The number of spanning trees in a superprism

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Abstract

Let the vertices of two disjoint and equal length cycles be denoted \( u_0, u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1} \) in the first cycle and \( v_0, v_1, \ldots, v_{n-1} \) in the second cycle for \( n \geq 4 \). The superprism \( P_n \) is defined as the graph obtained by adding to these disjoint cycles all edges of the form \( u_i v_i \) and \( u_i v_{i+2} \pmod{n} \). In this paper, it is proved that the number of spanning trees in \( P_n \) is \( n \cdot 2^{3n-2} \).

Keywords: spanning trees; antiprism graph; enumeration of trees; circulant graph; prism graph.

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1. Introduction

In this paper, by a graph \( G = (V, E) \), we mean an undirected graph without loops and parallel edges. Also, throughout this paper, the number of spanning trees in \( G \), which represent the total number of distinct trees on all vertices of \( V(G) \), is denoted by \( t(G) \). Let the vertices of two disjoint and equal length cycles be denoted \( u_0, u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1} \) in the first cycle and \( v_0, v_1, \ldots, v_{n-1} \) in the second cycle for \( n \geq 4 \). The 4-regular, super prism \( \tilde{P}_n \) on \( 2n \geq 8 \) vertices is defined as the graph obtained by adding to these disjoint cycles all edges of the form \( u_i v_i \) and \( u_i v_{i+2} \pmod{n} \). We prove that the number of spanning trees in \( P_n \) is \( n \cdot 2^{3n-2} \). Prism and antiprism are well-known graphs, which are closely related to superprism.

The prism \( P_n \) of order \( 2n \) is the cubic graph obtained from the cycles \( (u_0, u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}) \) and \( (v_0, v_1, \ldots, v_{n-1}) \) by adding all edges of the form \( u_i v_i \). The graph \( P_n \) can also be defined as a Cartesian product of the cycle \( C_n \) on \( n \) vertices and path \( K_2 \) on 2 vertices, denoted by \( C_n \square K_2 \) [3, 4]. The number of spanning trees in \( P_n \), that we established in [3] is

\[
t(P_n) = \frac{n}{2} [(2 + \sqrt{3})^n + (2 - \sqrt{3})^n - 2].
\]

The antiprism \( \tilde{P}_n \) of order \( 2n \), for \( n \geq 3 \), is the quartic graph obtained from the cycles \( (u_0, \ldots, u_{n-1}) \) and \( (v_0, \ldots, v_{n-1}) \) by adding all edges of the form \( u_i v_i \) and \( u_i v_{i+1} \pmod{n} \) [8, 11]. The following is known about \( \tilde{P}_n \):

**Theorem 1.1** (see [11]). Let \( C_i 2n(1, 2) \) be a circulant of order 2n. Then, \( \tilde{P}_n \simeq C_i 2n(1, 2) \).

Circulant \( C_i 2n(1, 2) \) is also called the square of a cycle [1]. The following is also known:

**Theorem 1.2** (see [1]). The number of spanning trees in the square of cycle for \( n \geq 5 \) is given by \( \frac{n}{2} [(\frac{3 + \sqrt{5}}{2})^n - (\frac{3 - \sqrt{5}}{2})^n - 2(-1)^n] \).

Based on Theorems 1.1 and 1.2, we obtain the number of spanning trees in \( P_n \), for \( n \geq 3 \), which is not explicitly published in literature, by substituting \( n \) with \( 2n \) in \( t(C_i 2n(1, 2)) \). So, we have, \( t(\tilde{P}_n) = \frac{2n}{3} [(\frac{3 + \sqrt{5}}{2})^{2n} - (\frac{3 - \sqrt{5}}{2})^{2n} - 2] \).

![Figure 1.1: Smallest superprism, i.e., \( \tilde{P}_4 \).](image)

Note that the superprism is not planar, as opposed to either a prism or an antiprism. In Figure 1.1, we illustrate the smallest example of the superprism, i.e., \( \tilde{P}_4 \). It is easy to verify that \( \tilde{P}_4 \) is not planar.

