
THE GARDEN
A Micro-Epic High Fantasy Game System

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[This page will be the credits and acknowledgements page.]

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Introduction

WELCOME TO THE GARDEN

[PAGE PLACEHOLDER 2]

[This page needs an opening dialog of basics for what the garden is, what it isn't, etc. The classic TTRPG page explaining the overview of the whole of the system.]

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THE GREAT AWAKENING: AN EPIC CHRONICLE

The Age of the Mindless Crawl

Before the world had a name, there was only the damp, silent dark. For uncounted generations, the ancestors of the Gastrons existed in a state of perpetual, instinctual repetition. They knew the sharp scent of decaying oak leaves, the heavy pull of morning dew, and the cold terror of the overhead predators that swooped down from the sky without warning. They moved along flat, silver trails of mucus, their bodies pressed hard against the dirt, unaware of the stars, unseeing the horizon, and trapped within the prison of a mindless crawl.

The world was vast, terrifying, and completely incomprehensible. A fallen apple was not a resource to be harvested and traded, but a sudden, localized cataclysm that altered the terrain. A summer rain was not a seasonal blessing, but an overwhelming deluge that threatened to drown entire generations in a single afternoon. The concept of tomorrow did not exist. There was only the immediate, desperate struggle to find moisture, avoid the crushing jaws of tunneling monsters, and survive until the sun dipped below the grass tips.

The Midnight Flash and the Shattered Sky

The turning point of history occurred on a night known now across all Gastron cultures as The Midnight Flash. High above the tallest clover canopies, where the grass stalks give way to the empty air, there stood an ancient, imposing monument of fused stone and glass: the Spire. To the mindless creatures of the dirt, it was simply an unmoving cliff face, a permanent fixture of the landscape that caught the afternoon light. They did not know that within its highest chambers, forces beyond comprehension were being channeled, compressed, and manipulated.

In the dead of winter, during a thunderstorm that shook the very roots of the world, the apex of the Spire fractured.

Witnesses across the central regions—whose descendants carry the inherited memory in their bloodlines—describe a sound like the snapping of a thousand iron needles. The sky did not merely light up; it tore open. A blinding cascade of kinetic, white-hot arcane energy erupted from the fractured laboratory, lighting the undergrowth with a terrifying, artificial day. The focal crystals that sat at the heart of the Spire's upper chambers detonated, vaporizing

the stone architecture and scattering millions of microscopic, glowing energy shards across the landscape.

For three days and three nights, it rained fire from the sky. But it was not a fire that consumed flesh or burned leaf matter. It was a cold, pulsing violet light. Shards of raw crystal drove deep into the soil, embedded themselves within the root labyrinths, and dissolved into the winding water channels. Every drop of dew that fell that week carried a microscopic hum of raw, unstable magic.

The Inward Growth

When the light finally faded and the smoke cleared from the grass, the world had fundamentally shifted. The creatures of the dirt did not grow into towering, mountain-sized monsters; instead, their transformation was entirely internal.

The raw energy of the shards had triggered an immediate, explosive evolutionary leap. The neural pathways of the Gastrons flared to life. For the first time, a snail looked at its reflection in a droplet of water and recognized its own existence. They looked up at the fractured Spire and felt awe; they looked at the bones of their ancestors and felt grief; they looked at the horizon and felt an overwhelming desire to explore.

Within a single season, the old instinctual crawl was abandoned forever. The Gastrons stood up. Their bodies adapted to a true, upright bipedal stance, lifting their heads away from the dirt to look the world in the eye. Their lower muscles are divided into two distinct, powerful legs capable of running, leaping, and navigating the world with athletic grace. Their eyes, long trapped on short, clumsy nubs, extended upward on elegant, flexible cranial stalks, giving them an unprecedented 360-degree view of their new high-fantasy reality.

They looked down at their smooth, eyeless faces and realized they were no longer worms in the dirt. They were a people. They were the Gastrons, and *The Garden* was theirs to claim.





THE FIVE PEOPLES: LINEAGES OF THE ECOSYSTEM

As the Gastrons spread out from the base of the Spire, their exposure to different micro-climates, raw crystal nodes, and localized spirits caused them to divide into five distinct, proud lineages. Each lineage adapted a unique cultural philosophy and environmental identity to survive the high-stakes dangers of the undergrowth.

Bush Snail: Guardians of the Wild Currents

Cultural Philosophy: The Bush Snails are the spiritual heart of *The Garden*. While other lineages looked at the raw crystal shards and saw a power source to be harvested or studied, the Bush Snails realized that the cataclysm had awakened something else entirely: the latent, ancient spirits of the natural world. They possess a deep, instinctual affinity for the elemental forces humming through the soil, the whispers of the wind through the clover canopies, and the silent will of the old roots. Often viewed by more rigid societies as eccentric, free-spirited, or "hippy-dippy," the Bush Snails approach life with a profound reverence for the balance of the ecosystem. They value community, oral history, and harmony over industrial progress.

Environmental Theme & Region: Bush Snail culture is deeply rooted in the rural, untamed borderlands of the ecosystem. They build sprawling, woven villages within the dense briar patches, bramble fields, and overgrown wild clover fields far from the shadow of the Spire. Their architecture is organic, utilizing living vines and hollowed-out gourds.

Societal Roles: Because of their spiritual attunement, Bush Snails naturally gravitate toward rural professions that interact with the earth, such as cultivators, fungal farmers, and herbalists. However, when the balance of the undergrowth is threatened by shard horrors or outside predators, their most dedicated individuals step into the legendary role of Spirit Guardians, channeling the raw, untamed elements to shield their companions from harm.



Garden Snail: The Nimble Syndicate

Cultural Philosophy: Survival in the undergrowth requires more than just raw strength; it requires absolute precision, flawless agility, and a quick wit. The Garden Snails are the smallest of the five lineages, but what they lack in physical stature, they more than make up for in sheer velocity and manual dexterity. They are a practical, highly adaptable people who view the world as a complex mechanism waiting to be manipulated. Garden Snail culture values cleverness, sharp reflexes, and the ability to spot an opening where others see a wall. They are highly social, forming tight-knit merchant guilds, artisan collectives, and underground syndicates that thrive on the exchange of secrets, wealth, and rare materials.

Environmental Theme & Region: Garden Snails dominate the high-traffic trade lanes, stone patios, and abandoned brick walkways that crisscross the central regions of *The Garden*. They are city-dwellers, building intricate, bustling miniature metropolises inside overturned wooden crates, discarded clay flowerpots, and stone masonry cracks where trade can flourish.

Societal Roles: Their incredibly nimble fingers and natural swiftness make them unparalleled masters of delicate, precise craftsmanship. They are highly sought after as jewelers, working with shimmering crystal flakes, and as locksmiths, designing complex mechanisms out of twisted sewing needles and copper wire. Of course, these exact same physical gifts mean that a significant portion of Garden Snails find immense success in more nefarious, high-stakes pursuits, operating as master thieves, silent infiltrators, and shadow scouts for adventuring parties.



Giant Snail: The Iron Shells

Cultural Philosophy: When the world fractures, someone must stand as an immovable wall. The Giant Snails are the physical titans of Gastron society, towering over the other lineages with massive, thick-plated shells and immense muscular development. Culturally, they are a stoic, deliberate, and deeply honorable people. They do not believe in rushing into situations; they move with a slow, measured confidence, knowing that hasty actions lead to structural failure. Giant Snail society is built around the concepts of duty, protection, and collective endurance. They believe that their incredible physical strength is a gift meant to bear the burdens of the community, and they take immense pride in being the shield that stands between their loved ones and the terrors of the wild.

Environmental Theme & Region: Giant Snails are drawn to environments that match their rugged durability. They are the undisputed masters of the Iron-Gate Crags, the subterranean networks, and the rocky borders where the soil gives way to heavy gravel beds. Their fortresses are carved directly out of solid stone, reinforced with discarded iron gears and rusted tool components.

Societal Roles: Due to their unparalleled strength and natural resilience, Giant Snails gravitate toward heavy physical professions. They are the stonemasons, blacksmiths, and heavy laborers who build the infrastructure of *The Garden*. On the battlefield, they are the ultimate frontline defenders, serving as elite fortress guards, heavy vanguards, and armored sentries who can hold a grid chokepoint against an entire swarm of attackers.



Toothed Snail: The Backbone of the Garden

Cultural Philosophy: While specialization allows for excellence in a single field, it also creates vulnerability when the ecosystem shifts. The Toothed Snails are the ultimate expression of biological and cultural versatility. Lacking the extreme spiritual affinity of the Bush Snail, the blinding speed of the Garden Snail, the immense power of the Giant Snail, or the hyper-intelligence of the Woodland Snail, the Toothed Snail occupies the vital, brilliant center. They are the true jacks-of-all-trades of *The Garden*. Culturally, they are a fiercely pragmatic, resilient, and democratic people. They do not believe in being confined by a single path; a Toothed Snail believes that with enough determination, any craft can be mastered, any weapon can be wielded, and any crisis can be managed. They are the glue that holds Gastron civilization together.

Environmental Theme & Region: Toothed Snails are found absolutely everywhere. They do not have a single, isolated regional home; instead, they represent the primary population of the crossroads, multi-cultural trade hubs, and transitional biomes where the fields meet the crags. They adapt their architecture to whatever environment they occupy, blending styles seamlessly.

Societal Roles: Because of their incredible mechanical and mental flexibility, a Toothed Snail can fill any role an adventuring party or town requires. They are just as likely to be found running a bustling tavern at a crossroads as they are wielding a broadsword in a mercenary company, negotiating treaties in the Lavender Vales, or researching ancient relics. They are the adaptive core of the world.



Woodland Snail: The Archons of the Spire

Cultural Philosophy: Knowledge is the ultimate weapon, and logic is the highest virtue. The Woodland Snails are the intellectuals, philosophers, and arcane scholars of *The Garden*. When the Spire detonated, their ancestors were positioned in the deep root channels directly beneath the blast radius, absorbing a massive wave of pure, concentrated mental clarity and arcane resonance. Woodland Snail culture is academic, disciplined, and intensely curious. They view the world not as a random collection of events, but as a grand, mathematical equation waiting to be solved. They value libraries, precise documentation, experimental research, and logical debate. To a Woodland Snail, an unsolved mystery is an insult to intellect, and they will risk their lives to unearth lost knowledge.

