

**Backdrop**

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| <b>COLLABORATORS</b> |
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|               |                            |                   |                  |
|---------------|----------------------------|-------------------|------------------|
|               | <i>TITLE :</i><br>Backdrop |                   |                  |
| <i>ACTION</i> | <i>NAME</i>                | <i>DATE</i>       | <i>SIGNATURE</i> |
| WRITTEN BY    |                            | February 24, 2025 |                  |

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| <b>REVISION HISTORY</b> |
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| NUMBER | DATE | DESCRIPTION | NAME |
|--------|------|-------------|------|
|        |      |             |      |

# Contents

|          |                         |          |
|----------|-------------------------|----------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Backdrop</b>         | <b>1</b> |
| 1.1      | main . . . . .          | 1        |
| 1.2      | description . . . . .   | 1        |
| 1.3      | wwp . . . . .           | 2        |
| 1.4      | why . . . . .           | 2        |
| 1.5      | how . . . . .           | 2        |
| 1.6      | why2 . . . . .          | 3        |
| 1.7      | installation . . . . .  | 3        |
| 1.8      | configuration . . . . . | 4        |
| 1.9      | startup . . . . .       | 5        |
| 1.10     | operation . . . . .     | 6        |
| 1.11     | help . . . . .          | 7        |
| 1.12     | screen . . . . .        | 7        |
| 1.13     | image . . . . .         | 7        |
| 1.14     | interval . . . . .      | 8        |
| 1.15     | go . . . . .            | 8        |
| 1.16     | shortcuts . . . . .     | 9        |
| 1.17     | trouble . . . . .       | 9        |
| 1.18     | warning . . . . .       | 11       |
| 1.19     | input . . . . .         | 12       |
| 1.20     | passcode . . . . .      | 12       |
| 1.21     | registration . . . . .  | 12       |
| 1.22     | about . . . . .         | 13       |
| 1.23     | reporting . . . . .     | 14       |
| 1.24     | deneban . . . . .       | 14       |

## Chapter 1

# Backdrop

### 1.1 main

<<----- For best viewing, adjust window to this width ----->>

USERS GUIDE TO BACKDROP                      Version 1.2

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Description  
Installation  
Configuration  
Startup  
Operation  
Parental/Adult Warning

Input Sequence  
Pass-code  
Registration  
Reporting Bugs and Suggestions  
About BackDrop/Revision History

About Deneban Software

### 1.2 description

#### DESCRIPTION OF BACKDROP

BackDrop automatically changes the Workbench Window Picture at an interval set by the user. It continually performs this function as a background process, requiring no further attention.

Backdrop randomly selects images from a user-specified drawer. This drawer may contain any number and type of image files either readable by the system's datatypes or capable of being displayed by the WBPatten Preference program.

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Backdrop is for computers with the AmigaDOS 3.1 operating system only.

Sales slogan: Don't like the way your Workbench looks?

Wait a few seconds - with BackDrop.

Installing BackDrop

Related topics:

What is meant by the term Workbench Window Picture?

Why BackDrop's function cannot be done using an AmigaDOS/ARExx script

What mechanism does BackDrop use to display images?

Why doesn't BackDrop work under AmigaDOS 2.x or 1.x?

## 1.3 wwp

WHAT IS MEANT BY THE TERM WORKBENCH WINDOW PICTURE?

The term "Workbench Window Picture" refers to a feature of the AmigaDOS 3.1 "WBPattern" preference program located in the "Sys:Prefs/" drawer. "WBPattern" allows the user to place an image file within the window of Workbench. All Workbench icons and icon text are overlaid on the image.

If Workbench is in background mode, the "picture" will fill the entire workbench screen. Otherwise, the "picture" will only occupy the borders of the Workbench window.

The normal procedure for setting the "Workbench Window Picture" is to run the "Sys:Prefs/WBPattern" program; select "Workbench" on the "Placement" gadget; select "Picture" on the "Type" gadget; specify an image by using the "Select Picture..." button; and finally selecting the "Use" button.

BackDrop has the effect of performing this function periodically and automatically in the background, selecting images that the user has prepared and consigned to a single drawer.

