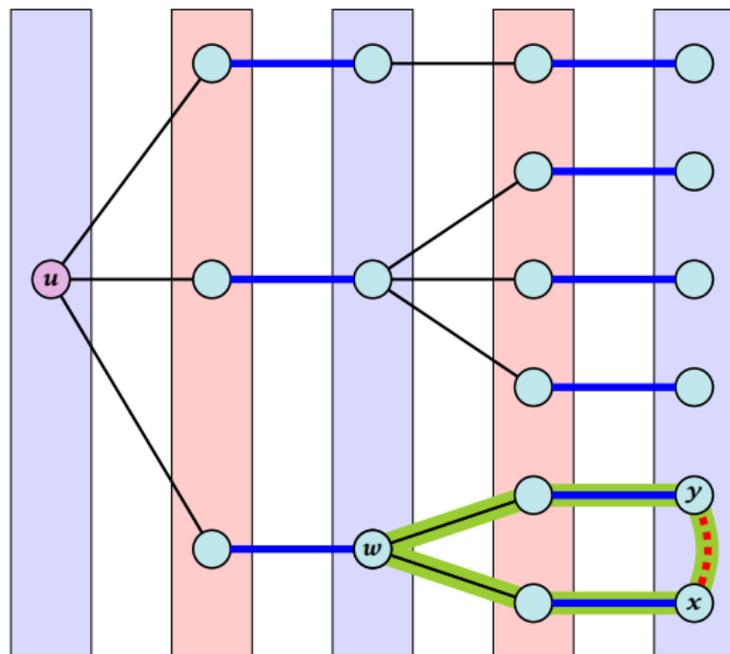


How to find an augmenting path?

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.

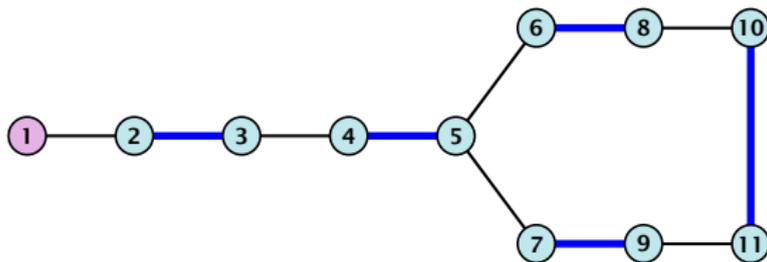
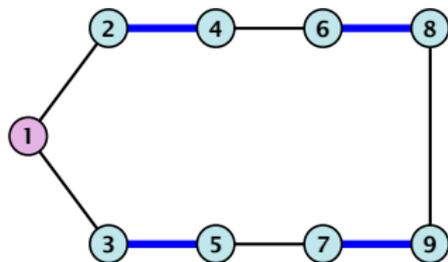
Flowers and Blossoms

Definition 103

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:

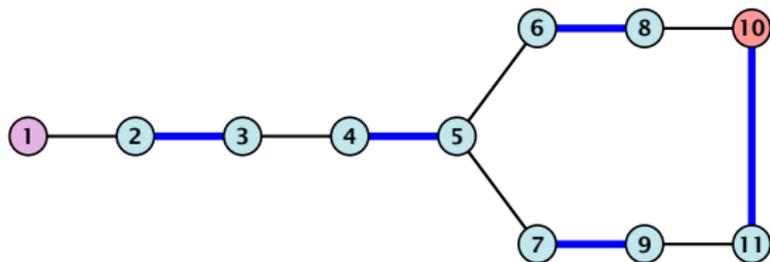
1. A stem spans $2\ell + 1$ nodes and contains ℓ matched edges for some integer $\ell \geq 0$.
2. A blossom spans $2k + 1$ nodes and contains k matched edges for some integer $k \geq 1$. The matched edges match all nodes of the blossom except the base.
3. The base of a blossom is an even node (if the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

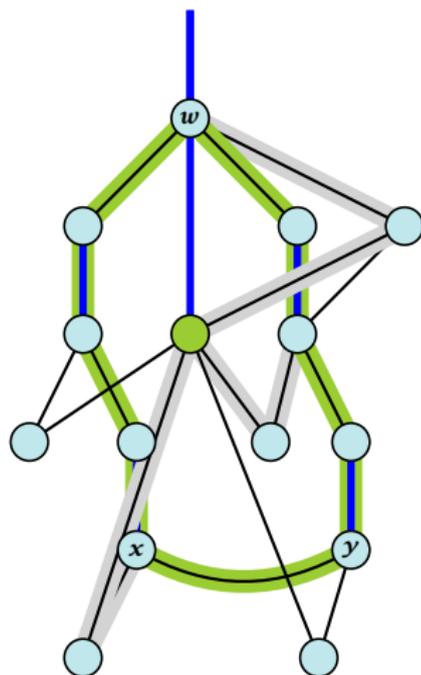


When during the alternating tree construction we discover a blossom B we replace the graph G by $G' = G/B$, which is obtained from G by contracting the blossom B .

