



MX-23 Fluxbox Manual

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1. Introduction

This Help document supplements the **User's Manual (Shift+F1)**, which covers general MX Linux topics including installation, configuration and software management.

MX Fluxbox (=MXFB) constitutes a minimal or “base” version of MX Linux that can be used out-of-the-box. By design it does not contain all the software automatically included with the other MX-Linux versions. But additional software can be easily installed using the MX Package Installer by clicking on

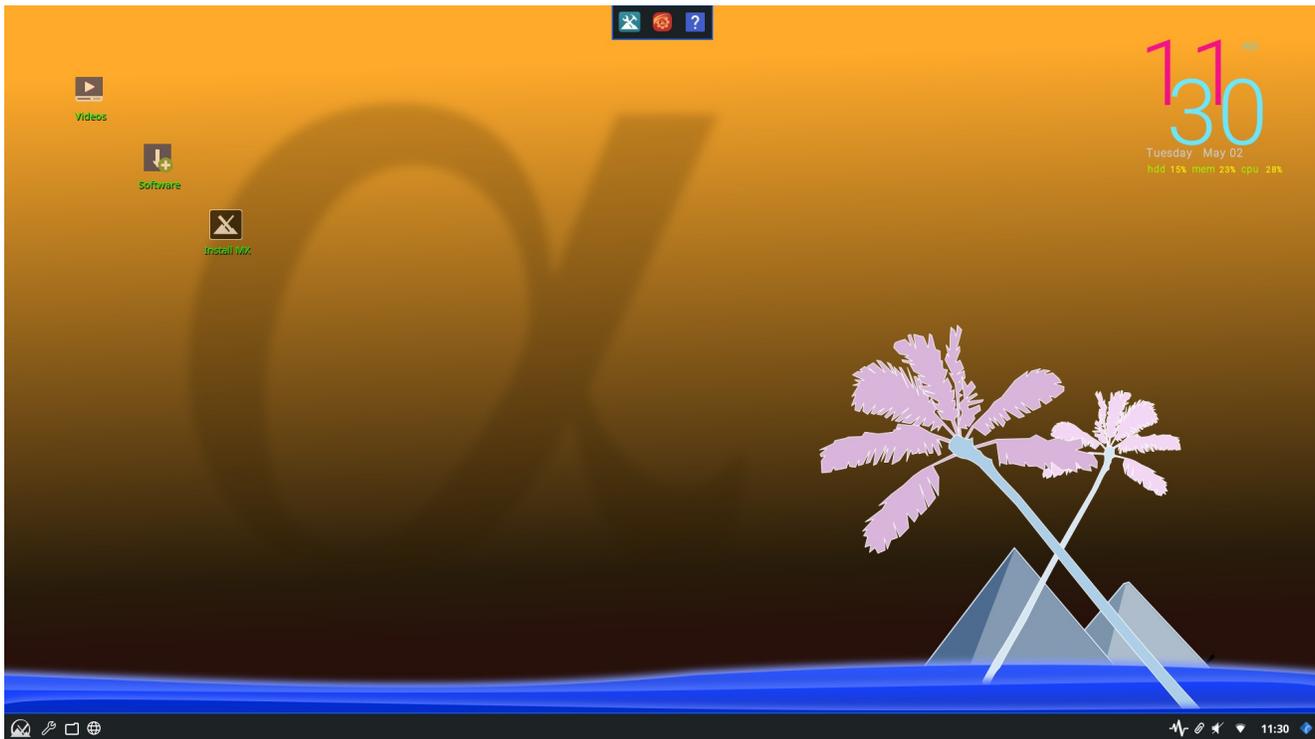
the desktop icon “Software”. Here you can find and install a multitude of other applications such as an office suite (LibreOffice) or sophisticated graphics editor (Gimp).

As the name suggests, MXFB employs [Fluxbox](#) as a [Window Manager](#) to control the placement and appearance of windows. Its small memory footprint and quick loading time are very effective on low-resource systems—and very fast on higher-level machines.