## 1.4 why

WHY BACKDROP'S FUNCTION CANNOT BE DONE USING AN AMIGADOS  
OR AREXX SCRIPT

Basically, it is because the WBPattern program does not accept an "image" argument. The only way to feed WBPattern an image is to have a WBPattern preset file made up. To perform BackDrop's function for a pool of images, one would have to make up a preset file for each individual image. This approach is far too tedious to be practical.

## 1.5 how

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## WHAT MECHANISM DOES BACKDROP USE TO DISPLAY THE RANDOM IMAGES?

Backdrop makes use of the "Use" argument of the WBPpattern program. The preset file that BackDrop uses is always the same: "Env:BackDrop.prefs". This file is surgically altered by BackDrop during each cycle to contain the path and name of the image file that has been randomly selected.

## 1.6 why2

### WHY DOESN'T BACKDROP WORK UNDER AMIGADOS 2.X OR 1.X?

Since the WBPpattern program under AmigaDOS 2.x does not have the facility to paint a picture on the Workbench window, BackDrop will not operate under AmigaDOS 2.x (although running BackDrop under AmigaDOS 2.x is not fatal).

Since AmigaDOS 1.x does not contain a WBPpattern program, BackDrop will not operate under those operating systems.

## 1.7 installation

### INSTALLING BACKDROP

The first three items below are already present in a standard AmigaDOS 3.1 system configuration, and are listed as a formality since BackDrop requires them, and will fail if they are not present.

- 1.~Ensure the AmigaDOS 3.1 "WBPpattern" preference program is present in the "Sys:Prefs" drawer of your system.
2. Ensure the file "WBPpattern.prefs" is present in the "Sys:Prefs/Env-Archive/sys" drawer.
3. Ensure the AmigaDOS 3.1 "Screenmode" preference program is present in the "Sys:Prefs" drawer of your system.
4. Setting up an Image Directory:

~~~Make (or find) a drawer that contains only image files readable by the WBPpattern preference program, including those types of images supported by the datatypes installed on your system.

~~~This drawer will be referred to herein as the "image directory". It may contain a mixture of readable image file types (i.e., IFF, GIF, JPG, BMP, etc...). Any subdirectories within the image directory will be ignored by BackDrop.

~~~The dimensions of the images do not have to correspond with the Workbench window dimensions. BackDrop (through WBPpattern) will attempt to "tile" images which are smaller than the Workbench Window.

~~~For maximum performance of BackDrop, it is recommended that IFF images be

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used. These require no datatype translation and are immediately mapped onto the Workbench window.

~~~GIF files take longer to display, but also work satisfactorily. Remember that the system must convert these to IFF before being able to display them.

~~~JPG files take the longest to display and can slow down your computer CPU significantly with each translation. It is suggested that you increase the "Interval" setting of BackDrop to accommodate this delay so that each image receive some appreciable display time.

~~~Do not include icon (i.e., .info) files in the image directory, even if you have an "Icon" datatype. BackDrop will refuse to operate if the user-selected image directory contains a single icon file. The user does not have to manually delete these before running BackDrop, however. BackDrop will give the user the option to delete all icon files in the selected image directory before attempting to select an image file from it.

5.~Place BackDrop and BackDrop.guide together in any drawer you desire.

6.~The BackDrop icon ("BackDrop.info") must coexist with BackDrop, even if the user intends to initiate BackDrop from a command line. This icon must have alternate image highlighting, as is provided, for BackDrop to run.

Configuring BackDrop

## 1.8 configuration

### CONFIGURING BACKDROP

There is no need to preconfigure BackDrop before running it. All adjustments may be made during program execution. Furthermore, BackDrop automatically saves the configuration to the BackDrop icon while it is executing.

There are only two configurable BackDrop program icon tooltypes:

Interval = <seconds> (default = 15)

ImageDirectory = <path specification> (default = BackDrop directory)

Tooltype example:

```
-----
| Interval = 60 |
| ImageDirectory = Images:WBPatternPics/ |
-----
```

Tooltype punctuation rules:

1. The <path specification> must end in a ":" or a "/".
2. No quotation marks are required.

Tooltype definitions:

Interval - How many seconds will BackDrop wait until it will change  
 ~~~~~the Workbench Window Picture. This should be a numeric  
 value between 15 and 300. Do not use quotation marks.

~~~~~If a non-numeric Interval tooltype is present when  
 BackDrop is launched, it will assume it to be the default  
 of 15. The default is also assumed for numeric values  
 less than 15. Numeric values greater than 300 will be  
 automatically reduced to 300.

ImageDirectory - What path (directory) BackDrop will randomly select  
 ~~~~~image files from. When specifying this tooltype, do not  
 use quotation marks. The path specification must end in  
 a colon (":") or an upslash ("/"). Do not specify a file  
 name or location in this tooltype.

~~~~~If the user supplies a nonexistent or improperly  
 formatted path, BackDrop will interrupt image retrieval  
 process during "Go" mode. Then the user is notified of  
 the problem, and returned to the "Control Window", where  
 a new image directory specification can be set.

When restarting BackDrop, the interval and image directory settings saved from  
 the previous session will automatically be read in take effect.

Refer to Operation for configuration changes that can be accomplished  
 during BackDrop execution.

Starting Up BackDrop

## 1.9 startup

### STARTING UP BACKDROP

It is recommended that the Workbench Window be placed in "BackDrop" mode to get  
 the best visual impact. This is easily accomplished by selecting the first  
 item in the "Workbench" menu of the "Workbench" window labeled "BackDrop".

Additionally, the user may wish to start BackDrop before any programs that ↵  
 will  
 create a Workbench-resident window. In this way, the user can, by way of  
 BackDrop, readily change the Workbench screenmode for best display of the images.

Non-registered users must start the BackDrop program from the Workbench.

Workbench Startup:~~~~~Open or double-click on the BackDrop icon. BackDrop  
 ~~~~~will automatically read the interval and image  
 directory tooltypes of this icon, if any.

~~~~~The "BackDrop Control Window" will appear if the  
 program has found the necessary support files.

~~~~~At this time, registered users should enter the  
 ~~~~~input sequence.



Command Line Startup: To startup in this manner, (registered) users must supply the pass-code.

~~~~~The starting environment must be pointed to the drawer that backdrop is located in.

~~~~~The command line must be of the form:

Backdrop #?<Pass-code>#?

where "#?" represents any sequence of characters or no characters

~~~~~If the Pass-code is not supplied, BackDrop will terminate. Furthermore, the icon file "Backdrop.info" must coexist with the BackDrop program file.

~~~~~Registered users who start BackDrop in this manner will be preempted from having to enter the Input Sequence in the Control Window.

~~~~~This version of BackDrop does not pass "Interval" and "ImageDirectory" command line arguments. However, BackDrop will read and obey the BackDrop icon tooltypes even when initiated from a command line. Furthermore, it will automatically save the "Interval" and "ImageDirectory" settings to the BackDrop icon during execution, even if it was initiated from a command line. Therefore, users who startup from a command line retain the capability of having an auto-saving and auto-loading BackDrop configuration.

## 1.10 operation

### BACKDROP OPERATION

Once the "Backdrop Control Window" appears, registered users who have started BackDrop from the Workbench should enter the Input Sequence.

Registered command line users are preempted from entering the input sequence.

At the "Backdrop Control Window", the user can do the following:

- Get Help
- Set the Workbench Screen Mode
- Set the Image Directory
- Set the Cycling Interval
- Go (i.e., Randomly cycle the WB Window Picture)

Backdrop has a few keyboard shortcuts:

Keyboard Shortcuts

Troubleshooting

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## 1.11 help

### GETTING HELP

Either selecting the "Help" button or pressing the "Help" key while at the Control Window will bring up this Amigaguide.

More about BackDrop Operation

## 1.12 screen

### SETTING THE WORKBENCH SCREENMODE

By selecting the "Change ScreenMode" button, the user has the opportunity to change the Workbench screenmode settings before asking BackDrop to cycle the Workbench Window Picture. This facility is provided to improve the display of the images since greater screen dimensions and colors provide a better backdrop.