- ▶ 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' .



Algorithm 55 $\text{search}(r, \text{found})$

- 1: set $\bar{A}(i) \leftarrow A(i)$ for all nodes i
- 2: $\text{found} \leftarrow \text{false}$
- 3: unlabel all nodes;
- 4: give an even label to r and initialize $\text{list} \leftarrow \{r\}$
- 5: **while** $\text{list} \neq \emptyset$ **do**
- 6: delete a node i from list
- 7: examine(i, found)
- 8: **if** $\text{found} = \text{true}$ **then**
- 9: **return**

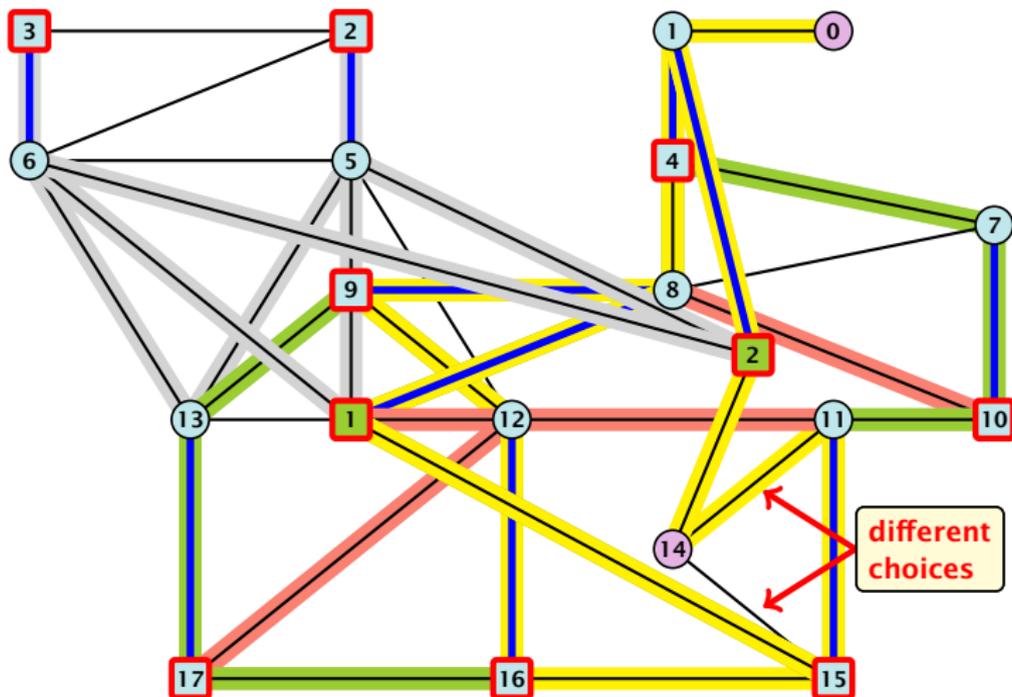
Algorithm 56 $\text{examine}(i, \text{found})$

```
1: for all  $j \in \bar{A}(i)$  do  
2:   if  $j$  is even then  $\text{contract}(i, j)$  and return  
3:   if  $j$  is unmatched then  
4:      $q \leftarrow j$ ;  
5:      $\text{pred}(q) \leftarrow i$ ;  
6:      $\text{found} \leftarrow \text{true}$ ;  
7:     return  
8:   if  $j$  is matched and unlabeled then  
9:      $\text{pred}(j) \leftarrow i$ ;  
10:     $\text{pred}(\text{mate}(j)) \leftarrow j$ ;
```

Algorithm 57 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 doubly linked list of nodes in B
- 6: delete nodes in B from the graph

Example: Blossom Algorithm



Assume that we have contracted a blossom B w.r.t. a matching M whose base is w . We created graph $G' = G/B$ with pseudonode b . Let M' be the matching in the contracted graph.

