forward	-r->
Backward	<-r-
Forward or backward	-r-
Forward and backward	<-r->

Graphs in XL

successor: > or (blank)

branch: + or []

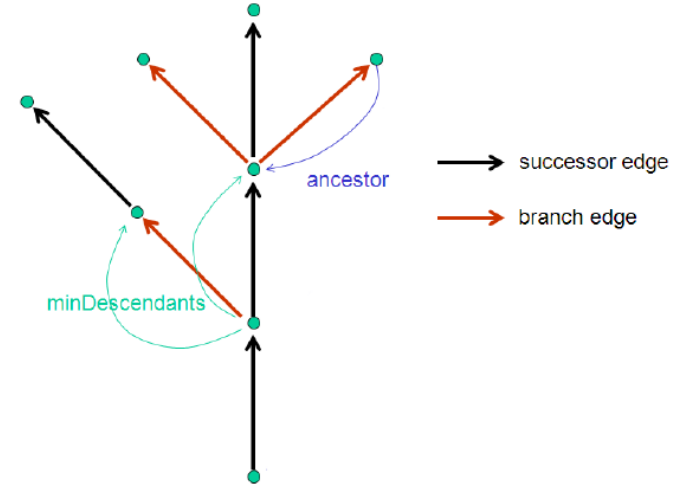


a:A [-e-> B C] [<-f- D] -g-> E [a]

multiple representations possible!

Some predefined relations

- *ancestor*
nearest preceding node of a certain node type
- *minDescendants*
nearest successors of a certain node type
(nodes of other types are skipped)
- *descendants*
all successors of a certain node type

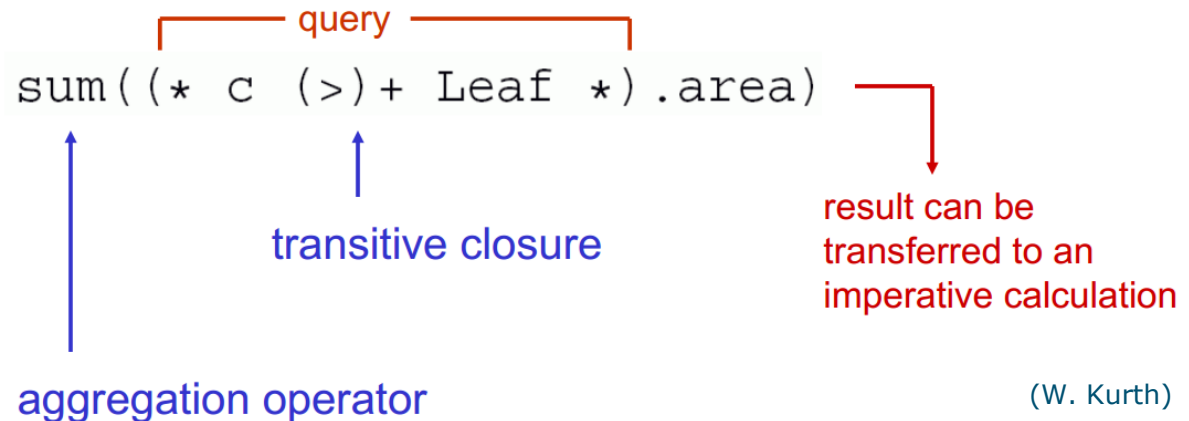


Syntax:

-ancestor->
-descendants->
-minDescendants->

Summary – Graph operations

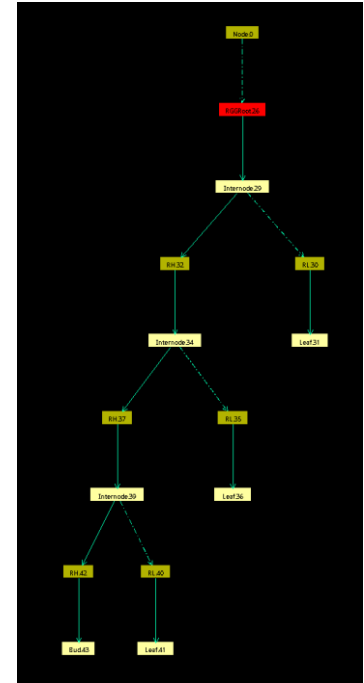
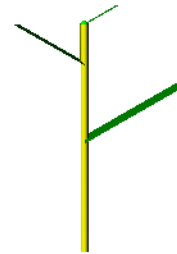
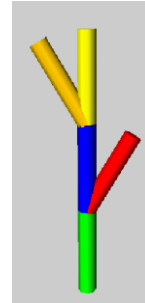
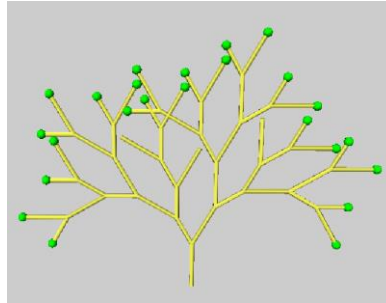
- Provide possibilities to connect structure and function
- *Example:*
search for all leaves that are successors of node c and sum up their surface areas

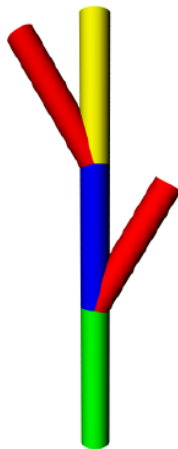


(W. Kurth)

Examples

- Tutorial:
["tutorials:xl-queries-and-operators \[GroIMP wiki\]"](#)
- Further examples:
`binaryTree_distance.gsz`
`nodeRelations.gsz`





```
// all modules extend the module Internode
Axiom ==>
    InternodeFirst [RU(30) BranchFirst]
    InternodeSecond [RU(-30) BranchSecond]
    InternodeThird
;
// queries and their outputs:
(* InternodeFirst -minDescendants-> Internode *)
    BranchFirst
    InternodeSecond

(* InternodeFirst -descendants-> Internode *)
    InternodeSecond
    InternodeThird
    BranchSecond
    BranchFirst

(* InternodeThird -ancestor-> Internode *)
    InternodeSecond

(* InternodeThird (-ancestor->)+ Internode *)
    InternodeSecond
    InternodeFirst
```



wiki.grogra.de



fspm.discourse.group