Environmental Theme & Region: Woodland Snails establish their grand academies, cloistered archives, and scriptoriums within the deep, shadow drenched root systems of the great ancient trees and inside the dangerous, glowing borders of the Spire Ruins. Their settlements are silent, academic havens filled with towering shelves of bark-parchment scrolls and glowing crystal lanterns.

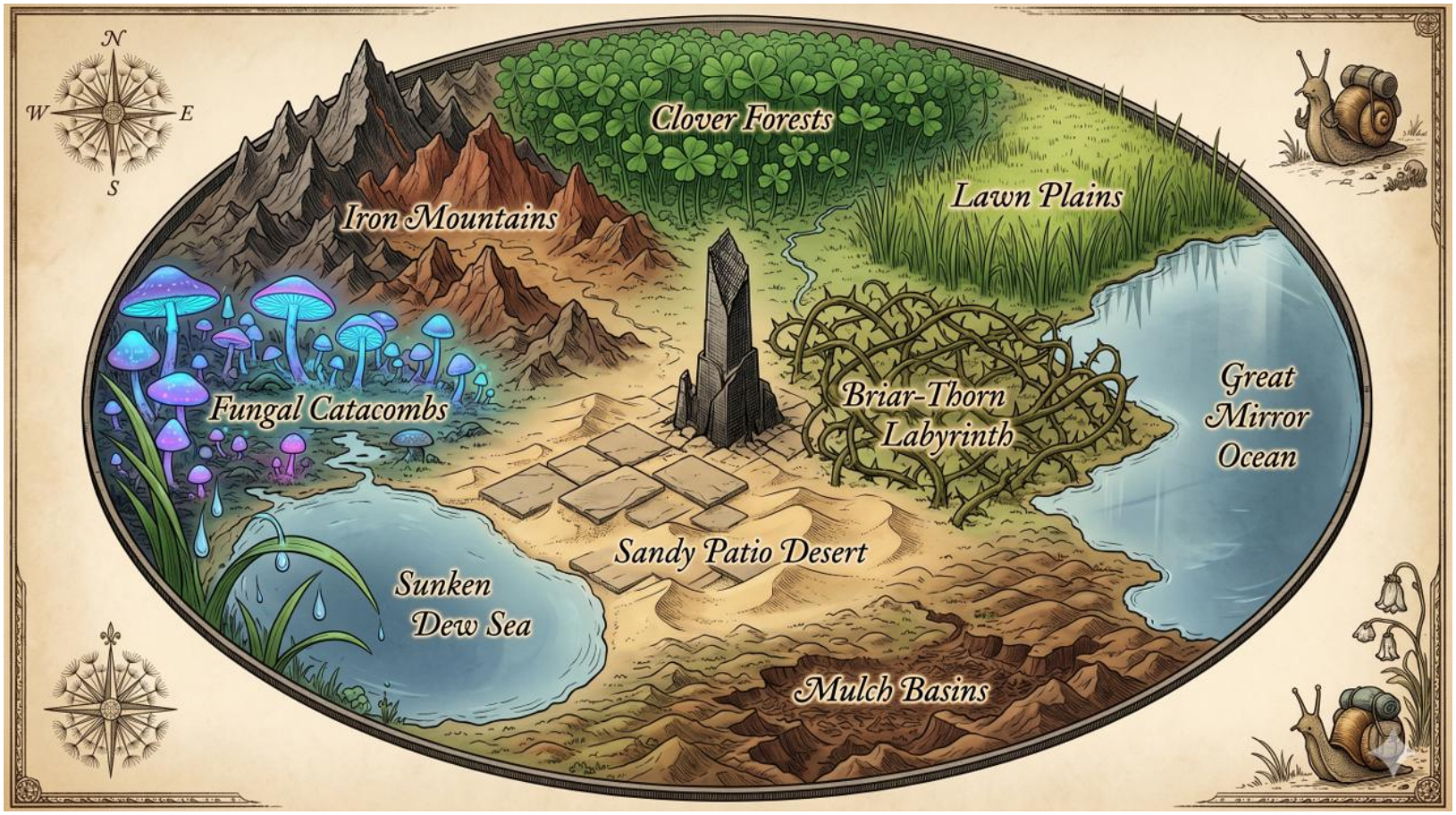
Societal Roles: Their superior intellect naturally guides them toward highly academic and research-oriented pursuits, serving as cartographers, master engineers, historians, and alchemists. However, they are far from helpless scholars; on the battlefield, their incredible mental discipline and attunement to raw crystal frequencies make them devastating Battle Casters, weaving complex arcane equations into lethal spells that can shatter enemy formations from afar.



LANDSCAPE OF ADVENTURE: THE CONTINENTAL BIOMES

The realm of *The Garden* is an infinite, sprawling landmass of mythic proportions, stretching across a majestic radius of over two hundred leagues in every direction from the shattered crown of the Spire. It is a true continent of unmatched geographic diversity, where primeval wooden wildernesses, towering metal mountain ranges, arid clay wastes, and roaring inland seas collide to form a breathtaking tapestry of peril and wonder.

What follows are but a few of the most renowned and wondrous regions that have been charted by brave Gastron cartographers since the dawn of the Awakening. Yet, you must remember that these known territories are merely a fraction of the vast, uncharted continent that awaits you. Beyond the edges of the master maps lie countless forgotten ruins, hidden sanctuaries, and legendary biomes steeped in raw crystal magic mysteries, that are yours alone to discover, explore, and conquer as you carve your own epic legacy into the history of the undergrowth.



Lavender Vales (High Canopy)

Suspended multiple feet above the dangerous soil, the Vales represent the height of civilized, high-canopy grandeur. Suspended in the air, this region is built upon a sprawling network of thick lavender branches, interlocking flower steps, and woven vine bridges. The air here is perpetually thick with aromatic purple pollen, creating a vibrant haze that filters the morning light. The local insect societies have built breathtaking kingdoms here, practicing complex blade-dancing and cutthroat diplomacy. For a Gastron traveler, navigating the Vales means mastering verticality, balancing on narrow petal pathways, and dealing with aristocratic factions that view ground-dwellers with a mixture of curiosity and disdain.

Iron-Gate Crags (Badlands of Rust)

Deep within the rocky eastern borders of the ecosystem lies a terrifying, industrial landscape forged from the remnants of humanity's past. The Crags are built around and inside a collection of heavy, rusted iron garden tools, ancient construction meshes, and discarded brickwork that have settled deep into the earth over centuries. It is a harsh realm of echoing darkness, jagged metal cliffs, and sudden structural collapses.

The Giant Snails have transformed this unforgiving environment into an impenetrable fortress network, converting massive, rusted iron gears into waterwheels and weapon foundries. Expeditions into the Crags require immense physical endurance, as a single slip can send a hero falling into a chasm of jagged, weapon-destroying rust.

Spire Ruins (Arcane Ground Zero)

The undeniable heart of danger within *The Garden* is the radioactive, scarred wasteland surrounding the base of the shattered stone tower. The Spire Ruins are a twisted landscape where raw, unaligned crystal energy actively leaks directly into the soil. The grass here grows in erratic, unnatural geometric patterns, and the ground itself glows with an eerie, pulsing violet luminescence. Gravity fluctuates unpredictably, and the water channels hum with unstable magic. This is the birthplace of the shard horrors—wild wildlife that have been completely consumed and mutated by mineral growths. Despite the extreme danger, adventurers are drawn to the Ruins like moths to a flame, for it is here that the largest, purest crystal shards can be harvested to fund legendary magic and powerful Gifts.

Great Mirror Ocean (Infinite Lake)

To a human, this body of water is merely a large, decorative landscape lake or neighborhood retention pond at the edge of the property lines. To the Gastrons, it is The Great Mirror Ocean, an endless, terrifying expanse of deep water that stretches completely past the eastern horizon. The coastlines are dangerous zones of shifting pebble beaches and massive, rotting driftwood sea-cliffs. Deep-sea currents are highly unpredictable, driven by submerged crystal shards that heat the water from below. Gastron sailors construct massive skiffs out of treated oak bark and buoyant seed pods to navigate its surface, trading with remote island communities while constantly scanning the dark depths for colossal koi-dragons, predatory water-strider fleets, and ink-well kraken-spawn.

Sunken Terraces (Kelp-Forest Marsh)

Where the Great Mirror Ocean meets the low-lying wetlands, the land dissolves into the Sunken Terraces. This biome is a vast, flooded labyrinth of terraced mudbrick retaining walls and shallow pools, choked with towering water milfoil and bladderwort weeds that mimic primeval kelp forests. The water level fluctuates constantly based on distant human drainage systems, creating a highly dynamic environment.

The Terraces are perpetually humid, draped in a thick blanket of hanging fog. Travel here is slow and treacherous; characters must constantly wade through waist-deep water or swim through submerged channels, managing the *Gunked* status as thick, black silt threatens to clog their armor joints and exhaust their Stamina pools.

Emerald Canopy (Primordial Jungle)

Stretching across the northern territory is a dense, impenetrable jungle known as the Emerald Canopy. Formed by a massive, untamed patch of wild clover, overgrown dandelions, and towering broadleaf weeds, this region completely blocks out the sky. The forest floor exists in a state of perpetual, humid twilight, lit only by bioluminescent mosses and fungi. The scale of the plant life here is staggering—a single clover leaf provides shelter from torrential downpours, and fallen dandelion stalks serve as hollowed-out highways. The Canopy is a hotbed of biological competition, filled with aggressive predatory mantises, territorial wasp hives, and shifting fungal spores that can choke the lungs of unprepared explorers.

Terracotta Desert (Shifting Patios)

To the south lies a blinding, arid expanse of absolute flat heat: the Terracotta Desert. This biome is forged from a massive, abandoned clay-brick patio that has cracked and split under the relentless sun. The wide gaps between the brick pavers form deep, shadowed canyons where subterranean monsters hide from the heat, while the flat surfaces of the bricks bake at extreme temperatures, dealing passive environmental damage to any character traveling without protective footgear. Sandstorms here are common, driven by fine mortar dust and crushed brick powder that strips away visibility and blinds eyestalks. Water is the ultimate currency in this region, and settlements are built exclusively around rare pipe-leaks and dripping spigots.

Whispering Briars (Arctic Needles)

On the westernmost fringes of the map, where the fertile soil hardens into clay, stands the dark wall of the Whispering Briars. This is a massive, tangled forest of dead raspberry bushes, dense thorn thickets, and fallen pine needles. The thorns here are as large as castle towers to a Gastron, whistling with an eerie, mournful sound whenever the wind blows from the outer borders. The climate is uncharacteristically cold, as the dense brambles trap freezing frost long into the spring seasons.