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In general, the number of spanning trees can be determined for any graph based on the Kirchhoff Matrix Tree Theorem [9], as opposed to other parameters, e.g., the number of cycles, which cannot be determined as easily. The Kirchhoff characteristic matrix $A_k$ of graph of order $k$ with vertices $V(G) = \{v_1, v_2, \ldots, v_k\}$ is $k \times k$ symmetric matrix $[a_{i,j}]$, where (1) $a_{i,j} = -1$ if $v_i, v_j$ are adjacent, (2) $a_{i,i}$ equals the degree of $v_i$, and (3) $v_{i,j} = 0$ in all other cases. The Kirchhoff matrix tree theorem states that for any graph $G$ with at least two vertices, all the cofactors of $A_k$ are equal, and they are equal to $t(G)$. Nevertheless, for the special family of graphs knowing the number of spanning trees based on an explicit formula turned out to be quite useful in many instances, because the Kirchhoff matrix tree theorem requires calculation of a determinant of the Kirchhoff characteristic matrix. This might become problematic for very large matrices. One of the first and simplest derived formulas for the number of spanning trees is due to Cayley [5]. It states that the complete graph $K_n$ on $n$ vertices has $n^{n-2}$ number of spanning trees. In this paper, we derive a simple formula for the number of spanning trees of the superprism $\tilde{P}_n$. This formula is almost as simple as Cayley’s formula for $t(K_n)$ and it is much simpler than the formulas for prism and antiprism described above. Other explicit formulas for the special families of graphs can be found in the number of publications, e.g., [2, 6, 7, 10, 13–17]. In particular, there are many papers covering the number of spanning trees in the circulant graphs $[1, 4, 6, 8, 10, 16, 17]$, which are related to our superprism through antiprism, as we indicated above.

In Section 2, a set of matrices is defined, and the relations between determinants of these matrices are derived. Based on these relations, in Section 3, a recurrence relationship for $t(\tilde{P}_n)$ is derived, which proves the main result (Theorem 3.1).

### 2. Preliminary results

Let $t(G)$ denote the number of spanning trees in $G$. In order to derive the number of spanning trees $t(\tilde{P}_n)$, we establish a recursion that is satisfied by the Kirchhoff cofactor of $\tilde{P}_n$.

Based on the definition of $\tilde{P}_n$, we first assign labels to the vertices of $\tilde{P}_n$ as follows: (1) assign odd numbers $1, 3, \ldots, 2n-1$ to $u_0, u_1, \ldots, u_{n-1}$, and (2) assign even numbers $2, 4, \ldots, 2n$ to $v_0, v_1, \ldots, v_{n-1}$. We then form the Kirchhoff characteristic matrix $A_{2n}$, based on these labels, and focus our attention on the principal $(2n-1) \times (2n-1)$ submatrix of $A_{2n}$ obtained by canceling its last row and column corresponding to vertex $v_{n-1}$ (e.g., vertex $v_1$ in Figure 1.1) labeled with $2n$. So, the number of spanning trees of $\tilde{P}_n$ equals $t(\tilde{P}_n) = \det(A_{2n-1})$, where $A_{2n-1} = [a_{i,j}]$ is defined as follows:

$$a_{i,j} = \begin{cases} 
4 & \text{for } i = j, \\
-1 & \text{for } |i - j| = 2, \\
-1 & \text{if } |i - j| = 1 \text{ or } |i - j| = 5, \text{ and } (i + j + 1) \equiv 0 \pmod{4}, \\
-1 & \text{if } i = 1 \text{ and } j = 2n - 1, \text{ or } i = 2n - 1 \text{ and } j = 1, \\
-1 & \text{if } i = 2 \text{ and } j = 2n - 3, \text{ or } i = 2n - 3 \text{ and } j = 2, \\
-1 & \text{if } i = 4 \text{ and } j = 2n - 1, \text{ or } i = 2n - 1 \text{ and } j = 4, \\
0 & \text{otherwise}
\end{cases}$$