MXFB can be run in two basic configurations, with many possible variations in between:

- **Default**, that includes the basic Fluxbox components but follows the MX Linux preference for the use of convenient graphical apps.
- **Fluxbox**, to which various components from the default configuration may be added with a simple click or two.

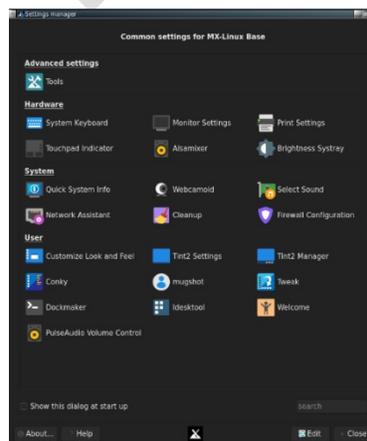
2. MX-Fluxbox Default Setup



Going clockwise from the upper left corner, here are the principle components:

- 1 Desktop icons (Section 2.1)
- 2 A native dock (Section 2.2)
- 3 System information display, called a “conky” (Section 2.3)
- 4 The creative tint2 panel (Section 2.4)
- 5 The hidden Fluxbox “rootMenu” (Section 2.5)

The first step for new users might well be the **Settings manager**, available from the dock (red icon in the middle), the panel (wrench icon) or the root Menu.



In addition to desktop icons and dock items, applications can be launched with any of the following tools:

- click the panel's Start (MX logo) button to open a menu using the app rofi (details [in the Wiki](#))
- right-click the desktop: *Menu > All Apps* for a Debian-like categorical menu
- click the keyboard's logo key (Windows or Apple icon) for an app-list menu with handy properties
- click Ctrl+F2 to bring up a small run window for the actual program name that you can launch in a terminal if wanted with Shift+Enter

The following sections aim to give users a basic understanding of how to use and manage each of the principle components. **NOTES:** 1) the tilde symbol “~” is a shortcut for the user's home folder (e.g., /home/demo); 2) the word “Menu” refers to the rootMenu that appears with a right-click on the desktop.

2.1 Desktop icons

Hide: Menu > Out of sight > Toggle icons

Remove (icon): middle-click icon to launch iDesktool

Stop: Menu > Out of sight > Toggle iDesk

Manage: Menu > Appearance > Desktop icons

Help: [in the Wiki](#)

Desktop icons are enabled in MXFB by iDesk, an older tool no longer maintained that MX Linux Devs and users adapted, modernized and expanded to produce **iDesktool**: *Menu > Appearance > Desktop icons*.

This tool greatly facilitates the use of desktop icons on MX-Fluxbox. It is very straightforward and should raise few questions about its use.

Here are the basic mouse actions for a desktop icon (config in ~/.ideskrc), using the default “Videos” icon as an example:

Action	Mouse	Example
Execute	Left single click	Opens to the MXFB YouTube channel
Execute alt	Right single click	Opens an action menu
Manage	Middle (scroll button) single click	Opens iDesktool focused on the icon
Drag	Left click hold, release to stop	

2.2 Docks

Hide: Menu > Out of sight > Toggle autohide dock

Remove/Add (a Dock item): *Menu > Appearance > Dockmaker*
Stop (Default dock): *Menu > Out of sight > Disable Default dock*
Manage: *Menu > Appearance > Dockmaker*
Help: [in the Wiki](#)

MXFB has a native app called Dockmaker which makes it easy for the user to create, modify and manage docks. A small dock appears at the top of the desktop when the user logs in for the first time whose configuration is set in `~/fluxbox/scripts/DefaultDock.mxdk`.

This default Dock contains the following items (from left to right):

- MX Tools
- Settings Manager
- Help (this Manual)

NOTE: you can also use tint2 as a dock, and a few examples can be found using Tint2 manager.

2.3 Conky

Hide: *Menu > Out of sight > Toggle conky*
Remove (conky): *Menu > Appearance > Conky*
Stop: *Menu > Out of sight > Toggle conky*
Manage: *Menu > Appearance > Conky*
Help: in the Wiki: [MX Conky](#), [Conky Manager](#)

MX-Fluxbox users can make use of the default conky set for MX Linux by clicking *Menu > Appearance > Conky* to bring up MX Conky; Conky Manager can be launched from it, or using any of the menus. Conky Manager is a handy method of basic management, while MX Conky supplies advanced features unique to MX Linux such as color manipulation.