Lemma 104

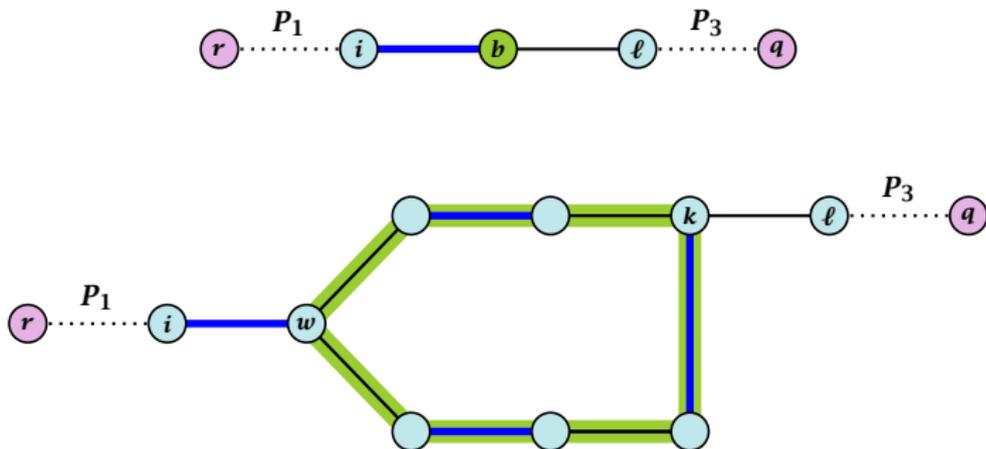
If G' contains an augmenting path p' starting at r (or the pseudo-node containing r) w.r.t. to the matching M' then G contains an augmenting path starting at r w.r.t. matching M .

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.

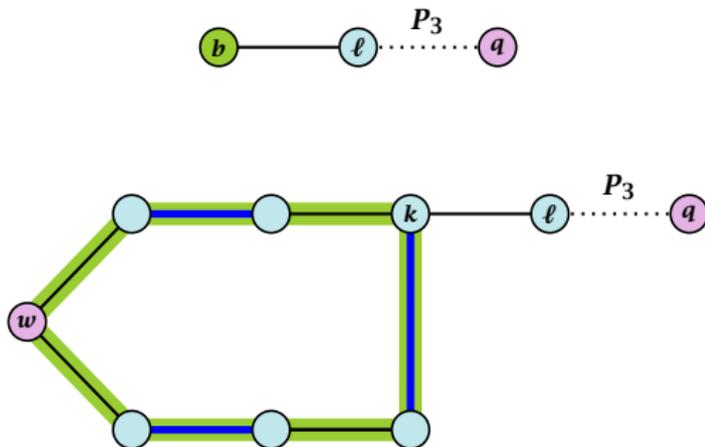


- ▶ After the expansion ℓ must be incident to some node in the blossom. Let this node be k .
- ▶ If $k \neq w$ there is an alternating path P_2 from w to k that ends in a matching edge.
- ▶ $P_1 \circ (i, w) \circ P_2 \circ (k, \ell) \circ P_3$ is an alternating path.
- ▶ If $k = w$ then $P_1 \circ (i,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

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.

Lemma 105

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' .

Proof.

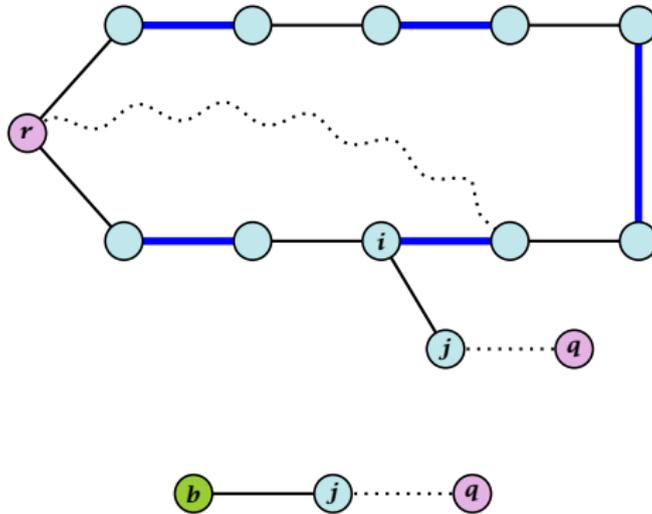
- ▶ If P does not contain a node from B there is nothing to prove.
- ▶ We can assume that r and q are the only free nodes in G .

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.



Case 2: non-empty stem

Let P_3 be alternating path from r to w . 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 .

Example: Blossom Algorithm