Navigating the Briars is a tactical nightmare; the paths are razor-sharp mazes where physical movement requires careful Body tests to avoid taking automatic slashing damage from the surrounding brush.

White Dunes (Playground Sandbox)

Located near the southwestern trade crossroads is a bizarre, alien landscape known as the White Dunes. A colossal human sandbox, forgotten for years, has turned into a shifting desert of pure, coarse quartz crystals. The landscape changes shape entirely after every heavy windstorm, burying cities and uncovering ancient, lost artifacts from the pre-Awakening era. Walking across the dunes is physically exhausting, cutting base movement speeds in half as boots sink into the loose, unstable sand grains. The region is home to specialized burrowing antlions and crystalline scarabs that swim through the sand as if it were water, launching ambushes from directly beneath an unsuspecting victim.

Weeping Aqueducts

(Gothic Sunken Vaults)

Running deep beneath the central territories is a massive network of ancient, subterranean drainage pipes, stone brick culverts, and concrete sewers known as the Weeping Aqueducts. This is a dark fantasy gothic underworld, where constant trickles of cold water echo off towering archways of stained concrete. The environment is completely detached from the surface world's day-night cycle, lit only by veins of glowing arcane crystals that have sprouted through cracks in the masonry. The Aqueducts are highly dangerous but strategically vital, serving as a dark highway system that links distant corners of *The Garden* together. However, it is heavily haunted by liquid ink horrors, toxic mold colonies, and outcasts who trade in forbidden shard sorcery.



THE ENLIGHTENMENT: RISE OF GASTRON CIVILIZATION

From Shell Bound Hermits to Empire Builders

In the cycles following the catastrophic illumination of the Midnight Flash, the five peoples did not merely scatter into the wild clover, they built empires. *The Awakening* of the Gastron mind brought forth a roaring wave of architectural, societal, and political innovation. No longer content to hide within the damp dark of rotten logs, the Gastron lineages began to reclaim the ruins of the forgotten pre-Awakening world, transforming detritus into grand, defensive strongholds.

In the high, sweeping spires of the central regions, magnificent libraries forged from discarded book bindings and bound with spider silk twine rose toward the sky. Deep within the earth, the steady rhythmic thrum of iron foundries echoed through the crags as metals were smelted down to forge heavy broadswords, reinforced shield rims, and ornate metallic filigree to decorate ancestral shells. Roads constructed from smoothed gravel and polished pebbles soon linked the distant continental biomes together, allowing vast, heavily guarded trade caravans to march securely from the arid clay wastes of the south to the primordial jungles of the far north.



Yet, this sudden golden age of enlightenment was not born out of peaceful luxury; it was forged in the fires of an escalating, high stakes struggle for biological survival.

Gathering Shadow of the Shard Horrors

As Gastron society flourished, the wild undercurrents of the continent grew increasingly violent. The raw, unaligned crystal energy bleeding from the fractured crown of the Spire did not fade over time; it seeped deeper into the subterranean veins of the continent, twisting the mindless wildlife that bathed in its violet light. Deep in the overgrown briars and the dark depths of the undergrowth, terrifying mutations began to take root.

Insects that once fled from the smallest spark were warped into massive, apex horrors whose chitinous shells grew dense, multi-layered crystal geode plating. These shard bound predators, driven mad by the volatile arcane frequencies humming in their bloodlines, began aggressive incursions into the borderlands of Gastron civilization. Entire crop fields of cultivated clover were razed in a single night; trade routes were shattered by burrowing behemoths, and outlying villages were systematically hunted to extinction.

The message echoed clearly from the Lavender Vales to the Iron Gate Crags: *The Awakening* was not a guarantee of survival, it was an invitation to fight.

THE GRAND CALL TO ADVENTURE: HEROES OF THE UNDERGROWTH

Gathering of the Vanguard

Faced with the rising tide of the shard horrors, ordinary Gastrons could no longer rely solely on city walls or isolated guard garrisons. The continent demanded a new breed of survivalist, elite, coordinated bands of pathfinders, spell weavers, and heavy vanguards willing to venture beyond the safety of the stone masonry and strike directly into the heart of the uncharted biomes.

The Adventurers of *The Garden.*

To step onto the path of adventure is to cast aside the quiet safety of the trade hubs and swear an unyielding oath to the ecosystem. It means stepping Into the hazardous wilds, where a single miscalculation can mean the cracking of your shell. Whether a hero is driven by a sacred spiritual connection to the wild currents, a burning desire to unlock the mathematical equations of raw crystal magic, or the fierce honor of standing as an unyielding wall against a ravenous apex beast, they represent the absolute pinnacle of Gastron exceptionalism.

Character Creation

THE METICULOUS MANUSCRIPT: INCEPTION OF A GASTRON

To build a hero in *The Garden* is to chart the rise of an exceptional individual from the everyday fabric of Gastron civilization. The Great Awakening is not a recent shock, but a foundational historical epic that took place nearly nine centuries ago. The character you create today is not a wild, mindless creature of the damp dark suddenly blinking into self-awareness; they are the proud descendant of those ancient, original lineages. They have grown up within established, generations old Gastron cultures, surrounded by the architecture, laws, and trade guilds built by their ancestors over the last nine hundred years.



When you create your character, you are taking a civilian, like a blacksmith from the Iron-Gate Crags, a glass blower from the brick patios, or a quiet scribe from the root archives, and forging them into an adventurer. You are selecting a Gastron who has chosen to step away from their ordinary profession, allocating their stats, and unlocking the unique tactical Gifts required to survive the long, perilous journeys across the continent.

This chapter serves as your mechanical blueprint to transition a citizen of the undergrowth into a true vanguard of the wilderness.

Bridging to Your Destiny

Your journey into this high stakes frontier begins now. You have walked through the shifting history of *The Awakening*, surveyed the vast continental biomes that stretch across the landmass, and witnessed the cultural philosophies of the five proud snail peoples who fight to hold the line against encroaching dark.

Turn the page, draw your quill, and prepare to take your first monumental step out into...

The Garden.

STEP 1: CHOOSE YOUR SPECIES

Your first and most permanent choice is selecting your character's snail lineage. In the wake of the Awakening nine centuries ago, five distinct peoples emerged to claim the undergrowth. This choice establishes your baseline anatomical properties, your movement parameters on the battlefield, and your unique foundational traits.

Review the five primary lineages below to determine which ancestral heritage calls to your character concept:

The Bush Snail (Spiritualists)

- **Anatomical Profile:** Bush Snails typically possess vibrant, swirled shells that naturally mimic the flora around them—often growing moss, small lichens, or fungal spores directly on their chitinous whorls. Their skin is supple and earth-toned, varying from deep peat-brown to soft clover-green.
- **Cultural Disposition:** Free-spirited, deeply communal, and inherently magical. They view the world as a lattice of living spirits rather than a resource to be engineered.
- **Tactical Overview:** Exceptional channels for spiritual and elemental magic. Their natural attunement makes them brilliant support characters, battlefield controllers, and resilient protectors when fulfilling the role of a Spirit Guardian.

Racial Attributes:

- **Primary Ability Stat Modifiers:** +2 Soul, -1 Body, -1 Heart
- **Base Speed:** 6 Squares
- **Base Stamina:** 3 Points

Garden Snail (Agile Collectors)

- **Anatomical Profile:** The smallest and lightest of all the bipedal Gastrons. Their shells are compact, featuring streamlined, hydrodynamic curves that allow for swift torso twists. Their bipedal legs are exceptionally long and lean relative to their body mass, built for explosive bursts of speed.
- **Cultural Disposition:** Highly social, quick-witted, and pragmatic. They are urban artisans, merchants, and shadow-brokers who value clever sleight-of-hand and analytical observation over brute physical dominance.
- **Tactical Overview:** Unrivaled masters of battlefield mobility and precision striking. They excel at slipping past enemy frontlines, disarming complex mechanical traps on the map layout, and finding weak joints in heavy monster shells.

Racial Attributes:

- **Primary Ability Stat Modifiers:** +2 Heart, -2 Body, -1 Mind
- **Base Speed:** 7 Squares
- **Base Stamina:** 2 Points

Giant Snail (Juggernauts)

- **Anatomical Profile:** Massive, imposing figures who tower over all other snail-kin. Their shells are thick, heavily calcified fortresses, often bearing deep battle scars, reinforced iron rivets, or stone-grafted ridges. Their skin is thick, leathery, and incredibly dense.
- **Cultural Disposition:** Stoic, honorable, and fiercely protective. They believe that strength is a social responsibility, serving as the literal walls that preserve Gastron civilization from the horrors of the wild.
- **Tactical Overview:** The definitive frontline vanguard. While they move slower across the grid squares, their raw physical power allows them to absorb massive impacts, hold critical choke-points, and shield fragile allies from harm.

Racial Attributes:

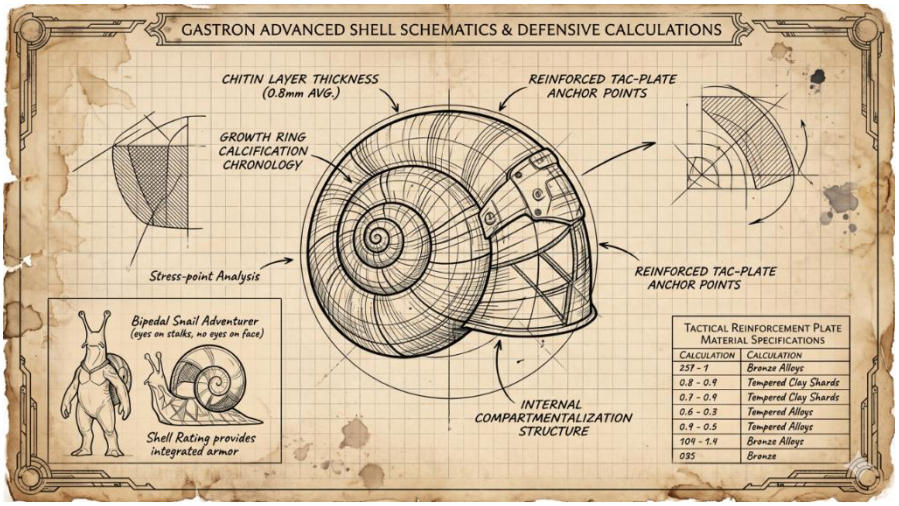
- **Primary Ability Stat Modifiers:** +2 Body, -1 Mind
- **Base Speed:** 5 Squares
- **Base Stamina:** 5 Points

Toothed Snail (Adaptable Vanguards)

- **Anatomical Profile:** Characterized by a series of small, calcified ridge-protrusions along the aperture of their shells, giving them their historical name. Their physical build is perfectly proportional—neither as bulky as the Giant Snail nor as slight as the Garden Snail.
- **Cultural Disposition:** Fierce independent, democratic, and intensely practical. They refuse to be pinned down to a single philosophy or trade, believing that a true Gastron should be ready to handle anything.
- **Tactical Overview:** The ultimate tactical flexible element. They can fill any gap in an adventuring party, shifting seamlessly from melee to ranged support or survival tracking depending on the need of the party.