Our matrix $A_{2n-1}$ is given as follows:

$$A_{2n-1} = \begin{bmatrix}
4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\
-1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\
0 & -1 & -1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 4 & -1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 4 & 0 \\
\vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots & \vdots \\
0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 4 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 4 \\
-1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\
\end{bmatrix}$$

For convenience and clarity of the proofs, we define the following two matrices associated with $A_{2n-1}$. First, matrix $B_{2n-1}$ is obtained from $A_{2n-1}$ by subtracting the fourth row from the first row, followed by subtracting the fourth column from the first column. Let $\det(A_{2n-1}) = a_{2n-1}$ and $\det(B_{2n-1}) = b_{2n-1}$. Second, matrix $C_{2n-1}$ is obtained from $A_{2n-1}$ by replacing six unity elements $a_{1,2n-1}, a_{2,2n-3}, a_{4,2n-1}, a_{2n-1,1}, a_{2n-3,2}, a_{2n-4,1}$ by $0$. Let $C_{2k-1} = C_{2n-1}$ for $n = k$, and let $C_{2k-3}$ be obtained from $C_{2k-1}$ by cancelling first two rows and first two columns of $C_{2k-1}$ for $n \geq k \geq 4$. This recursion defines matrices $C_{2n-1}, C_{2n-3}, C_{2n-5}, \ldots, C_7, C_5,$
where $a_{2n-1} = b_{2n-1}$,

$$
B_{2n-1} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
-4 & -1 & -1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 1 & 0 & 0 & 4 & -1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
\end{bmatrix},
$$

$$
C_{2k-1} = \begin{bmatrix}
4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & -1 & -1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 4 & -1 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
\end{bmatrix},
$$

In addition, in order to derive the recurrence relationships in the supporting lemmas, presented in the next section, we also define auxiliary matrices as follows:

1. Matrix $D_{2n-2}$ is obtained by canceling the first row and first column in $A_{2n-1}$.

$$
D_{2n-2} = \begin{bmatrix}
4 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 4 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & -1 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
\end{bmatrix},
$$

$$
C_{2n-5}
$$

2. Matrix $E_{2n-3}$ is obtained by canceling first and fourth rows, followed by canceling first and fourth columns in $A_{2n-1}$.

$$
E_{2n-3} = \begin{bmatrix}
4 & 0 & 0 & -1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 4 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
\end{bmatrix},
$$

$$
C_{2n-5}
$$
3. Matrix $F_{2k-2}$ is obtained by canceling first row and first column in $C_{2k-1}$, where $k \leq n$.

4. Matrix $G_{2k-2}$ is obtained by canceling last row and last column in $C_{2k-1}$, where $k \leq n$.

5. Matrix $H_{2k-2}$ is obtained by appending first row and first column to $C_{2k-3}$ as follows:

\[
H_{2k-2} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 \\
0 & \ddots & \ddots \\
-4 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix}
\]

6. Matrix $M_{2k-1}$ is obtained by appending first row and first column to $G_{2k-2}$ as follows:

\[
M_{2k-1} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 \\
0 & \ddots & \ddots \\
-4 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix}
\]

**Lemma 2.1.** Let $b_{2n-1}, c_{2k-1}, d_{2n-2}, e_{2n-3}, f_{2k-2}, g_{2k-2}, h_{2k-2}, m_{2k-3}$ be respective determinants of matrices $B_{2n-1}, C_{2k-1}, D_{2n-2}, E_{2n-3}, F_{2k-2}, G_{2k-2}, H_{2k-2}, M_{2k-3}$ for $k \leq n$. Then the following relations hold: (i) $a_{2n-1} = b_{2n-1} = 8d_{2n-2} - 16e_{2n-3}$, (ii) $d_{2n-2} = 8c_{2n-3} - 8h_{2n-4} - 16g_{2n-4}$, (iii) $e_{2n-3} = 8h_{2n-4} - 16m_{2n-5}$, (iv) $h_{2k-2} = 8c_{2k-3} - 16h_{2k-4}$, (v) $m_{2k-1} = 8g_{2k-2} - 16m_{2k-3}$.

