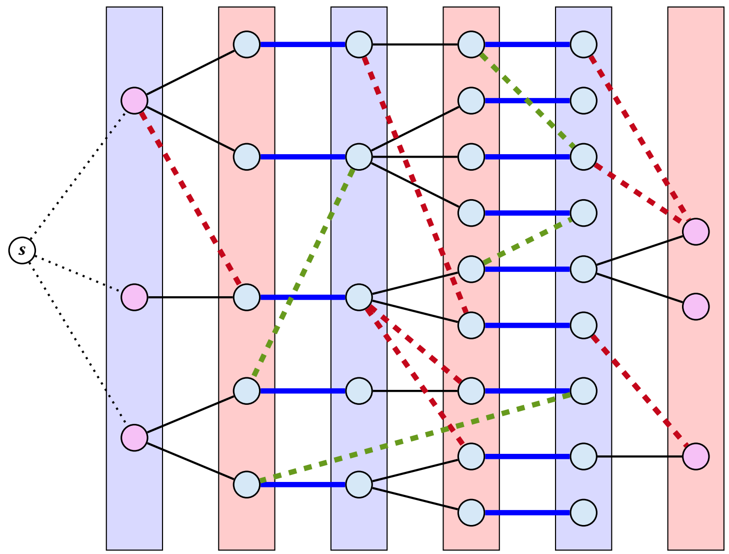
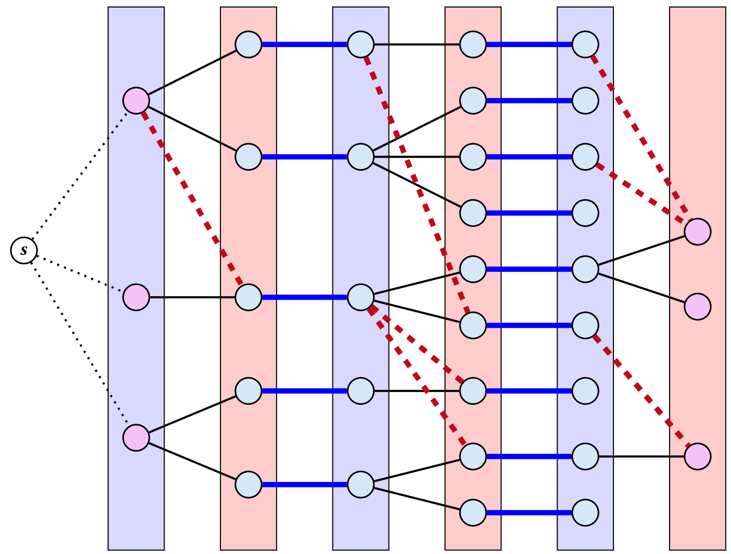
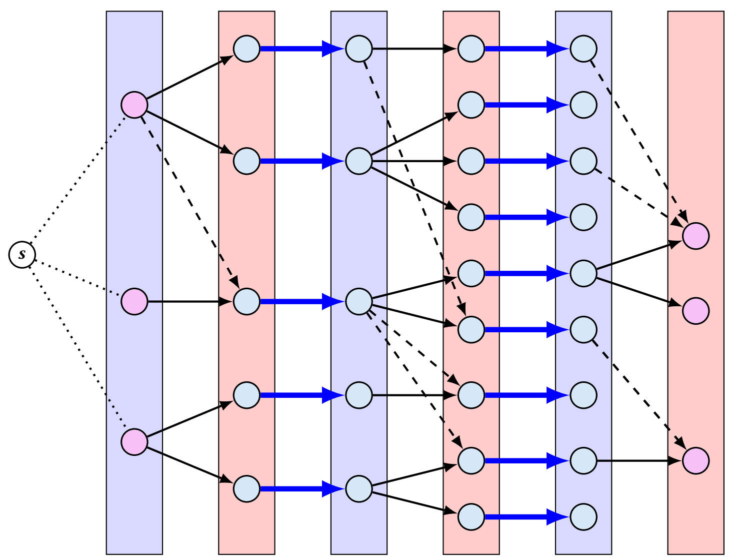


This fixes length of shortest alternating path; every shortest alternating path must visit layers from left to right (green edges are not helpful)