In Conky Manager follow these simple steps to edit, view and display a conky:

- Highlight each conky and hit Preview to see what it looks like. Be sure to close each preview before going to another.
- Click on the Settings icon (gears) to change basic properties such as location.
- Check the box to select any conky you want to use. It will be auto-installed.
- The configuration files are stored in the folder `~/.conky/` in individual theme files. They can be edited, though it is not easy, by highlighting the conky in the list and clicking on the edit icon (pencil).

For more complicated conkies, you may need to make use of a compositor. Click *Menu > Settings > Config > Startup*, and uncomment the line about a compositor so it looks like this: `compton &`

2.4 The tint2 panel

Hide: *Menu > Out of sight > Toggle autohide panel*

Remove: *Manual: delete the config file from ~/.config/tint2/*

Stop: *Manual: put a comment (#) in front of line in the “startup” file*

Manage: *Settings manager > Tint2 manager*

Help: [in the Wiki](#)

The original Fluxbox toolbar is very different from what today’s users expect in function and design. That’s the reason an alternative “traditional” toolbar was added starting with MX-Fluxbox 2.2 using a highly configurable app known as “**tint2**.” (You can toggle back and forth between the two: *Menu > Appearance > Toolbar > Fluxbox/Traditional*)

To change the panel, click the wrench icon next to the Start button, the gear icon on the dock or the listing in the Menu. This launches the Settings manager, where you can click on “Tint2 manager.”

The screen opens showing all the tint2 configurations in the location *~/config/tint2/*. MXFB supplies a set of very different configurations that you can try out.

In addition to selecting an existing configuration you can also change the elements of any panel—in fact, that is one of the great pleasures of using tint2. Click on either the “Config” button for a graphical editor or the “Edit” button to directly edit the configuration file.

The Graphical editor includes two applications:

- “Themes” displays all the tint2 configs in the user’s location as well as a few others brought in during installation.
- “Properties” displays the features of the running config. If the Properties window is not visible, click on the little gear icon in the upper left corner.

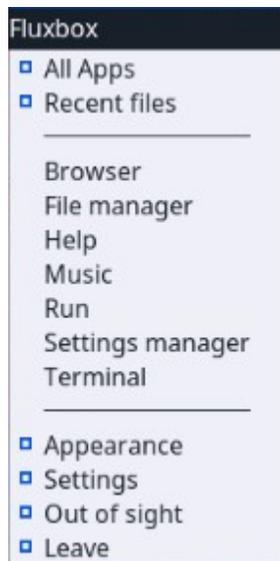
Here are a couple of common actions in the “Properties” window to get you started:

- Adding/Removing launchers. Click the “Launcher” entry on the left side. The right panel has two columns: on the left a list of application icons currently displayed on the toolbar, while on the right a list of all desktop applications installed. Use the arrows to move items up/down.
 - **Add:** select the application you want from the list in the right column, click the “left arrow” icon on the middle and then click the “Apply” button, to instantly add it to the toolbar.
 - **Remove:** reverse the procedure.
- Moving or resizing the panel. Click the “Panel” entry in the left panel and then choose its placement and size in the right panel. Click the “Apply” button. That is also where you can scroll down and check the “Autohide” box if desired.
- Changing to time/date format. Click the “Clock” entry in the left panel and then change the field “First line format” or “Second line format” to whatever you like. To get 24hr time, for instance, you would change “%I” to “%H”. Codes [in the Wiki](#).

NOTE: Back up your current configuration before changing it: click on *~/config/tint2/tint2rc* and then save it under a new name such as “tint2rc_BAK.” You can then copy all your customized lines from your backup file to the correct place on your new tint2rc configuration.

2.5 The rootMenu

The rootMenu is hidden by default and offers a quick and easy way to access many functions and settings.