**Proof.** (i) By the definition of $B_{2n-1}, a_{2n-1} = b_{2n-1}$. Also, by expanding $B_{2n-1}$ with respect to the first row, we obtain $b_{2n-1} = 8d_{2n-2} - 16e_{2n-3}$.

(ii) We subtract the last row from the first row, and then we subtract the last column from the first column in $D_{2n-2}$, which results in the following matrix $D'_{2n-2}$:

\[
D'_{2n-2} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
0 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
-4 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix}
\]

So, $d'_{2n-2} = d_{2n-2}$ and there are exactly two nonzero elements in the first row and first column of $D'_{2n-2}$. Expanding $D'_{2n-2}$ with respect to the first row, we have

\[
d_{2n-2} = 8 \left( c_{2n-3} - \det \begin{bmatrix}
-4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-1 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
0 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
-1 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix}
\right) - 16g_{2n-4}.
\]

By subtracting the third row from the first row, followed by subtracting the third column from the first column, we obtain

\[
d_{2n-2} = 8 \left( c_{2n-3} - \det \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 \\
0 & \ddots & \ddots \\
-4 & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix}
\right) - 16g_{2n-4} = 8c_{2n-3} - 8h_{2n-4} - 16g_{2n-4}.
\]

(iii) We subtract the last row from the first row, and then we subtract the last column from the first column in $E_{2n-3}$. Subsequently, we subtract the fourth row from the second row, and finally, we subtract the fourth column from the second
column, which results in the following matrix \( E'_{2n-3} \):\[
E_{2n-3} \to E'_{2n-3} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & -4 \\
8 & 0 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
0 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
-4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
-4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
\end{bmatrix} C_{2n-5}
\]

Clearly, \( e'_{2n-3} = e_{2n-3} \) and there are exactly two nonzero elements in the first row and first column of \( E'_{2n-3} \). Expanding \( E'_{2n-2} \) with respect to the first row results in the following:

\[
e_{2n-3} = 8 \cdot \det \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
0 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
-4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix} C_{2n-5} - 16 \cdot \det \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
0 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
-4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix} G_{2n-6} = 8h_{2n-4} - 16m_{2n-5}.
\]

(iv). By subtracting the fourth row from the second row, followed by subtracting the fourth column from the second column in \( H_{2k-2} \), and followed by expanding \( H_{2k-2} \) with respect to the first row, we obtain the following:

\[
h_{2k-2} = 8 \cdot c_{2k-3} - 16 \cdot \det \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
0 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
-4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix} C_{2k-5} \]

(v). By subtracting the fourth row from the second row, followed by subtracting the fourth column from the second column in \( M_{2k-1} \), and followed by expanding \( M_{2k-1} \) with respect to the first row, we obtain the following:

\[
m_{2k-1} = 8 \cdot g_{2k-2} - 16 \cdot \det \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
0 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
-4 & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots & \ldots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\vdots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots & \ddots \\
\end{bmatrix} G_{2k-4} \]

\[\square\]

3. Main result

Before presenting our main result, we need additional lemmas that explore linear recurrence relations with constant coefficients. To this end, we use the following notation. For a sequence \( \{f_i\} \) and the recurrence relation with constant coefficients \( \alpha_0, \alpha_1, \ldots, \alpha_k \) given by \( \alpha_k f_{i+k} + \alpha_{k-1} f_{i+k-1} + \cdots + \alpha_0 f_i = 0 \), we say that the sequence \( \{f_i\} \) satisfies the equation \( \alpha_k x^k + \alpha_{k-1} x^{k-1} + \cdots + \alpha_0 x^0 = 0 \), which is called the characteristic equation [12], where \( x \) is the shift operator satisfying \( x \cdot f_{i-1} = f_i \) and \( x^0 = 1 \).