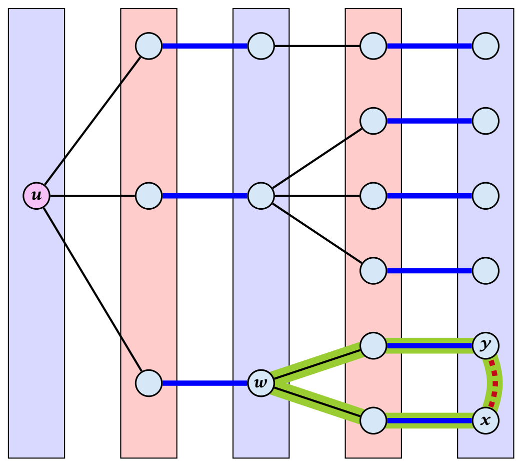
Delete green edges and direct remaining edges from left to right;



Every shortest alternating path is a path in this graph from a left free vertex to a right free vertex; find a maximal vertex disjoint set of path by a modified DFS

How to find an augmenting path?

Construct an alternating tree.



even nodes
odd nodes

Case 4:
y is already contained in T as an even vertex

can't ignore y

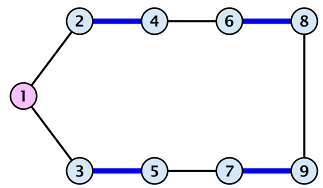
The cycle $w \leftrightarrow y - x \leftrightarrow w$ is called a blossom.
w is called the base of the blossom (even node!!!).
The path u-w path is called the stem of the blossom.

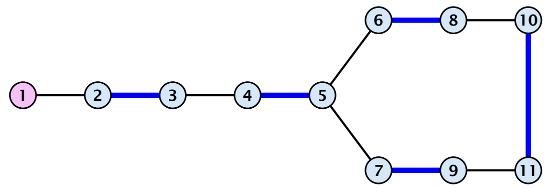
Flowers and Blossoms

Definition 9
A flower in a graph $G = (V, E)$ w.r.t. a matching M and a (free) root node r, is a subgraph with two components:

- A stem is an even length alternating path that starts at the root node r and terminates at some node w. We permit the possibility that $r = w$ (empty stem).
- A blossom is an odd length alternating cycle that starts and terminates at the terminal node w of a stem and has no other node in common with the stem. w is called the base of the blossom.

Flowers and Blossoms





Flowers and Blossoms

Properties:

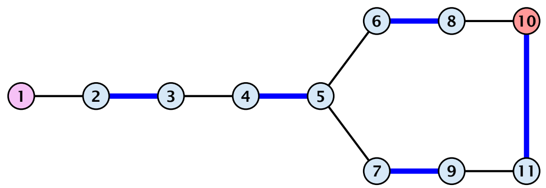
1. A stem spans $2\ell + 1$ nodes and contains ℓ matched edges for some integer $\ell \geq 0$.
2. A blossom spans $2k + 1$ nodes and contains k matched edges for some integer $k \geq 1$. The matched edges match all nodes of the blossom except the base.
3. The base of a blossom is an even node (if the stem is part of an alternating tree starting at r).

Flowers and Blossoms

Properties:

4. Every node x in the blossom (except its base) is reachable from the root (or from the base of the blossom) through two distinct alternating paths; one with even and one with odd length.
5. The even alternating path to x terminates with a matched edge and the odd path with an unmatched edge.

Flowers and Blossoms



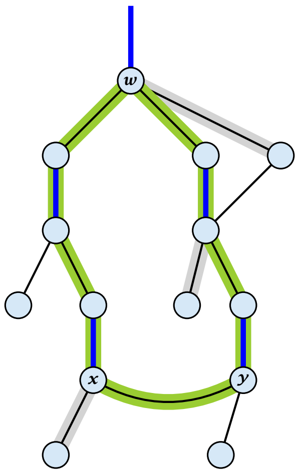
Shrinking Blossoms

When during the alternating tree construction we discover a blossom B we replace the graph G by $G' = G/B$, which is obtained from G by contracting the blossom B.

- Delete all vertices in B (and its incident edges) from G.
- Add a new (pseudo-)vertex b. The new vertex b is connected to all vertices in $V \setminus B$ that had at least one edge to a vertex from B.