Show: right click on desktop

Remove/Add (a menu item): Menu > Settings > Configure > Menus

Stop: put a comment (#) in front of the line in the init file that starts with:
session.menuFile:

Manage: Menu > Settings > Configure > Menus

Help: Section 3.5 and Links

The short main menu (~/.fluxbox/menu-mx) incorporates three submenus (Appearance, Settings, Out of sight) that are located in ~/.fluxbox/submenus.

The root menu is divided into three sections:

- Top
 - All apps: a Debian-like categorical menu. It is updated automatically when using Package Installer; otherwise click Update if necessary
 - Recent files: displays the most recent files used (click Refresh if

necessary)

- Middle Section: links to directly open some frequently used apps
- Bottom
 - Appearance
 - conky
 - docks
 - desktop icons
 - monitors: small system monitors
 - style: decoration of windows, toolbar and menu
 - theme: set GTK theme (windows, icons)
 - toolbar: select between toolbar and panel
 - wallpaper: rotate, separate by workspace, select
 - Settings
 - backup
 - configure: the Fluxbox files such as menus, startup, etc.
 - display: change display parameters, help on how to save
 - keyboard: quick change to one of 11 languages
 - Out of sight: a collection of handy commands to hide elements
 - Leave:
 - refresh: used to restart fluxbox after changing a configuration file if not logging out
 - suspend
 - log out
 - reboot

- shutdown

The new user would do well to work through that menu in order to appreciate its contents, power, speed and flexibility. Particularly attractive is the fact that these menus are easy to read and completely under the user's control.

DRAFT

3. Fluxbox details

3.1 Styles

Styles in Fluxbox are simple text files that tell it how to decorate the window, toolbar and menu. MXFB ships with a large number of predefined styles, located in `/usr/share/fluxbox/styles/`, that can be selected in Menu > Appearance > Style. Many more styles can be found online with a web search on "fluxbox styles."

In the wider sense, style can be thought of the combination of themes, decorations and icons. There are many tools available to set up a style that you like.

- **MX Tweak** > Styles tab makes it easy to test and select these elements as well as to combine them into your own particular theme.
- **MXFB Look** provides even more detailed options that can be included into a specific collection of graphic features (a "look") that you can save.
- **MX Comfort** tool enables you to edit the colors of the default MX-comfort fluxbox style and save the changes as a new style. If you want to manually edit an existing fluxbox style, copy the style to `~/.fluxbox/styles`, rename it, and make your changes (consult Ubuntu style guide under Links, below).
- **Exit Options Manager** enables you to determine icons and layout

Styles can include a background image, but that is blocked in MX-Fluxbox by default with the top lines in Menu > Settings > Configure > Overlay. To allow the style to determine the background, place a hash mark in front to the line so that it looks like this:

```
! The following line will prevent styles from setting the background.  
#background: none
```

3.2 Themes

A GTK theme controls items such as the panel color, the backgrounds for windows and tabs, icons, how an application will look when it is active vs. inactive, buttons, check-boxes, etc. They range from very dark to very light.

The default theme for MX-Fluxbox is called MX-Comfort. It can be changed by right-clicking on the desktop to bring up Menu > Appearance > Theme, bringing up a selector (Settings Manager: Customize Look and Feel) for themes, icons, fonts etc. which makes it very easy to see and choose the other possibilities. MX-Tweak makes that possible as well.

3.3 Wallpaper

First make sure the overlay file is blocking the style from determining the background. Then click Menu > Appearance > Wallpapers > Select to see the available choices. The list that pops up from the menu entry includes any user backgrounds (`~/.fluxbox/backgrounds`) as well as system backgrounds

(*/usr/share/backgrounds*), separated by a horizontal line. This setup allows you to add backgrounds in the user folder and then be able to select them from the menu.

3.4 Key Shortcuts

Fluxbox allows the user to set key combinations as shortcuts. The settings are stored in the file `~/.fluxbox/keys`, which can be accessed for editing via `Menu > Settings > Configure > Keys`.