**Lemma 3.1.** Let \( \tilde{c}_k = c_{2k-1} \) and \( k \geq 4 \). The sequence \( \{\tilde{c}_k\} \) satisfies the characteristic equation \( (x - 8)^2 = 0 \).

**Proof.** Let \( r_i, c_i \) be \( i \)-th row and \( i \)-th column in \( C_{2k-1} \) respectively for \( k \geq 4 \). We obtain matrix \( Q_{2k-1} \) from matrix \( C_{2k-1} \) by subtracting \( r_{2i} \) from \( r_{2i-3} \) followed by subtracting \( c_{2i} \) from \( c_{2i-3} \) obtaining new row \( r_{2i-3} \) and new column \( c_{2i-3} \), for every integer \( i \), where \( 2 \leq i \leq k \). Hence, \( e_{2k-1} = \det(Q_{2k-1}) = q_{2k-1} \), where \( Q_{2k-1} = [q_{i,j}] \) is defined as follows:

\[
q_{i,j} = \begin{cases} 
8 & \text{for } i = j, \ i \ \text{odd, and } 2i \leq 2k - 5, \\
4 & \text{for } i = j, \ \text{and either } i \ \text{even or } 2i > 2k - 5, \\
-1 & \text{for } |i-j| = 2 \ \text{and } (i+j-2) \equiv 0 \pmod{4}, \\
-1 & \text{if } i = 2k - 3 \ \text{and either } j = 2k - 2 \ \text{or } j = 2k - 1, \\
-1 & \text{if } j = 2k - 3 \ \text{and either } i = 2k - 2 \ \text{or } i = 2k - 1, \\
-4 & \text{for } |i-j| = 3 \ \text{and } (i+j-1) \equiv 0 \pmod{4}, \\
0 & \text{otherwise.}
\end{cases}
\]
So, we have,

\[
Q_{2k-1} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & . . . \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 4 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 4
\end{bmatrix}
\]

Let matrix \( R_{2k-2} \) be obtained by canceling the first row and first column in matrix \( Q_{2k-1} \), and let \( r_{2k-2} = \det(R_{2k-2}) \). Expanding \( Q_{2k-1} \) with respect to the first row, we get

\[
q_{2k-1} = 8 \cdot r_{2k-2} - 64 \cdot \det Q_{2k-5} = 8r_{2k-2} - 64s_{2k-4}, \quad \text{where}
\]

\[
S_{2k-2} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & . . . \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 4 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 4
\end{bmatrix}
\]

and \( s_{2k-2} = \det(S_{2k-2}) \).

Expanding \( R_{2k-2} \) with respect to the first row, we get

\[
r_{2k-2} = 4 \cdot q_{2k-3} - \det Q_{2k-5} = 4q_{2k-3} - s_{2k-4}
\]

Expanding \( S_{2k-2} \) with respect to the first row, we get \( s_{2k-2} = 8q_{2k-3} - 16s_{2k-4} \). Consequently, solving the following three relations \( q_{2k-1} = 8r_{2k-2} - 64s_{2k-4}, r_{2k-2} = 4q_{2k-3} - s_{2k-4}, q_{2k-1} = 8q_{2k-3} + 16s_{2k-2} \), we obtain \( s_{2k-2} = 16s_{2k-2} + 64s_{2k-4} = 0 \). This means that sequence \( \{\tilde{s}_k\} \), where \( \tilde{s}_k = s_{2k} \), satisfies the characteristic equation \( (x - 8)^2 = 0 \). Furthermore, since \( q_{2k-1} = c_{2k-1} = \tilde{c}_k \) then relation \( 8q_{2k-1} = s_{2k} + 16s_{2k-2} \) together with sequence \( \{\tilde{s}_k\} \) satisfying \( (x - 8)^2 = 0 \) imply that sequence \( \{\tilde{c}_k\} \) also satisfies \( (x - 8)^2 = 0 \).

**Lemma 3.2.** Let \( \bar{g}_k = g_{2k-2} \) and \( k \geq 4 \). The sequence \( \{\bar{g}_k\} \) satisfies the characteristic equation \( (x - 8)^2 = 0 \).