Racial Attributes:

- **Primary Ability Stat Modifiers:** Neutral (No positive or negative adjustments)
- **Base Speed:** 6 Squares
- **Base Stamina:** 4 Points



Woodland Snail (The Scholars)

- **Anatomical Profile:** Possess elegant, elongated shells that spiral upward into sharp, precise points. Their shells often absorb the ambient violet luminescence of the Spire, giving them a faint, ghostly glow in dark environments.
- **Cultural Disposition:** Academic, highly disciplined, and intensely analytical. They treat the world as a grand mathematical equation and spend their lifetimes archiving history and decoding the frequencies of raw crystal shards.
- **Tactical Overview:** Devastating offensive and analytical powerhouses. Their immense mental discipline makes them unparalleled Battle Casters, capable of calculating complex arcane formulas to tear through enemy defenses from a distance.

Racial Attributes:

- **Primary Ability Stat Modifiers:** +2 Mind, -2 Body
- **Base Speed:** 6 Squares
- **Base Stamina:** 2 Points

LINEAGE TABLE

Lineage	*Body* Adj.	*Mind* Adj.	*Heart* Adj.	*Soul* Adj.	*Speed*	*Stamina*	*Carrying Capacity Multiplier*	*Carrying Capacity Base*
Bush	*-1*	*+0*	*-1*	*+2*	*6*	*3*	*1*	*20*
Garden	*-2*	*-1*	*+2*	*+0*	*7*	*2*	*0.5*	*16*
Giant	*+2*	*-1*	*+0*	*+0*	*5*	*5*	*2*	*40*
Toothed	*+0*	*+0*	*+0*	*+0*	*6*	*4*	*1*	*20*
Woodland	*-2*	*+2*	*+0*	*+0*	*6*	*2*	*1*	*20*

Carrying Capacity multiplier and base can be ignored in the Beginner Ruleset

STEP 2: DETERMINE ATTRIBUTES

Understanding the Four Primary Ability Stats

Before determining your exact scores, you must understand the four primary ability stats that define every living creature within *The Garden*. These attributes represent your raw, un-boosted potential across distinct physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual spectrums:

BODY: This statistic measures your muscle density, physical mass, bone structural integrity, and raw physical endurance. Body directly dictates your ability to wield heavy melee weapons, lift burdens, leap across hazardous environmental gaps, and physically resist hazardous toxins, poisons, or blunt trauma.	HEART: This statistic measures your internal willpower, emotional morale, leadership presence, and combat reflex quickness. Heart acts as the direct mechanical anchor for your defensive instincts, determining your ability to resist psychological fear, panic, or suppression when facing horrifying apex predators.
MIND: This statistic represents your capacity for logical reasoning, engineering prowess, environmental perception, and survival tracking. Mind dictates your ability to decipher ancient anomalies, craft and repair undergrowth technology, spot hidden ambushes on the grid layout, and medically stabilize your wounded allies.	SOUL: This statistic measures your biological and spiritual attunement to the residual ley-line frequencies pulsing out from the shattered Spire. Soul is the definitive attribute used to channel high-fantasy magic, manifest mystical effects, and cast complex spells.



Methods of Attribute Generation

All characters are built from the ground up starting at Level 1. If you are creating a veteran character for a higher level campaign, **complete this Level 1 generation process first** before applying sequential level up progression rewards.

To determine the baseline scores for your four primary ability stats, select one of the two authorized generation methods below:

Method A: Point Buy System

The Point Buy system offers absolute custom control over your character's statistical design, letting you distribute a finite resource pool to match your exact mechanical concept.

- **Point Pool:** You receive exactly **16 points** to distribute across your four attributes.
- **No Minimum Threshold:** Unlike other systems, there is no requirement to place a minimum baseline of points into every stat. If it suits your character concept, you can completely leave an attribute at **0**.



- **Maximum Starting Cap:** The maximum number of points you can allocate to any single primary ability stat at this stage is **7**. This structural cap represents a significant, vital tactical advantage over the dice-rolling method, as it allows point-buy characters to achieve a higher starting attribute ceiling than random generation can normally guarantee.

Point Buy Archetype Examples:

- ***Indomitable Bulwark:*** 7 Body, 0 Mind, 7 Heart, 2 Soul (Sum: 16). *Built for pure physical mass, extreme willpower, and high defensive reflexes, sacrificing analytical skill to withstand the heaviest blunt trauma and psychological fear.*
- ***Calculated Crystalline Sage:*** 0 Body, 5 Mind, 4 Heart, 7 Soul (Sum: 16). *Maxes out spiritual attunement to cast complex spells, balanced with sharp tracking and perception to decipher anomalies, completely disregarding physical strength.*
- ***Balanced Pathfinder:*** 4 Body, 4 Mind, 4 Heart, 4 Soul (Sum: 16). *An evenly distributed profile, ensuring the adventurer has solid muscle endurance, reliable engineering wits, stable leadership presence, and functional magic capabilities.*

Method B: Rolling for Stats

For players who want the unpredictable winds of fate to define their Gastron's inherent genetic structure, you can roll for your attributes.

- **The Dice Mechanic:** For the four core statistics (Body, Mind, Heart, and Soul), roll **one six-sided dice (1d6)** 4 times. After you have rolled all 4 times, you may assign a value for one of the dice to a core statistic of your choosing. Do that with as well with the remaining 3 dice so that each statistic has a value assigned to it.
- **The Inherent Limit:** Because this method relies entirely on standard six-sided dice to establish your final allocation numbers, the absolute mathematical maximum value a starting attribute can achieve using this method is a 6.

Finalizing Your Scores

Once you have generated your baseline scores using either Point Buy or Rolling, you must apply the positive or negative **Primary Ability Stat Modifiers** from your chosen lineage (detailed in Step 1).

Add or subtract these modifiers from your baseline values to determine your official, finalized Level 1 attributes. These final numbers will permanently establish your starting resource pools, defensive threshold limits, and combat test modifiers.

STEP 3: SELECT CLASS & GIFTS

THE PATHS OF ENGAGEMENT: TWO CHOSEN RULESETS

Beneath the rich, high-fantasy lore of *The Garden* lies a system engineered for deep, highly tactical tabletop gameplay. This is a world where reckless choices cut your journey short, and victory is earned through positioning, coordination, and keen foresight. To accommodate both veteran tacticians seeking a rich mechanical landscape and newer players eager to explore the undergrowth, this guide features two distinct rule modules.

The Full Rules represent the complete, unabridged architecture of the system. This mode introduces meticulous layers of complexity, demanding that players think strategically about long-term character progression, feature synergies, and precise resource economics. Conversely, the Beginner Ruleset strips away heavy administrative barriers and structural restrictions, providing a streamlined, accessible gateway into the system without sacrificing the core high-stakes thrill of the adventure.

The players and The Gardener must decide together which operational framework best suits their table's style. To ensure a seamless building experience regardless of the path you choose, this manual implements an intuitive, universal visual color-coding system across its mechanical tables:

- 🔶 **Orange Highlight** (Full Rules Constraints): Throughout these chapters, specific cells, headers, or columns are marked by an Orange Highlight. These sections represent parameters—such as strict Primary Ability Stat prerequisites—that apply exclusively to the Full Rules.
- **Beginner Exemption:** If your group is utilizing the Beginner Ruleset, you may completely disregard any orange-highlighted cell. For example, under the Full Rules, you cannot select a Class unless your starting attributes satisfy its mandatory prerequisite thresholds. Under the Beginner Ruleset, these gates are entirely removed: players have the total freedom to choose any of the five core Classes, completely ignoring their underlying Primary Ability Stats.

This visual shorthand is maintained throughout the entire guide book, allowing you to instantly distinguish which rules govern your current character creation process. Furthermore, whenever a specific creation phase branches into fundamentally different mechanics between the Full Rules and the Beginner Ruleset, a dedicated breakdown block will explicitly map out those differences, ensuring absolute clarity as you forge your hero.





THE FIVE CORE CLASSES

Every adventurer chooses one of these five foundational callings to anchor their combat methodology and progression vector within the ecosystem:

ASSAULTER: Frontline martial specialists who focus on offensive pressure, high melee damage output, and breaking through heavy enemy shells.

PROTECTOR: The unyielding shields of the party, engineered to draw enemy attention, hold chokepoints, and absorb blunt trauma to shield their allies.

BATTLE CASTER: Arcane martial scholars who weave raw crystal frequencies into lethal, calculated combat spells.

GARDEN SPIRIT: Divine conduits who channel the natural elements and elemental currents of the soil to heal wounds and control the battlefield.

SCOUT: Masters of precision, tracking, and manual dexterity who strike weak joints and spot hidden threats before they emerge.

ACQUIRING STARTING GIFTS

At Level 1, your class choice provides immediate access to a curated pool of specialization abilities. You do not simply receive a static, pre-determined ability; instead, each Class features its own distinct list of 4 Starting Gifts. Upon selecting your Class, you have the tactical freedom to choose any one of those four options to serve as your definitive baseline Starting Gift.

Additional Gifts at Level 1, and how your pool of capabilities expands as you adventure through the undergrowth, depends entirely on which ruleset your Gardener is running at the table:



The Beginner Ruleset Path

Designed for seamless onboarding, the Beginner Ruleset features a linear, predictable growth path.