The same restriction applies here as with the WBPpattern preference program: only icons and directory windows are permitted to be open if the new screenmode is to take effect. Implicitly, the "BackDrop Control Window" is open before selecting this button, but it will close down to permit Workbench screenmode changes after it is selected. BackDrop will temporarily transform into a smaller screen behind the Workbench screen.

Control is passed to the Screenmode preference program. The user should select the screenmode that is desired for BackDrop when it will cycle the Workbench Window Picture. The user should close out the screenmode dialog box by selecting the "Use" button.

After the new Workbench screenmode has taken effect, the "BackDrop Control Window" will return.

More about BackDrop Operation

## 1.13 image

### SETTING THE IMAGE DIRECTORY

The Image Directory is the directory from which BackDrop randomly selects image files that are to be cycled on the Workbench Window.

Before setting this directory, the user should be familiar with what characteristics an Image Directory should have. Please read Item 4 in the Installation instructions before proceeding.

Selecting the "Set Image Directory" button will initiate a directory requester (where filenames will be ghosted). After selecting the desired directory, the "BackDrop Control Window" will return.

BackDrop will then automatically record this parameter to the BackDrop icon

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tooltype "ImageDirectory". Furthermore, it will read and set the parameter from this tooltype whenever the program is launched.

More about BackDrop Operation

## 1.14 interval

### SETTING THE INTERVAL

The "Interval" is the number of seconds BackDrop waits between changing the Workbench Window Picture.

From the Control Window, "Interval" is adjusted by the slide gadget, and is accompanied by instant digital feedback.

There is a minimum and default value of 15 seconds for Interval, and a maximum value of 300 seconds (5 minutes).

For image files that require a greater time to read and map, such as JPG files, it is suggested that a higher "Interval" be used so that an appreciable display time will be realized.

When the "Go" button is selected, BackDrop automatically saves the "Interval" value as a tooltype setting in the BackDrop icon for recall the next time the program is launched. When BackDrop is launched, the initial value of "Interval" is 15, unless overridden by the tooltype setting.

More about BackDrop Operation

## 1.15 go

### "GO" MODE

The "Go" button initiates the essential function of the program, to cycle the Workbench Window Picture.

In this mode, BackDrop can operate unsupervised, selecting an image at random from the Image Directory and mapping it to the Workbench Window at a frequency prescribed by the "Interval" setting.

In "Go" mode, BackDrop manifests itself as a "bar" window, initially placing itself in the upper right of the Workbench screen. The name of the current image file is displayed on the bar. The bar window is the active window at first, and so any space bar key inputs made will trigger an unscheduled image change (see Shortcuts).

When "Go" mode is initiated, the "Interval" and "ImageDirectory" settings are immediately recorded as tooltype entries in the BackDrop icon.

The "Go" window is not capable of acknowledging the input sequence. The user must go to the Control Window to enter it.

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The user may drag the "Go" window around the Workbench screen. If this mode is exited and then reentered, the prior window position will be recalled and the "bar" will reappear in its previous screen location. The "Go" window screen location is not retained beyond BackDrop shutdown.

To return to the Control Window voluntarily, the user selects the "close" gadget of the "Go" window.

If the ImageDirectory is not set, or is set but found to be nonexistent, BackDrop will notify the user and then return to the Control Window.

In "Go" mode, BackDrop will scan the Image Directory for icon files. If at least one icon file is found, BackDrop will give the user a choice: delete the icon(s) immediately, or return to the Control Window. "Go" mode is not executable if any icon files exist in the Image Directory.

More about BackDrop Operation

## 1.16 shortcuts

### KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

At the Control Window:

HELP brings up this Amigaguide  
<Input Sequence> initiates indefinite operation

In "Go" mode:

SPACEBAR triggers an immediate unscheduled image change. Periodic image changes remain on schedule and unaffected.

More about BackDrop Operation

## 1.17 trouble

### BACKDROP TROUBLE-SHOOTING HELP

If your system does not have AmigaDOS 3.1, stop here. You cannot use BackDrop.