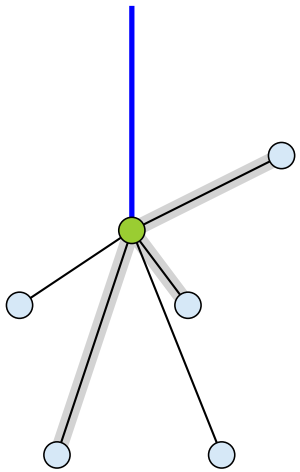
Shrinking Blossoms

- Edges of T that connect a node u not in B to a node in B become tree edges in T' connecting u to b.
- Matching edges (there is at most one) that connect a node u not in B to a node in B become matching edges in M'.
- Nodes that are connected in G to at least one node in B become connected to b in G'.



Shrinking Blossoms

- Edges of T that connect a node u not in B to a node in B become tree edges in T' connecting u to b.
- Matching edges (there is at most one) that connect a node u not in B to a node in B become matching edges in M'.
- Nodes that are connected in G to at least one node in B become connected to b in G'.



Example: Blossom Algorithm

Animation of Blossom Shrinking algorithm is only available in the lecture version of the slides.

Correctness

Assume that in G we have a flower w.r.t. matching M. Let r be the root, B the blossom, and w the base. Let graph $G' = G/B$ with pseudonode b. Let M' be the matching in the contracted graph.

Lemma 10
If G' contains an augmenting path P' starting at r (or the pseudo-node containing r) w.r.t. the matching M' then G contains an augmenting path starting at r w.r.t. matching M.

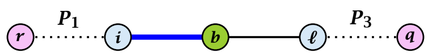
Correctness

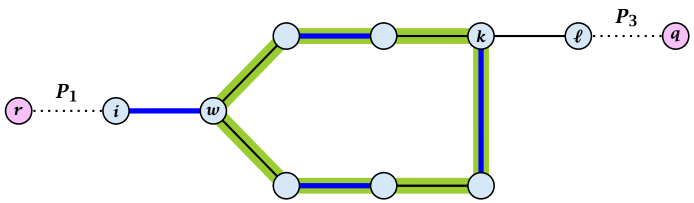
Proof.

If P' does not contain b it is also an augmenting path in G.

Case 1: non-empty stem

- Next suppose that the stem is non-empty.





Correctness

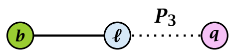
- After the expansion ℓ must be incident to some node in the blossom. Let this node be k.
- If $k \neq w$ there is an alternating path P_2 from w to k that ends in a matching edge.
- $P_1 \circ (i, w) \circ P_2 \circ (k, \ell) \circ P_3$ is an alternating path.
- If $k = w$ then $P_1 \circ (i, w) \circ (w, \ell) \circ P_3$ is an alternating path.

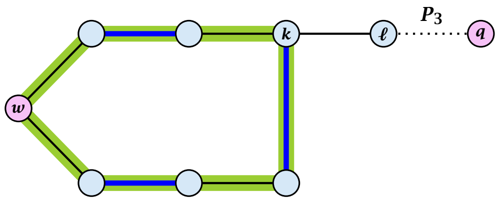
Correctness

Proof.

Case 2: empty stem

- If the stem is empty then after expanding the blossom, $w = r$.





- The path $r \circ P_2 \circ (k, \ell) \circ P_3$ is an alternating path.

Correctness

Lemma 11

If G contains an augmenting path P from r to q w.r.t. matching M then G' contains an augmenting path from r (or the pseudo-node containing r) to q w.r.t. M'.

Correctness

Proof.

- If P does not contain a node from B there is nothing to prove.
- We can assume that r and q are the only free nodes in G.

Case 1: empty stem

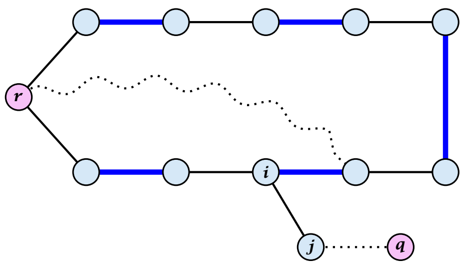
Let i be the last node on the path P that is part of the blossom.

