

About the Cover

Patterns of factorization

This month's cover is derived from David N. Cox's article on the arithmetic sieve. The pixels in the column above n are at heights equal to the divisors of n . The primes are characterized in this figure by yellow columns.

Clues in the cover image ought to help in figuring out the origin of the parabolas Cox observes. Various other views of Cox's factorization images will bring to light other interesting patterns, but none seem to involve deep number theory. What's astonishing is how good the human eye is at perceiving regular patterns in a noisy background.

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