The names used for of a couple of the keys are a bit obscure:

- Mod1 = Alt
- Mod4 = Logo key (Windows, Apple)

More: <http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/c296.html>

There are dedicated function key combinations in MX-Fluxbox (see top of *keys* file to change):

- Ctrl+F1: MX-Fluxbox documentation
- Ctrl+F2: Run command using the quick app runner “[rofi](#)”; if you enter a command that needs terminal input, use Ctrl+Enter.
- Ctrl+F3: File manager
- Ctrl+F4: Drop-down terminal
- Ctrl+F5: MX Tools

Function keys are programmed with the modifier “Ctrl” to avoid conflict with usage by apps.

3.5 Managing menus

Main menu (MX icon on panel)

The main menu is based on a rofi config called “appfinder” (`~/.config/rofi/themes/appfinder/XX`).

[ADD]

rootMenu

You can change, add and rearrange the elements in the root menu. Subsections of the root menu can be dragged away as separate active menus. (Left click and hold the titlebar)

Open the menu file you wish to edit with `Menu > Settings > Configure > Menus`.

(The main menu and submenus Appearance, Settings and Out of sight are all separate files)

The syntax is: `[category] (name) {command}` – be sure to use brackets, parentheses and braces correctly.

Example 1: change “Music” to open Clementine instead of DeaDBeeF

- Find the line with the word Music (use Ctrl+F if necessary)

```
[exec] (Music) {deadbeef}
```

- Double-click the word “deadbeef” in the command part so it is highlighted, then type “clementine” and save, producing this result:

```
[exec] (Music) {clementine}
```

- Click Menu > Leave > Refresh to use the new settings

Example 2: add Skype to the menu

- Decide where you want it to show up; for this example, let’s assume you want to add a new category “Communicate” in the Common apps section and enter it there
- Create the category using the submenu commands (see below), introduce a new line and follow the pattern: [exec] (menu entry) {command}
- The result will look something like this:

```
[submenu] (Communicate)
    [exec] (Skype) {skypeforlinux}
[end]
```

- Menu > Leave > Refresh

NOTE: as the second example shows, the command to use may not always be obvious.

All apps (rootMenu)

The menu uses the category label listed in the app’s desktop file (in /usr/share/applications) to set up its structure. The items it contains are refreshed by default every time the update program is run. You can change that behavior by checking the box in MX Tweak > Fluxbox > Update existing menu entries, after which you can use the bottom menu entry “Update.”

To remove this menu, first click Menu > Settings > Configure and delete the section so that it does not show in the menu. Then disable the update trigger with this command in a terminal:

```
sudo rm /etc/apt/apt.conf.d/00exectmp
```

3.6 Text files

All basic settings are controlled by [text files](#) with straight-forward format. Before you begin editing any configuration files, you should back up your current configuration. In the file manager Thunar click on the config file to open it, then use File > Save as to rename it (e.g., “filename_BAK”). Should things go wrong you can always restore the previous setup.

When editing these configuration files, you can prevent individual settings from being applied by simply commenting out the relevant line (adding a hashtag # at the beginning of the line)

For example: Setting A: This line will be read by Fluxbox
 # Setting B: but this one won’t be

3.7 Overlay File

Fluxbox allows the user to globally override settings, eg. System fonts, xxx,xxx via the overlay file. These override settings are stored in the file `~/.fluxbox/overlay`, which can be accessed for editing via `Menu > Settings > Configure > Overlay`.

Element settings defined in the overlay file will override settings defined elsewhere in the fluxbox setup. For example, font settings in the overlay file will override the font settings defined in the current fluxbox style.

You can adjust the font being used by a theme or style using the theme selector; default for MX-Fluxbox is Sans 11. More detailed control is available by using the `~/.fluxbox/overlay` file. For instance, this set of commands might be tried to make the text generally larger:

```
# fonts-----  
menu.frame.font: PT Sans-12:regular  
menu.title.font: PT Sans-12:regular  
toolbar.clock.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.workspace.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.iconbar.focused.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
toolbar.iconbar.unfocused.font: PT Sans-11:regular  
window.font: Lato-9
```

For other font options, consult the Links at the end of this document.