- **Level 1 Customization:** After selecting your preferred starting option from your Class's list of four, you may immediately select one additional Gift of your choice from any general or tier-appropriate list you qualify for. This gives your hero a total of 2 Gifts at Level 1.
- **Level Progression Scale:** As your character advances, you receive exactly 1 new Gift for every level achieved. Therefore, a level-up to Level 2 awards another selection, bringing your lifetime total to 3 Gifts (1 chosen Class Starting Gift + 1 for Level 1 + 1 for Level 2). This direct calculation ensures a clear, accessible leveling experience.

The Full Ruleset Path (Advanced)

For tactical veterans who want complete mathematical control over their character builds, the Full Ruleset introduces modular economy systems.

- **Purchase Point Pool:** Instead of receiving a flat, free selection, characters are granted a pool of Purchase Points at Level 1.
- **Buying Customization:** After recording your chosen Class Starting Gift, you must spend your Purchase Points to buy additional custom Gifts. Each customization option carries a distinct point cost.
- **Prerequisites:** To purchase an advanced Gift, your hero must fully satisfy all listed prerequisites, including specific minimum level targets or primary ability stat thresholds. This allows you to theory-craft specialized builds right from the start.

CLASS TABLES

The column marked with a ◆ symbol (*Stat Prerequisites*) represents Full Rules restrictive thresholds. In the printed layout, this column's cells must be styled with an Orange Highlight to alert players that these prerequisites are entirely bypassed when using

Class	◆ Stat Prerequisites	Starting Gift Options	Base Purchase Points	Purchase Points per lvl
Assaulter	[◆] Body 2 & Heart 2	Charge, Bullseye, Martial Artist, Telling Blow	10	2
Battle Caster	[◆] Mind 3	Study the Mind, Study Language, Study Break, Sword and Sorcery	7	1
Garden Spirit	[◆] Soul 3	Tend Wounds, Meditation, Skill Add, Study the Soul	7	1
Protector	[◆] Body 3	Stand Your Ground, Bully, Hardened Shell, Sprinter	9	2
Scout	[◆] Mind 1 & Heart 3	Thievery, Bullseye, Take Aim, Increased Stamina	11	2

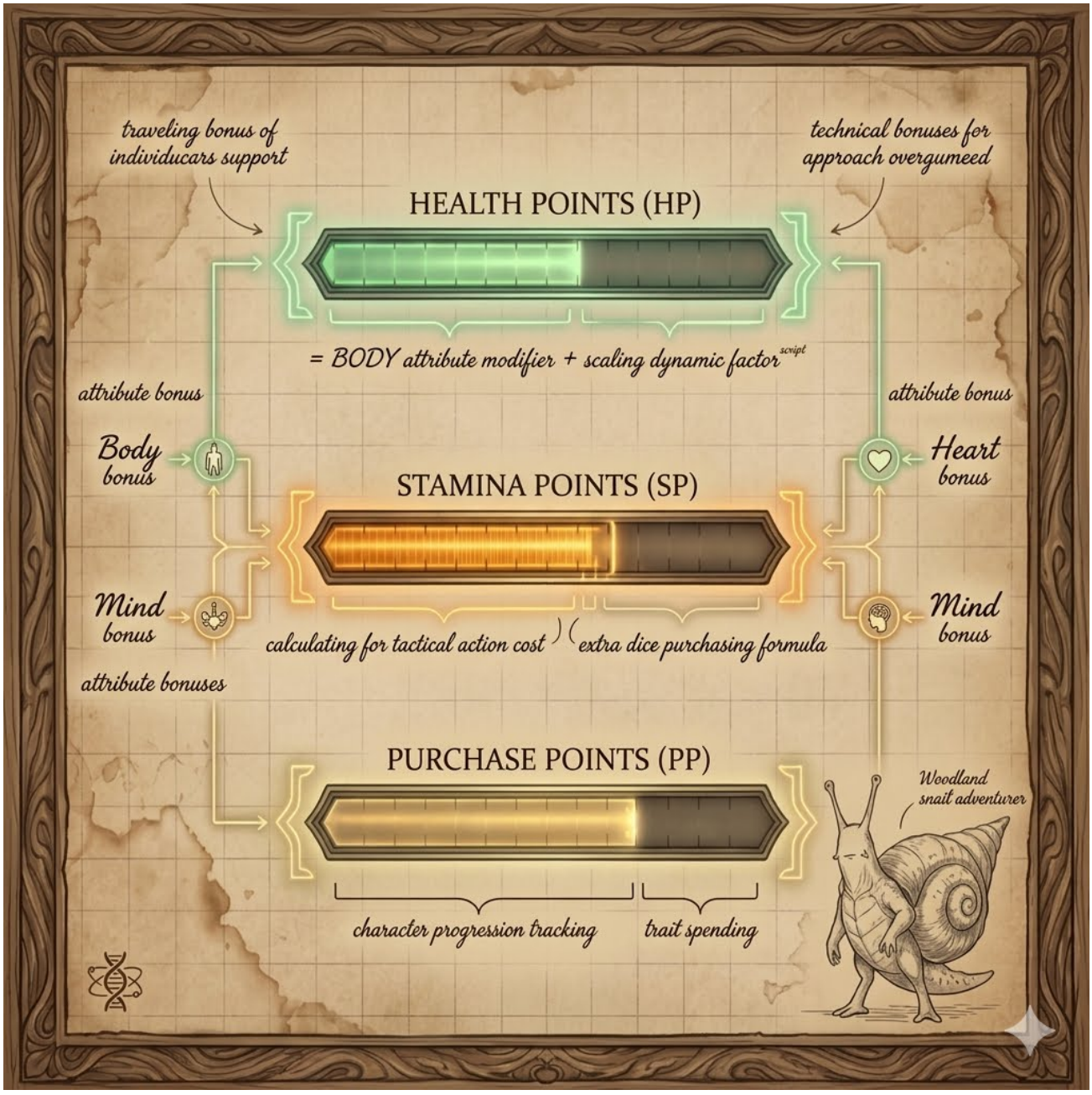
Class	Base MP	Magic Points	Base Health	Class Stamina
Assaulter	0	0	18	5
Battle Caster	5	3	12	3
Garden Spirit	5	3	16	3
Protector	0	0	18	5
Scout	0	0	12	4

Class	Spells known Base	Spells known per level	Spell Difficulty Base
Assaulter	0	0	0
Battle Caster	6	2	5
Garden Spirit	6	2	5
Protector	0	0	0
Scout	0	0	0

STEP 4: CALCULATE RESOURCE POOLS

With your Lineage chosen and your Class finalized, you must calculate the vital statistics that govern your character's survival, energy, and supernatural limits within the ecosystem. In *The Garden*, your resource pools are not arbitrary milestones; they are directly calculated from a combination of your chosen lineage, your starting primary attributes, your current character level, and your chosen Class.

All parameters calculated below represent your maximum baseline capacity at Level 1. Ensure these values are recorded accurately on your character sheet before entering hazardous territory.



HEALTH POINTS (HP)

Your Health Points represent your physical vitality and structural integrity. If your current HP pool is ever reduced to 0 during an engagement, your shell cracks, and your character falls into a dying state called *The Drift*. Rules about Death and Dying will be discussed in a later chapter.

Your Maximum HP pool is determined by combining the fixed Base Health granted by your chosen Class with your finalized Body attribute modifier, scaled by your character level, and adding any additional vitality granted by chosen features.

Max Health = ((Base Health + Body Modifier) x Level) + Gift Health Add

Base Health Rating Component by Class:

- Assaulter: 9 Base Health Points
- Battle Caster: 6 Base Health Points
- Garden Spirit: 8 Base Health Points
- Protector: 9 Base Health Points
- Scout: 6 Base Health Points

STAMINA POOL (SP)

Stamina is the absolute lifeblood of your tactical options in the undergrowth. It is the resource currency you actively spend to execute powerful Gifts, activate immediate out-of-turn Reflex actions, or buy additional $d12$ dice to bypass an apex predator's heavy Success Threshold.

Your starting Stamina pool is a combination of your innate biological energy, professional conditioning, your campaign Tier, and any specific trait choices. At Level 1 (Tier 1), it is calculated using the following absolute formula:

Maximum Stamina = Base Stamina (Race) + Class Stamina (Class) + Tier + Stamina from Gifts

Race Baseline Component:

- Bush Snail: 3 Base Stamina Points
- Garden Snail: 2 Base Stamina Points
- Giant Snail: 5 Base Stamina Points
- Toothed Snail: 4 Base Stamina Points
- Woodland Snail: 2 Base Stamina Points
- Class Baseline Component (Step 3 Recap):
- Assaulter: 5 Class Stamina Points
- Battle Caster: 3 Class Stamina Points
- Garden Spirit: 3 Class Stamina Points
- Protector: 5 Class Stamina Points
- Scout: 4 Class Stamina Points

Note on Level 1 Modifications: When calculating this at character inception, remember to add +1 for your starting Tier (Tier 1), alongside any additional Stamina points explicitly granted if you selected a Gift that offers a bonus to your pool (such as the Scout's "Increased Stamina" option).

PURCHASE POINTS (PP)

FULL RULESET ONLY

For those travelers testing their mettle under the Full Ruleset, progression abandons traditional level-locked constraints in favor of a fluid, customizable structural economy. To construct your build crafting framework, you must establish your starting reservoir of Purchase Points. This pool acts as the definitive currency used to buy your custom traits, specialized features, and advanced martial techniques from the ledger in Section 8.

Your allocation of Purchase Points is heavily dictated by your chosen calling. Referencing the master chart in Step 3 reveals two distinct variables granted by your Class: Base Purchase Points and Purchase Points Per Level.

To determine your character's maximum current Purchase Point ceiling, execute the following calculation:

Total Purchase Points = (Purchase Points Per Level x Character Level) + Base Purchase Points

Calculation Example:

Let us look at a 1st-level character whose chosen Class provides a baseline of 10 Base Purchase Points and awards 4 Purchase Points Per Level. Their investment capital tracks as follows: Total Purchase Points = (4 x 1) + 10 = 14 PP

This total represents the absolute currency available to fund your customization following your Class selection. Ensure this total is noted clearly on your sheet before spending points on Gifts so you know how much you have available to spend.

STEP 5: SHELL & SHELL RATING (SR)

It is time for you to pick your characters Shell. This will help to determine your Shell Rating. Your Shell Rating (SR) determines your passive physical defense, establishing the baseline target number an enemy must hit to deal physical damage. Rather than a static math calculation based entirely on your attributes, your starting defense is dictated by the actual physical Shell you select for your character at creation.

