NUMERICAL NOTES

1. Computer software such as Mathematica and Maple can use symbolic calculations to find the characteristic polynomial of a moderate-sized matrix. But there is no formula or finite algorithm to solve the characteristic equation of a general $n \times n$ matrix for $n \geq 5$.
2. The best numerical methods for finding eigenvalues avoid the characteristic polynomial entirely. In fact, MATLAB finds the characteristic polynomial of a matrix A by first computing the eigenvalues $\lambda_1, \ldots, \lambda_n$ of A and then expanding the product $(\lambda - \lambda_1)(\lambda - \lambda_2)\cdots(\lambda - \lambda_n)$.
3. Several common algorithms for estimating the eigenvalues of a matrix A are based on Theorem 4. The powerful *QR algorithm* is discussed in the exercises. Another technique, called *Jacobi's method*, works when $A = A^T$ and computes a sequence of matrices of the form

$$A_1 = A \quad \text{and} \quad A_{k+1} = P_k^{-1} A_k P_k \quad (k = 1, 2, \ldots)$$

Each matrix in the sequence is similar to A and so has the same eigenvalues as A. The nondiagonal entries of A_{k+1} tend to zero as k increases, and the diagonal entries tend to approach the eigenvalues of A.

4. Other methods of estimating eigenvalues are discussed in Section 5.8.

PRACTICE PROBLEM

Find the characteristic equation and eigenvalues of $A = \begin{bmatrix} 1 & -4 \\ 4 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$.

5.2 EXERCISES

Find the characteristic polynomial and the eigenvalues of the matrices in Exercises 1–8.

1. $\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 7 \\ 7 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$

2. $\begin{bmatrix} 5 & 3 \\ 3 & 5 \end{bmatrix}$

3. $\begin{bmatrix} 3 & -2 \\ 1 & -1 \end{bmatrix}$

4. $\begin{bmatrix} 5 & -3 \\ -4 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$

5. $\begin{bmatrix} 2 & 1 \\ -1 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$

6. $\begin{bmatrix} 3 & -4 \\ 4 & 8 \end{bmatrix}$

7. $\begin{bmatrix} 5 & 3 \\ -4 & 4 \end{bmatrix}$

8. $\begin{bmatrix} 7 & -2 \\ 2 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$

Exercises 9–14 require techniques from Section 3.1. Find the characteristic polynomial of each matrix, using either a cofactor expansion or the special formula for 3×3 determinants described prior to Exercises 15–18 in Section 3.1. [*Note*: Finding the characteristic polynomial of a 3×3 matrix is not easy to do with just row operations, because the variable λ is involved.]

9. $\begin{bmatrix} 1 & 0 & -1 \\ 2 & 3 & -1 \\ 0 & 6 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

10. $\begin{bmatrix} 0 & 3 & 1 \\ 3 & 0 & 2 \\ 1 & 2 & 0 \end{bmatrix}$

11. $\begin{bmatrix} 4 & 0 & 0 \\ 5 & 3 & 2 \\ -2 & 0 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$

12. $\begin{bmatrix} -1 & 0 & 1 \\ -3 & 4 & 1 \\ 0 & 0 & 2 \end{bmatrix}$

13. $\begin{bmatrix} 6 & -2 & 0 \\ -2 & 9 & 0 \\ 5 & 8 & 3 \end{bmatrix}$

14. $\begin{bmatrix} 5 & -2 & 3 \\ 0 & 1 & 0 \\ 6 & 7 & -2 \end{bmatrix}$

For the matrices in Exercises 15–17, list the eigenvalues, repeated according to their multiplicities.