**Proof.** Let matrix \( Q'_{2k-2} \) be obtained from \( Q_{2k-1} \), defined in Lemma 3.1, by deleting the last row and last column. Let \( q'_{2k-2} = \det(Q'_{2k-2}) \). Let matrix \( R'_{2k-3} \) be obtained by canceling the first row and first column in matrix \( Q'_{2k-2} \), and let \( r'_{2k-3} = \det(R'_{2k-3}) \). Expanding \( Q'_{2k-2} \) with respect to the first row, we get

\[
q'_{2k-2} = 8 \cdot r'_{2k-3} - 64 \cdot \det Q'_{2k-5} = 8r'_{2k-2} - 64s'_{2k-4}, \quad \text{where}
\]

\[
S'_{2k-1} = \begin{bmatrix}
8 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
-4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 0 & . . . \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 8 & 0 & 0 & -4 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & -4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 & 0 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -4 & -1 & 0 & 4 & 0 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 4 \\
0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & 0 & -1 & 0 & 4
\end{bmatrix}
\]

and \( s'_{2k-1} = \det(S'_{2k-1}) \).
Expanding $R'_{2k-3}$ with respect to the first row, we get

$$r'_{2k-3} = 4 \cdot q'_{2k-4} - \text{det} \begin{bmatrix} 8 & 0 & -4 & \cdots & \cdots \\ 0 & \cdots & \cdots \\ -4 & \cdots \\ \vdots & \cdots \\ \vdots & \cdots \\ Q'_{2k-6} & \cdots \\ \vdots & \cdots \\ \vdots & \cdots \\ \end{bmatrix} = 4q'_{2k-4} - s'_{2k-5}.$$ 

Expanding $S'_{2k-3}$ with respect to the first row, we get

$$s'_{2k-3} = 8q'_{2k-4} - 16s'_{2k-5}.$$ 

Consequently, solving the relations

$$q'_{2k-2} = 8r'_{2k-3} - 64s'_{2k-5},$$

$$r'_{2k-3} = 4q'_{2k-4} - s'_{2k-5},$$

$$8q'_{2k-2} = s'_{2k-1} + 16s'_{2k-3},$$

we obtain

$$s'_{2k-1} - 16s'_{2k-3} + 64s'_{2k-5} = 0.$$ 

So, our sequence $\{\hat{s}_k\}$, where $\hat{s}_k = s'_{2k-1}$, satisfies the characteristic equation $(x - 8)^2 = 0$. Furthermore, since $q'_{2k-2} = g_{2k-2} = \hat{g}_k$ then relation $8q'_{2k-2} = s'_{2k-1} + 16s'_{2k-3}$ together with sequence $\{\hat{s}_k\}$ satisfying $(x - 8)^2 = 0$ imply that sequence $\{\hat{g}_k\}$ also satisfies $(x - 8)^2 = 0$. 

\[\square\]

**Lemma 3.3.** Let $\hat{a}_n = a_{2n-1}$ and $n \geq 4$. The sequence $\{\hat{a}_n\}$ satisfies the characteristic equation

$$(x - 8)^2 = 0.$$ 

**Proof.** By Lemma 2.1(v), $m_{2k-1} + 16m_{2k-3} = 8g_{2k-2}$, and by Lemma 3.2, sequence $\{\hat{g}_k\}$ satisfies $P(x) = (x - 8)^2 = 0$. This implies that sequence $\{\hat{m}_k\}$, where $\hat{m}_1 = m_{2n-1}$, also satisfies $P(x) = 0$.

Since by Lemma 3.1 sequence $\{\hat{m}_k\}$ satisfies $P(x) = (x - 8)^2 = 0$, and by Lemma 2.1(iv), $h_{2k-2} + 16h_{2k-4} = 8c_{2k-3}$ then sequence $\{\hat{h}_k\}$, where $\hat{h}_1 = h_{2n-1}$, also satisfies $P(x) = 0$.