Strength Requirements for Shell Wear

Heavier shells offer superior protection and raw Damage Reduction, but their massive weight requires physical power to properly wear. To select a shell, your character's baseline Body attribute must meet or exceed the value listed under Body Required to Use. If your character lack the necessary physical strength, they cannot safely support that category of shell.

Calculating Final Shell Rating

Your final baseline Shell Rating is calculated by taking the inherent Shell Rating of your chosen carapace and adding your personal Heart Modifier. However, every shell has a physical limit to how much your agility and defensive reflexes can assist you. Your added Heart Modifier can never exceed the shell's listed Max Heart Mod for SR.

Final Shell Rating (SR) = Shell Rating (Chosen Shell) + Applied Heart Modifier (Up to Max Cap)

Calculation Example:

A character equips a Steel Shell (which features a baseline Shell Rating of 10 and *Max Heart Mod for SR* cap of 2).

- If the character has a Heart Modifier of +1, their final SR is 10 + 1 = 11.
- If the character has a Heart Modifier of +3, their final SR is capped at 12 (10 + 2), because the Steel Shell mathematically rejects any Heart bonus beyond its maximum cap of 2.



SHELL SELECTION TABLE

Shell	Category	Rating	Damage Reduction	Speed Penalty	Gift Penalty	Casting Penalty	Total Slots	Body Required to Use	Max Heart Mod for SR
Diamond	Heavy	13	3	[◆] -2	[◆] -2	[◆] -5	[◆] 8	18	0
Adamantium	Heavy	12	2	[◆] -2	[◆] -2	[◆] -5	[◆] 8	16	0
Titanium	Heavy	11	2	[◆] -2	[◆] -1	[◆] -5	[◆] 8	14	0
Cobalt	Heavy	10	1	[◆] -1	[◆] -1	[◆] -4	[◆] 7	12	0
Steel	Medium	10	1	[◆] -1	[◆] -1	[◆] -4	[◆] 7	10	2
Iron	Medium	9	1	[◆] -1	[◆] 0	[◆] -4	[◆] 7	6	2
Calcite	Medium	9	0	[◆] -1	[◆] 0	[◆] -3	[◆] 5	6	2
Brass	Medium	8	0	[◆] 0	[◆] 0	[◆] -3	[◆] 5	4	2
Bronze	Medium	7	0	[◆] 0	[◆] 0	[◆] -2	[◆] 5	4	2
Mithril	Light	7	0	[◆] 0	[◆] 0	[◆] -1	[◆] 4	0	4
Copper	Light	6	0	[◆] 0	[◆] 0	[◆] -1	[◆] 4	-3	4
Crystal	Light	6	0	[◆] 0	[◆] -1	[◆] 0	[◆] 4	-4	4
Shell-less	Light	0	0	[◆] 0	[◆] 0	[◆] 0	[◆] 2	-5	8

STEP 6: BASE EQUIPMENT & WEAPONS

With your primary stats assigned, your Class selected, and your core resource pools finalized, the final phase of character generation is outfitting your hero. Surviving the dangerous wilderness beyond Gastron civilization requires the right tools.

Unlike other systems, your equipment is not strictly tied to your Class. Instead, every character, regardless of their calling, selects their gear sequentially by choosing a Starting Equipment Package followed by their preferred Weapons.

SELECT YOUR STARTING EQUIPMENT PACKAGE

Every starting character chooses one of the five specialized survival packages below. These packages represent your character's chosen equipment for the start of their adventures. In addition to your starting equipment, each character begins the game with a starting amount of currency with which they can spend. After selecting your Starting Equipment, your character will need to roll for how much starting currency they begin the game with. This currency will be used to purchase any additional weapons and equipment they wish to start the game with.



Note: The Starting Equipment Packages each contain a Backpack. Backpacks add 3 slots worth of space to a characters Shell. This means that Starting Equipment Packages add some Slot space to a characters inventory. Slots and weight only matter in the Full Ruleset, so those using the Beginners Ruleset can ignore slots and weight requirements.

The Adventure Pack (+0.2 Slots)

- 1 Backpack
- 1 Blanket
- 1 Mess Kit
- 1 Tinderbox
- 1 Waterskin
- 2 Rations (1 day)
- 5 Torches
- 1 Whetstone

The Dungeon Pack (+0.6 Slots)

- 1 Backpack
- 1 Hammer
- 50 feet of Silk Rope
- 1 Tinderbox
- 1 Waterskin
- 2 Rations (1 day)
- 5 Torches
- 5 Pitons

The Spirit Pack (+1.2 Slots)

- 1 Backpack
- 1 Blanket
- 1 Tinderbox
- 1 Waterskin
- 1 Small Steel Mirror
- 1 Vial of Antitoxin
- 1 Soul Crystal

The Research Pack (+1.6 Slots)

- 1 Backpack
- 1 One ounce bottle of Ink
- 1 Ink Pen
- 10 Parchment (1 sheet)
- 1 Spellbook
- 1 Robes
- 1 Sealing Wax
- 1 Mind Crystal

The Skullduggery Pack (+1.8 Slots)

- 1 Backpack
- 1 Set of Lockpicks
- 1 Bag of 1,000 Ball Bearings
- 1 Flask of Oil
- 1 Tinderbox
- 1 Waterskin

ROLL FOR MONEY

Currency in The Garden is divided into 4 types. With Blooms being the highest denomination, then Petals, Sprouts and finally Seeds.

- 10 Seeds equal 1 Sprout.
- 10 Sprouts equal 1 Petal.
- 10 Petals to equal 1 Bloom.

Prices for most things are typically listed in Petals, as that is base denomination.

To determine how much starting currency your character has you roll 2d12 and multiply by 10 and that is how many Petals your character starts the game with. When it comes to selecting your other equipment. Each character gets to pick a Weapon without spending any money, however any additional weapons will cost you. Your character also starts with a Shell without having to spend any money, however if they want to upgrade in the future they must use their currency to purchase the new Shell. The same goes with additional equipment. You get a Starting Equipment Package for free, but additional equipment will cost you.

Note: The Gardener can choose to ignore costs for additional equipment, weapons, etc, but that is entirely up to them. For those choosing to use the Full Ruleset, it is encouraged to keep costs in play, and the equipment space (slots) and weight requirements for that ruleset will also come into play.

CHOOSE YOUR WEAPONS

Once your survival gear package is secured, select the weapons your hero will wield to defend themselves against the apex predators of the undergrowth. You have the freedom to choose any weapon configuration you desire, such as a massive two-handed polearm, a sword-and-shield pairing, or a brace of light ranged instruments, provided your selection complies with your chosen ruleset.

EQUIPMENT SPACE: TWO CHOSEN RULESETS

How your physical gear interacts with your character sheet is the primary operational difference between the game's two rulesets:

Beginner Ruleset Path

Under the Beginner Ruleset, your capacity for equipment is entirely unrestricted.

- **No Restrictions**: You may select any weapon or combination of weapons you wish to use, and you can carry your chosen Starting Equipment Package seamlessly.
- **No Tracking**: You do not have to worry about weight requirements, load burdens, or slot limits. If you want it on your character sheet, you simply write it down and use it.



Full Ruleset Path (Advanced)

Under the Full Ruleset, character customization is strictly bound by physical spatial limitations. Your chosen gear must physically fit inside the shell you selected in Step 4.

The Single Slot Pool: Every Shell dictates how many Slots are available as space within that type of Shell. Unlike other mechanics, your inventory is not divided or restricted into separate weapon or gear categories. Weapons, utility gear, tools, and rations all draw from this exact same shared pool.

The Allocation Process:

First, account for the number of slots added by the items within your chosen Starting Equipment Package. Add this to your shell's maximum *Slots Available* to find the amount of total space you have for your equipment.

Next, review the slot costs of the weapons you wish to carry. You can only equip weapons that can successfully fit within the remaining vacant slots left inside your shell.

Over encumbered Penalties: Attempting to force extra weapons or gear beyond your shell's mathematical slot limit instantly overburdens your bipedal legs, introducing severe tactical penalties to your movement across the battlefield squares.
In these Full Rules you will also have to track the amount of Weight your character is carrying to determine if your character is over encumbered by weight as opposed to space. To determine how much your character can carry use the following formula.

Max Carry Weight *= Carrying Capacity Base + Body Modifier*



STEP 7: UNLOCKING MAGICAL GIFTS

Across the vibrant undergrowth and weathered ruins of *The Garden*, physical prowess and razor-sharp gear are only half of the equation for survival. For those adventurers who feel a deeper calling, a world of cosmic forces awaits. Magic is not a uniform gift; it is a primal power that must be structured, learned, and carefully managed.

If you have selected a spellcasting path for your hero, or if you have chosen specific tactical features that unlock a minor connection to the world's natural forces, you must now formalize your spellcasting boundaries. Calculate the precise volume of spells your hero knows, determine the ceiling of magical Tiers they can safely grasp, and establish your final maximum pool of Magic Points (MP) before selecting your incantations from the archives in Section 6. This is required only for characters who possess spellcasting capabilities via Class or Gift selection.

CALCULATIONS OF KNOWLEDGE: SPELLS KNOWN

The complexity of the currents requires an ordered mind or a deeply resonant soul. The total number of spells a character can know and prepare for an excursion is directly shaped by their primary casting attributes, their level of experience, and their Class.

Primary Spellcasters (Battle Casters & Garden Spirits)

True disciples of the arcane and spiritual arts possess the deepest reservoirs of knowledge. To find your starting and progressing number of spells known, apply the following baseline calculation:

Spells Known = 6 + Main Casting Stat Modifier + (2 x Character Level)

- Battle Casters utilize their analytical Mind stat as their main casting modifier.
- Garden Spirits utilize their deeply resonant Soul stat as their main casting modifier.

A Legacy in Practice: Imagine a 1st level Battle Caster who has a Mind stat of 6, yielding a +2 modifier. Their baseline capacity begins at 6 (Base) + 2 (Mind Modifier) = 8. To this, they add the training bonus of 2 x 1 (Level 1) = 2. Thus, upon entering the wilderness at 1st level, they possess a total of 10 spells available to know.