#### Startup Problems

~~~~~

1.~BackDrop was started from a command line (CLI), but terminated after  
~~~presenting a requester appeared which stated that the proper pass-code was  
not entered. You must be a registered user to know the pass-code.

~~~

~~~The pass-code was not entered as a command line argument. Retry the command  
using "BackDrop <pass-code>".

~~~

2.~BackDrop was started, but terminated after a requester stated that it could  
~~~not find the BackDrop Icon file.

~~~

~~~Even if BackDrop is started from CLI, the icon (BackDrop.info) must be present to read the~configuration information.

~~~

~~~If BackDrop was started from the Workbench, the BackDrop program icon must be present. If the system default tool icon is displayed on the Workbench, the BackDrop icon is not present and BackDrop will not function.

3. BackDrop terminated after presenting a requester that said "WBPattern",  
~~~"Screenmode" or "WBPattern.prefs" could not be found.

~~~All three of these files must be present in the normal paths that the AmigaDOS 3.1 operating system expects them in. The "WBPattern" and "Screenmode" programs are provided with OS 3.1 and should be in the path "sys:Prefs/." If "WBPattern.prefs" is not in the path "sys:Prefs/env-archive/sys/", it can be created by running the "WBPattern" program and clicking on the "Save" button.

#### Control Window Problems

~~~~~

1.~BackDrop was running, but then terminated after displaying a requester that  
~~~stated several keyboard inputs were pressed which did not correspond to the "input sequence" or a help request.

~~~This trap has been intentionally coded into BackDrop to discourage unregistered users of BackDrop from guessing the "input sequence".

~~~Unregistered users should refrain from pressing keys at the~control window. The "Help" key is an exception to this.

#### Operating Problems

~~~~~

1. BackDrop was running fine but then terminated after presenting a requester that stated the required input sequence was not entered.

~~~When starting BackDrop from Workbench, all users must enter the "input sequence" within the first five image changes or else it will terminate. If you are a registered user, simply re-start BackDrop and enter the "input sequence" at the "BackDrop Control Window". If you are not registered, you cannot run BackDrop indefinitely unless you register. See Registration.

2.~After selecting the "Go" button, BackDrop presents a requester that states the image directory has not been specified.

~~~The image directory setting was inadvertently cleared during program operation.

~~~BackDrop will return to the control window. Select the "Set Image Directory" button. When the directory requester appears, be sure that the image directory path appears at the bottom of the requester before clicking on the "Okay" button.

3.~After selecting the "Go" button, BackDrop presents a requester that states  
~~~the image directory is invalid.

~~~Backdrop could not find the image directory that had been specified.

~~~Backdrop will return to the control window. Select the "Set Image Directory" button. When the directory requester appears, be sure that the image directory path appears at the bottom of the requester before clicking on the "Okay" button.

4.~After selecting the "Go" button, BackDrop presents a requester that states the image directory is empty.

~~~Be sure to place images in the specified image directory or choose an alternative image directory.

5.~After selecting the "Go" button, BackDrop presents a requester that states  
~~~the image directory contains icon files. The same requester offers to  
~~~delete them.

~~~

~~~Backdrop does not operate on an image directory that contains icon (i.e., .info) files. If the current image directory is to be used, the icon files must be deleted and the user should select the "Yes" Button. If the icon files are to be retained, select the "No" button and select an alternate image directory. If the images in the problem directory are desired, the alternative directory could be a copy of the problem directory minus the icon files.

6.~In "Go" mode, a requester appears entitled "Preferences" which states that  
~~~it could not load a specific image file.

~~~The image file is either not really an image file or is not an image file type supported by the datatypes available on the system.

7. In "Go" mode, a requester appears which states "Could not allocate bitmap".

~~~There is insufficient chip memory to load the current image which BackDrop has selected. The user can acknowledge the requester, then select the "BackDrop bar" on the Workbench screen, and then press the space bar to load the next image.

8.~Backdrop displays a requester that states it could not find an image. The  
~~~path of the image displayed in the requester begins with a quotation mark.

~~~The image directory tooltype erroneously included a quotation mark.