Because sequences $\{\hat{m}_k\}$, $\{\hat{h}_k\}$ satisfy $P(x) = (x - 8)^2 = 0$, and by Lemma 2.1(iii), $e_{2n-3} = 8h_{2n-4} - 16m_{2n-5}$ then sequence $\{\hat{e}_k\}$, where $\hat{e}_1 = e_{2n-1}$, also satisfies $P(x) = 0$.

Because sequences $\{\hat{c}_k\}$, $\{\hat{h}_k\}$, $\{\hat{g}_k\}$ satisfy $P(x) = (x - 8)^2 = 0$, and by Lemma 2.1(ii), $d_{2n-2} = 8c_{2n-3} - 8h_{2n-4} - 16g_{2n-4}$ then sequence $\{\hat{d}_k\}$, where $\hat{d}_1 = d_{2n-1}$, also satisfies $P(x) = 0$.

Because sequences $\{\hat{d}_k\}$, $\{\hat{e}_k\}$ satisfy $P(x) = (x - 8)^2 = 0$, and by Lemma 2.1(i), $a_{2n-1} = 8d_{2n-2} - 16e_{2n-3}$ then sequence $\{\hat{a}_k\}$, where $\hat{a}_1 = a_{2n-1}$, also satisfies $P(x) = 0$. 

\[\square\]

We can now state and prove the (following) main result of this paper.

**Theorem 3.1.** Let $n \geq 4$. The number of spanning trees in $\hat{P}_n$ is

$$t(\hat{P}_n) = n \cdot 2^{3n-2}.$$ 

**Proof.** Let $g(n)$ be defined as

$$g(n) = n \cdot 2^{3n-2}.$$ 

By direct calculation, we verify that $g(n)$ satisfies the characteristic equation

$$(x - 8)^2 = 0,$$ 

where $x$ is the shift operator such that $g(n) = x \cdot g(n - 1)$ and $x^0 = 1$. According to Lemma 3.3, $\hat{a}_n = a_{2n-1}$ satisfies the same characteristic equation. Based on the Kirchhoff matrix tree theorem, by numerically evaluating the determinants $a_{2n-1}$ for $n = 4, 5, 6$, we obtain that $g(n) = \hat{a}_n$ for $n = 4, 5, 6$. This implies that $g(n) = \hat{a}_n$ for $n \geq 4$, which proves the theorem. 

\[\square\]

We point out that our formula $t(\hat{P}_n) = n \cdot 2^{3n-2}$ is much simpler than the ones for prism and antiprism, both of which involve $\sqrt{3}$ and $\sqrt{5}$, respectively. This is quite surprising and counterintuitive because both prism and antiprism are planar graphs. On the other hand, based on Kuratowski’s celebrated theorem, it’s easy to verify that our $t(\hat{P}_1)$ in Figure 1.1 is not planar, because it contains induced $K_{1,3}$. In fact, we derived in this paper one of the simplest formulas in graph theory. It suggests that this super prism might be of interest in other respects as well.
Finally, let $\hat{P}_n$ be defined as $\hat{P}_n$ but for $n \geq 1$. That is, a loop is considered as a cycle on a single vertex, and a cycle on two vertices is considered as two parallel edges. Then we can state the following:

**Corollary 3.1.** Let $n \geq 1$. The number of spanning trees in $\hat{P}_n$ is

$$t(\hat{P}_n) = n \cdot 2^{3n-2}.$$ 

**Proof.** It is directly verified that $t(\hat{P}_1) = 2$, $t(\hat{P}_2) = 32$, and $t(\hat{P}_3) = 384$, which satisfy the formula. In addition, based on Theorem 3.1, $t(\hat{P}_n)$ is also satisfied for $n \geq 4$. \qed

Note that for $n = 1$ we have a multigraph with two loops, for $n = 2$ we have a multigraph with four pairs of parallel edges, and for $n = 3$ we have $\hat{P}_n \simeq \bar{P}_n$.

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**References**