Half Casters (Teller of Tales & Soulsinger Gifts)

Not all who wield magic are dedicated scholars or mystics. Some characters are standard survivalists who unlock a minor connection to the forces by purchasing specialized features. If your character is *not* a primary spellcasting class but has taken either the Teller of Tales or Soulsinger Gifts, your capacity is halved due to your split focus:

Spells Known = (6 + Main Casting Stat Modifier + (2 x Character Level)) ÷ 2

- Teller of Tales practitioners rely on an analytical focus, using their Mind stat as their main casting modifier.
- Soulsinger performers harmonize with the environment, using their Soul stat as their main casting modifier.
- *Note: If the final calculation results in a decimal, always round down to the nearest whole integer.*

A Legacy in Practice: Imagine a 1st level character who has taken the Soulsinger Gift and possesses a Soul stat of 6, yielding a +2 modifier. Their baseline begins at 6 (Base) + 2 (Soul Modifier) = 8. Adding their level progression (2 x 1 = 2) brings the raw value to 10. We then cut this total in half (10 / 2), allowing this half caster to know exactly 5 spells at 1st level.

SPELLS KNOWN TABLE

Use the table below to quickly verify your progression frameworks and see how your casting tier limits scale as you advance through the campaign.

Character Path / Gift	Main Stat	Baseline Core Formula	Max Spell Tier Access Rate
Battle Caster	Mind	6 + Mind Mod + (2 x Level)	Equal to Current Character Tier
Garden Spirit	Soul	6 + Soul Mod + (2 x Level)	Equal to Current Character Tier
Teller of Tales (Gift)	Mind	(6 + Mind Mod + (2 x Level) ÷ 2) [Round down]	1 Spell Tier per every 2 Campaign Tiers
Soulsinger (Gift)	Soul	(6 + Soul Mod + (2 x Level) ÷ 2) [Round down]	1 Spell Tier per every 2 Campaign Tiers



ACCESSIBLE TIERS OF SPELLCASTING

Grasping a spell that is too powerful for your current training will tear a character's focus asunder. The maximum Tier of spell your hero can safely master is strictly regulated by their depth of training.

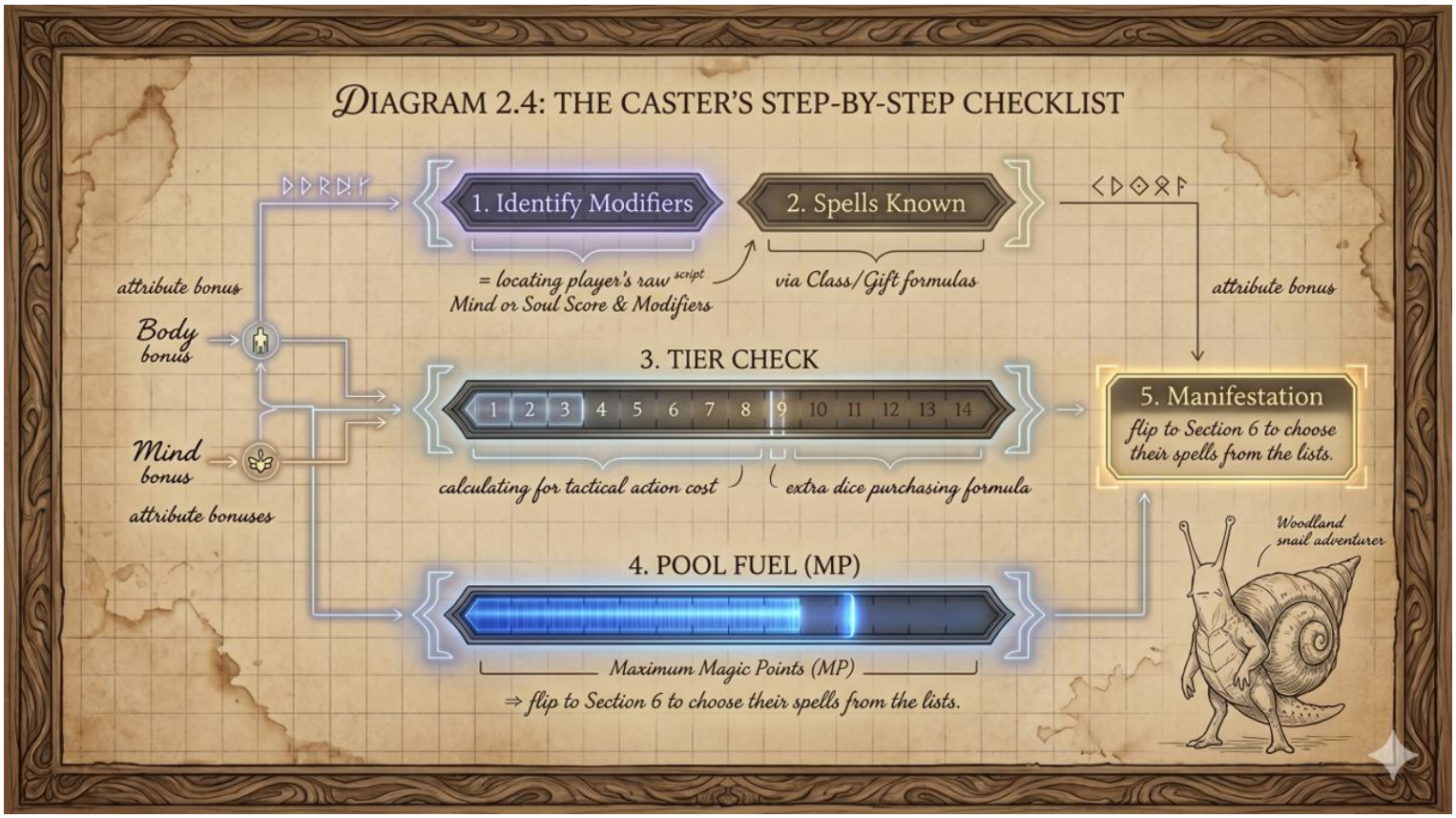
Primary Caster Tier Access

For dedicated Battle Casters and Garden Spirits, progression is absolute. You can learn and cast spells that are of the exact same Tier as your current character Tier. If your party is surviving within Tier 1 content, you have access to Tier 1 spells; as you break through into higher campaign Tiers, your limits unlock on a 1-to-1 matching basis.

Half Caster Tier Access

For those who only cast spells through the Teller of Tales or Soulsinger Gifts, the volatile forces are more difficult to control. These characters unlock access at half the standard rate, accessing a single spell Tier for every two campaign Tiers they navigate:

- Campaign Tiers 1 & 2: Restricted strictly to Tier 1 spells.
- Campaign Tiers 3 & 4: Access is granted to Tier 1 & Tier 2 spells.
- Campaign Tiers 5 & 6: Access is granted up through Tier 3 spells.



CALCULATING MAXIMUM MAGIC POINTS (MP)

The final piece of your supernatural foundation is establishing your Magic Points pool. This resource represents your character's internal fuel tank for launching magical assaults or weaving protective spirit barriers.

To find your characters maximum Magic Points value, apply the exact algebraic formula designated for your specific path:

Primary Classes

Battle Caster Maximum MP = ((3 + Mind Mod) x Level) + 5

Garden Spirit Maximum MP = ((3 + Soul Mod) x Level) + 5

Half Casters

Teller of Tales Maximum MP = (((3 + Mind Mod) x Level) + 5) ÷ 2

Soulsinger Maximum MP = (((3 + Soul Mod) x Level) + 5) ÷ 2

STEP 8: CHARACTER LEVELING

All characters are initially created at Level 1. However, players may upgrade their character to any level required by their current campaign, as determined by their Gardener. Follow the steps below to accurately level up your character.

Stat Adjustments (Tier-Based)

Stat Adjustments occur at the beginning of each new Tier (Level 4 begins Tier 2; Level 7 begins Tier 3).

- **Applying Adjustments**: When you reach a new Tier, you may add 2 points to one Primary Ability Stat of your choice, OR add 1 point each to two different Primary Ability Stats.
- **Maximum Values**: Primary Ability Stats cannot exceed 20 via Stat Adjustments. Values above 20 are only achievable through Magic, Gifts, or magical equipment.
- **Calculation Order**: If you level up multiple times (e.g., from Level 1 to 7), apply all Stat Adjustments earned at each Tier threshold first.
- **Derived Adjustments**: After adjusting Primary Ability Stats:
  - Update your Stat Modifiers using the standard table.
  - Adjust Skill Modifiers affected by these changes.
  - Update Attack Bonuses (Melee, Ranged, Magic).

Note: Body modifier increases Melee Attack; Heart modifier increases Ranged Attack; your Main Casting Stat modifier increases Magic Attack Bonus and Spell Difficulty Level (SDL).

Choosing New Gifts

- **Beginner Ruleset:** You gain one new Gift for every level gained beyond 1st. (e.g., Level 1 to 5 = 4 new Gifts). You must qualify for the Tier of the chosen Gift. Review all Gift prerequisites; some require specific base Gifts (like "Increased Stamina" at max rank) before others (like "Epic Stamina") can be selected.
- **Full Ruleset:** You must spend Purchase Points to acquire new Gifts. Refer to the *Purchase Points* section to calculate your total points available before selecting Gifts.
- **Stat-Affecting Gifts:** If a chosen Gift (such as "Skill Add") provides static bonuses, update your character sheet immediately after selection.

Resource Pool Recalculation

Re-calculate all resource pools based on your new level, selected Gifts, and adjusted stats:

- Stamina Points
- Health Points
- Magic Points (for spellcasters)
- Spells Known (for spellcasters)

Refer back to the specific sections covering these resources to ensure accurate re-calculation.

Selecting New Spells

If your character has spellcasting abilities, review the spellcasting rules in Section 6 and select your new spells accordingly.

Final Review

Verify all calculations. Ensure that all Stat Adjustments, Resource Pool updates, Gift-related bonuses, and spellcasting values (MP, Spells Known, SDL) are correctly recorded. Once verified, your character leveling is complete.



Gameplay Resolution Mechanics

THE CORE ENGINE: d12 RESOLUTION SCALE

Every fateful moment in *The Garden*, whether you are swinging a weapon at a ravenous apex predator, tracing the glowing runes of an ancient arcane anomaly, or throwing yourself clear of a sudden crumbling sinkhole, is decided by a single instrument of destiny: the d12 Resolution Scale. While other realms rely on twenty-sided or ten-sided dice, the heroes of this micro-epic high fantasy world risk it all on the spin of a twelve-sided die (d12).

From the smallest skirmish in the undergrowth to the grandest clash amidst the Spire ruins, the twelve faces of the die hold the balance between a hero's glorious triumph and an unexpected tactical setback.