3.8 Window Settings and Controls

A variety of Fluxbox settings for how windows look and behave can be accessed with `Menu > Settings > Configure > Window`:

- Focus Model : Options for window focusing
- Maximize Options: how maximized windows are handled
- Tab Options: show/hide tabs on title bar, show/hide icons in title bar
- Transparency: settings for focused, unfocused Windows and root menu (left click reduces value, right click increases value, 0= transparent, 255=opaque)
- Opaque Window Moving: toggle on/off
- Workspace Warping: toggle on/off
- Slit
- Toolbar

Moving and adjusting windows can be controlled with various key and mouse combinations

- Resize: Alt + right click near the corner you want to change and drag.
- Move: Alt + left click and drag.
- Stick: use the little square in the top left corner to limit the window to the current desktop.
- Options: right-click on the window's toolbar at the top. Of special value is the ability to select to remember size and location (recorded in `~/.fluxbox/apps`).

- **Tabbing:** combine multiple windows into one window with tabs across the top by simply Ctrl-Clicking and holding the titlebar of one window and dragging and dropping it on another window. Reverse the procedure to separate them again.
- **Reduce window to titlebar (“shade”):** Double click the titlebar

3.9 Terminals

- Ctrl+F4 = Drop-down Xfce4-terminal
- Menu > Terminal: preferred terminal

3.10 Screen Options

- **Brightness:** Settings Manager > Tools > Brightness systray
- **Capture:** mxfb-quickshot. Typically triggered with the Print Screen (AKA Print, PrtSc, etc.) key, but any other key (e.g., Ctrl+Q) can be described in the keys file.
- **Tiling:** two sets of commands are listed at the bottom of the keys file
- **Resolution:** Menu > Settings > Display (arandr). Be sure to read the “Help” file to see how to save any changes you wish to make.

4. Traditional Fluxbox

This section addresses the user who wants to run a traditional Fluxbox setup.

How do I start?

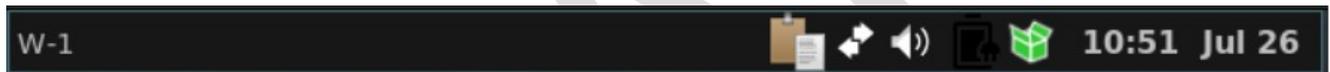
It is very easy to restore a traditional Fluxbox setup. Right-click anywhere on the desktop to see and use the desktop menu (rootMenu). The following changes are at your fingertips:

- Settings > Toolbar > Fluxbox: the traditional (tint2) panel will disappear and the Fluxbox toolbar will appear at the top of the screen.
- Out-of-sight > Kill dock*
- Out-of-sight > Kill conky*
- Out-of-sight > Toggle iDesk and Toggle icons*

*For persistent changes, comment out (#) the relevant lines in the file **which opens with rootMenu** Settings > Configure > Startup so they look like this:

```
#$HOME/.fluxbox/scripts/DefaultDock.mxdk
#$HOME/.fluxbox/scripts/conkystart
#idesktoggle idesk on 1>/dev/null 2>&1 &
```

Let's go through how to understand and use the changed desktop:



What is the toolbar across the top?

This fluxbox toolbar offers MX users information about workspaces, open applications, a system tray, and the current time. Its width and placement can be set with the options available by middle-clicking (=scroll wheel) the clock or pager on the toolbar—if that doesn't work for some reason, click Menu > Settings > Window, slit and toolbar > Toolbar. Height is set in `~/.fluxbox/init/`:

```
session.screen0.toolbar.height: 0
```

If a zero is there, it means that the selected style will set the height. Otherwise, a value of 20 to 25 is often comfortable.