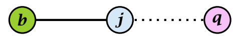
P is of the form $P_1 \circ (i, j) \circ P_2$, for some node j and (i, j) is unmatched.

$(b, j) \circ P_2$ is an augmenting path in the contracted network.

Correctness

Illustration for Case 1:





Correctness

Case 2: non-empty stem

Let P_3 be alternating path from r to w; this exists because r and w are root and base of a blossom. Define $M_+ = M \oplus P_3$.

In M_+, r is matched and w is unmatched.

G must contain an augmenting path w.r.t. matching M_+, since M and M_+ have same cardinality.

This path must go between w and q as these are the only unmatched vertices w.r.t. M_+.

For M'_+ the blossom has an empty stem. Case 1 applies.

G' has an augmenting path w.r.t. M'_+. It must also have an augmenting path w.r.t. M', as both matchings have the same cardinality.

This path must go between r and q.

Algorithm 54 search(r, found)

- set $\bar{A}(i) \leftarrow A(i)$ for all nodes i
- $\mathit{found} \leftarrow$ false
- unlabel all nodes;
- give an even label to r and initialize $\mathit{list} \leftarrow \{r\}$
- **while** $\mathit{list} \neq \emptyset$ **do**
  - delete a node i from list
  - examine(i, found)
  - **if** $\mathit{found} =$ true **then return**

Search for an augmenting path starting at r.

The lecture version of the slides has a step by step explanation.

Algorithm 55 examine(i, found)

- **for** all $j \in \bar{A}(i)$ **do**
  - **if** j is even **then** contract(i, j) and **return**
  - **if** j is unmatched **then**
    - $q \leftarrow j$;
    - $\mathrm{pred}(q) \leftarrow i$;
    - $\mathit{found} \leftarrow$ true;
    - **return**
  - **if** j is matched and unlabeled **then**
    - $\mathrm{pred}(j) \leftarrow i$;
    - $\mathrm{pred}(\mathrm{mate}(j)) \leftarrow j$;
    - add $\mathrm{mate}(j)$ to list

Examine the neighbours of a node i

The lecture version of the slides has a step by step explanation.

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

- trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
- create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
- label b even and add to list
- update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
- form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
- delete nodes in B from the graph

Contract blossom identified by nodes i and j

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
label b even and add to *list*
update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
delete nodes in B from the graph

Get all nodes of the blossom.

Time: $\mathcal{O}(m)$

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
label b even and add to *list*
update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
delete nodes in B from the graph

Identify all neighbours of b.

Time: $\mathcal{O}(m)$ (how?)

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
label b even and add to *list*
update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
delete nodes in B from the graph

b will be an even node, and it has unexamined neighbours.

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
label b even and add to *list*
update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
delete nodes in B from the graph

Every node that was adjacent to a node in B is now adjacent to b

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

1: trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
2: create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
3: label b even and add to *list*
4: update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
5: form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
6: delete nodes in B from the graph

Only for making a blossom expansion easier.

Algorithm 56 contract(i, j)

1: trace pred-indices of i and j to identify a blossom B
2: create new node b and set $\bar{A}(b) \leftarrow \cup_{x \in B} \bar{A}(x)$
3: label b even and add to *list*
4: update $\bar{A}(j) \leftarrow \bar{A}(j) \cup \{b\}$ for each $j \in \bar{A}(b)$
5: form a circular double linked list of nodes in B
6: delete nodes in B from the graph

Only delete links from nodes not in B to B.

When expanding the blossom again we can recreate these links in time $\mathcal{O}(m)$.

Analysis

- A contraction operation can be performed in time $\mathcal{O}(m)$. Note, that any graph created will have at most m edges.
- The time between two contraction-operation is basically a BFS/DFS on a graph. Hence takes time $\mathcal{O}(m)$.
- There are at most n contractions as each contraction reduces the number of vertices.
- The expansion can trivially be done in the same time as needed for all contractions.
- An augmentation requires time $\mathcal{O}(n)$. There are at most n of them.
- In total the running time is at most

$$n \cdot (\mathcal{O}(mn) + \mathcal{O}(n)) = \mathcal{O}(mn^2) \ .$$

Example: Blossom Algorithm

Animation of Blossom Shrinking algorithm is only available in the lecture version of the slides.