~~~

~~~Backdrop will return to the control window. Redefine the image directory specification using the "Set Image Directory" button".

## 1.18 warning

### PARENTAL AND ADULT WARNING

Once an Image Directory is set and BackDrop is in "Go" mode, it is only a matter of time before all the directory images are displayed on the Workbench Window. Therefore, parents, and adults with children present, are warned not to allow BackDrop to run unsupervised while aimed at a directory that contains

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graphic images unsuitable for viewing by children.

## 1.19 input

### THE INPUT SEQUENCE

If BackDrop is launched from the Workbench, the user must enter the "Input Sequence" at the "BackDrop Control Window" or else it will terminate after five image changes. Within this context, unregistered users must determine whether they wish to register.

The "Input Sequence" is an input event that enables BackDrop to run indefinitely. It is provided to registered users who have paid the modest shareware fee of \$5. For more information, see Registration

## 1.20 passcode

### THE "PASS-CODE"

The "Pass-code" is a command line argument that allows BackDrop to run indefinitely. It is provided to registered users only.

To use the "pass-code", simply enter it on the command line:

```
BackDrop <pass-code>
```

If BackDrop is successfully started with the "pass-code", the user is exempt from entering the "input sequence"

## 1.21 registration

### REGISTRATION

BackDrop is a shareware program. Deneban Software has invested time and resources in bringing it to the Amiga community. In return, we ask for a modest fee of \$5.00. In return, the registered user will be able to run BackDrop indefinitely from either the Workbench or the CLI.

In the past, our experience has been that voluntary requests for contributions have not allowed us to realize sufficient returns. Therefore, we have implemented a policy of installing "Input Sequence" mechanisms into our software. These allow unregistered users to sample our software's operation, without reducing their incentive to maintain our incentive to continue to bring quality software to the Amiga community.

The "Input Sequence" is a simple combination of input events that allow the software to operate indefinitely. Although it must be entered each time the software is launched from the Workbench, it is so inconsequential that we have never bothered to compile an unprotected version of BackDrop at Deneban Software.

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To register, mail the name of the user to register, the return address, the program being registered and \$5 US to:

Deneban Software  
Attn: Russ Grasso  
16 Arbor Road  
Holbrook MA, 02343-1302  
USA

Upon receipt, Deneban Software will mail the "input sequence" and "pass-code" back to the registered user. This information will not be e-mailed.

## 1.22 about

### ABOUT BACKDROP

BackDrop Version 1.1 is by Russell J. Grasso, developer at Deneban Software

User's Amigaguide to BackDrop by Russell J. Grasso

### REVISION HISTORY:

Version 1.0 (non-distributable) issued 6/5/95

Version 1.05 (non-distributable) issued 1/28/96

### Corrections:

1. Fixed image directory requester to always accept initial string gadget

Version 1.1      8/18/96

### Enhancements:

1. Created this Amigaguide
2. Incorporated Deneban Software markings
3. Removed sound effects
4. Added "Help" button
5. Completely revised the layout and text of the control window.
6. Added five picture limit for nonregistered users
7. Added "Go" window position memorization
8. Made "Go" window active when "Go" button is pushed
9. Added screen titles for control panel and "Go" windows
10. Moved default position for "Go" window off of Workbench screen title
11. Added five keyboard inputs trap to prevent input sequence guessing
12. Added tooltype facility
13. Added automatic storage of program icon tooltypes from user settings
14. Added CLI startup and Pass-code facility
15. Added required file checking

### Corrections:

1. Fixed initial position of Period slider gadget
-



2. Added routine to ensure period limitations
3. Accounted for empty image directories
4. Fixed interval display so that residual "spots" do not appear when switching from 3 digits to two digits.
5. Fixed bug that allowed only 40 or so character image file path and name specification.

Version 1.2 8/27/96

Corrections:

1. Corrected this Amigaguide
2. Eliminated references to ici.net web site and e-mail address

## 1.23 reporting

### REPORTING BUGS AND SUGGESTIONS

Both registered and unregistered users can report problems or suggest improvements to Deneban Software's e-mail address:

deneb@gis.net

Alternatively, when reporting by conventional mail, use the registration address.

## 1.24 deneban

Visit the Deneban Software Website at:

<http://www.gis.net/~deneb>

E-mail address:

deneb@gis.net

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