The toolbar contains the following default components (L-R):

pager

- Allows you to switch workspace up (right click) or down (left click); same as Control + F1/F2/ etc., Ctrl-Alt + ←/→ or using the scroll wheel over an empty section of the desktop. Number and name are set in the `~/.fluxbox/init`. “W” stands for “Workspace.” Not used by default.

iconbar

- Here open apps will show an icon, with various window options available by right-clicking the relevant icon (including the toolbar itself) > iconbar mode. Default for MX-Fluxbox is to show All Windows.

systemtray AKA systray

- Equivalent of Notification Area in Xfce. Default components set in `~/.fluxbox/init`; apps that have a `systemtray` option will show there when launched.

clock

- To adjust the clock to 12h or 24h, right-click and click 12h or 24h, whichever shows. If that doesn't work, select "Edit clock format."
- 24h: `%H:%M`, 12h: `%I:%M`.
- The default is 12h time and date in day/short month format: `%I:%M %b %d`. Many other time/date options can be found [in the Wiki](#).

You can move or delete any of the toolbar components in `~/.fluxbox/init/`, which by default are set up in this way:

`workspacename, iconbar, systemtray, clock`

How can I make the toolbar look more like legacy systems such as Windows?

Click Menu > Appearance > Toolbar > Traditional (using `tint2`)

I have read about the slit: what is that?

The slit was originally conceived as a container for [dockapps](#), but in MXFB it is primarily used for the dock. It can be located at various locations on the desktop:

- TopLeft, TopCenter, TopRight
- LeftCenter, RightCenter
- BottomLeft, BottomCenter, BottomRight

You can search the default repo for dockapps with this terminal command:

```
apt-cache search dockapp
```

Many available in the repos may not work well, but it's worth taking a look.

One very interesting and useful dockapp not found with that apt-cache search is the monitor stack [gkrellm](#), installed by default in MX-Fluxbox. It is available by clicking Menu > System > Monitors and has many configuration options (right-click on the top label or on one of the charts), [many skins](#) and [many plugins](#). A few skins are installed by default, and can be reviewed and selected by clicking Shift-PageUp.

5. FAQ-Finder

How do I...	From Desktop	With App
Open the rootMenu	Right click on Desktop	
Open programme X	rootMenu > All apps	
	Click MX Logo (Appfinder)	
	Press Windows/ Apple key (rofi)	
Install new apps	Software icon	MX Package Installer
Toggle desktops icons on/off	rootMenu > Out of sight > Toggle iDesk	
Change to a different Conky	Conky Manager	
	rootMenu > Appearance > Conky	
Toggle Conky on/off	rootMenu > Out of sight > Toggle Conky	
Select a different Panel		Settings manager > tint2manager
Edit a Panel		tint2settings
Edit the items in a Dock	rootMenu > Appearance > Dockmaker	
	For a rofi dock > Rofi Manager	
Change appearance of window Title bar and FB-Menu	rootMenu > Appearance > Style	
Change appearance of	rootMenu > Appearance >	Settings manager > Customize look and feel

window contents, icons, font	Theme	
	MX-Tweak	
Change the wallpaper	rootMenu > Appearance > Wallpapers	Nitrogen
Edit key shortcuts	rootMenu > Settings > Configure > Keys	
Edit root Menu	rootMenu > Settings > Configure > Menu	
Remove desktop items	rootMenu > Out of sight >	
Open a Terminal	rootMenu > Terminal	Xfce4-terminal or other preferred terminal

6. Links

The man files (in terminal or <https://linux.die.net/man/>):

- fluxbox
- fluxbox-keys
- fbrun
- fluxstyle
- fluxbox-remote

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/pdf/fluxbook.pdf>

Basic handbook, somewhat dated but still useful

<https://bbs.archlinux.org/viewtopic.php?id=77729>

Some good general explanations with examples

<https://wiki.archlinux.org/index.php/Fluxbox>

Some commands are Arch-specific

<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/HowToFluxboxStyles>

<https://ubuntuforums.org/showthread.php?t=617812>

Excellent thread on fluxbox keys

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxBox>

<https://wiki.debian.org/FluxboxIcon>

<http://fluxbox.sourceforge.net/docbook/en/html/chap-tabs.html>

Window tabbing.

<https://github.com/jerry3904/mx-fluxbox>

The GitHub repo of MX-Fluxbox

<https://mxlinux.org/wiki/help-files/help-mx-fluxbox/>

The MX-Fluxbox Wiki entry

<https://bit.ly/2Sm1PJl>

YouTube: MX-Fluxbox

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