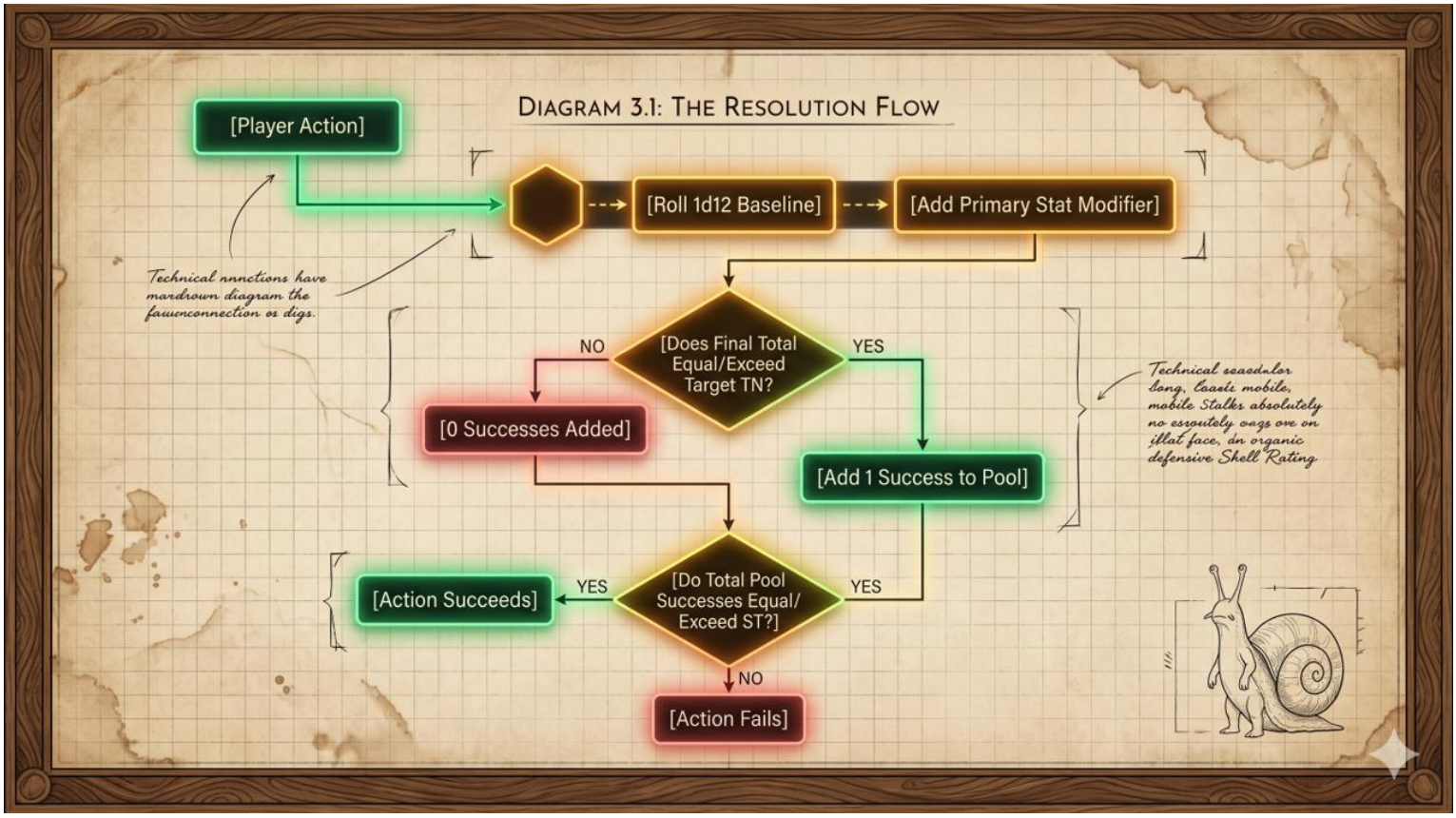
The single-d12 choice shapes the fundamental tension of exploring the wild. When your character faces a trial, the raw roll of the die represents the chaotic, unpredictable forces of nature. It is your character's innate primary attributes, specialized class training, and clever tactical positioning that drag you out of the clutches of pure luck, grounding your survival in deliberate heroic choices rather than blind fortune.





TARGET NUMBER (TN) & SUCCESS THRESHOLD (ST) ENGINE

Overcoming an obstacle in *The Garden* requires passing a dual-layered challenge composed of two distinct pillars: the Target Number (TN) and the Success Threshold (ST). Achieving your goals is not just a matter of rolling high on a single die; it is about generating a sufficient number of individual successes to conquer the task at hand.



Generating a Success: The Target Number (TN)

The Target Number (TN) is the baseline static difficulty value required to generate a single, solitary success. When your character attempts an action, you roll your baseline twelve-sided die (1d12) and add your relevant Primary Ability Stat modifier. To earn a "success," your final calculated total must equal or exceed the Target Number assigned to that specific action or enemy defense layer.

- *If your final total is equal to or greater than the TN:* You have generated 1 success.
- *If your final total is less than the TN:* That die yields 0 successes.

Overcoming the Challenge: The Success Threshold (ST)

While the Target Number dictates whether an individual die succeeds, the Success Threshold (ST) determines how many total successes a player character must accumulate across their entire roll to completely conquer the task.

The Gardener sets the ST based on the tier, severity, or complexity of the obstacle presented to the party. If the task requires an ST of 1, a single successful die satisfies the requirement. If the challenge demands an ST of 2 or higher, rolling a single success is simply not enough, your hero will fail the overall challenge unless you expand your dice pool to generate multiple successful results simultaneously.

To overcome daunting, high-ST threats, a lone adventurer can expend their own resources to bolster their rolls, or the entire party can explicitly tie their fates together by initiating a Team Up to combine their efforts into a single, massive pool of successes (detailed later in this section).

Example of a Full Test:

When your hero tests their mettle through an attack, a skill check, or a straight Primary Ability Stat challenge, the resolution follows this strict sequence:

1. Identify the Stat: Pinpoint the relevant Primary Ability Stat (Body, Mind, Heart, or Soul) required to face the challenge.

2. The Foundational Roll: Roll exactly one twelve-sided die (1d12). The baseline number of dice rolled for any check is always a single d12.

3. Apply Your Modifier: Add your specific Primary Ability Stat modifier to the face value of the die.
4. Evaluate for Successes: Determine if your total equals or exceeds the Target Number (TN). If it does, you have generated 1 success.

5. Expanding the Dice Pool: Because a single baseline d12 can only ever generate a maximum of one success, you must expand your dice pool to overcome any challenge with an ST of 2 or higher. The *only* way to roll more than one d12 is by actively drawing from your internal reserves or specialized training. A player can spend Stamina points directly from their pool to buy extra d12 dice for the check on a 1-to-1 basis, or spend Stamina to activate a specialized Class Gift that explicitly awards bonus d12 dice for that specific tactical situation.

6. Compare to the ST: Count your total accumulated successes across all rolled dice. If your total successes meet or exceed the Success Threshold (ST) required for the challenge, your action succeeds perfectly. If you fall short of the required ST, the action fails.

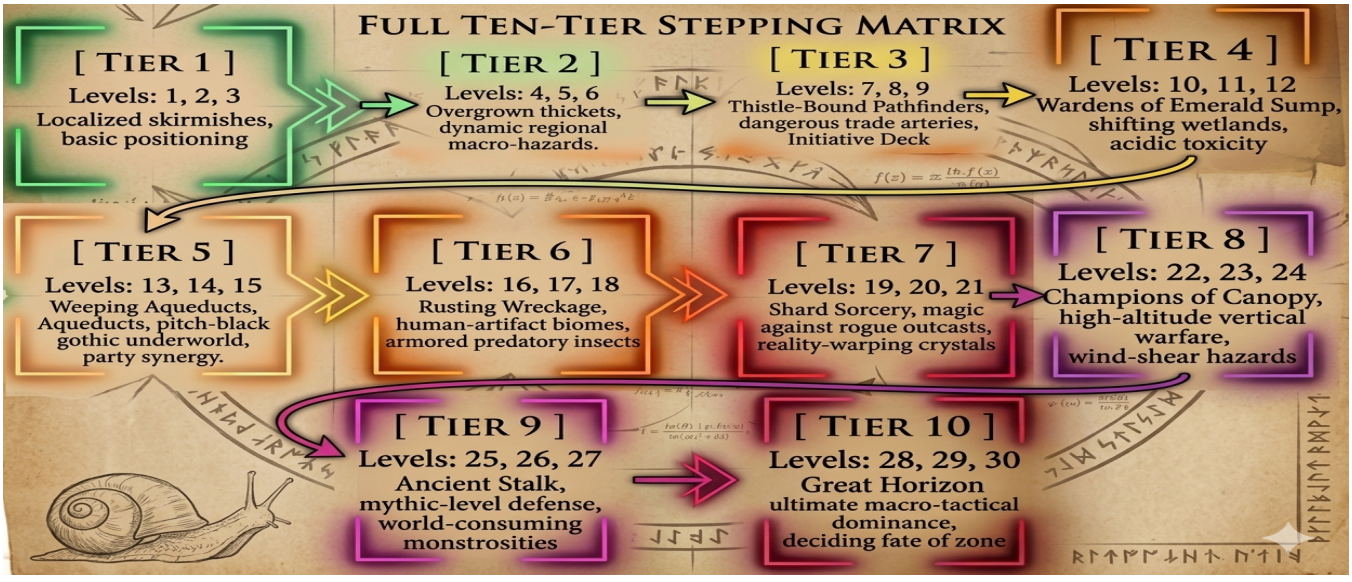
TIER SYSTEM & WORLD SCALING

As adventurers journey deeper into the sprawling ecosystems of *The Garden*, the dangers they face scale alongside them. Progression and world difficulty are governed by a structured Tier System. Tiers dictate the relative power brackets of both the player characters and the hazards, monsters, or environmental trials they encounter.

Tier and Level Progression

Every Tier in the game system encompasses exactly three character levels. As a character levels up, they hone their class gifts and expand their resource pools within their current tier framework before breaking through into the next epic bracket of play.

Campaign Tier	Bound Character Levels	Gameplay Bracket/Power Scale Description
Tier 1	1, 2 and 3	**Sproutlings of the Nursery:** Localized skirmishes against mundane garden pests where survival hinges on basic positioning and conserving precious early Stamina.
Tier 2	4, 5 and 6	**Clearers of the Briar:** Ventures beyond the safe-havens into overgrown thickets, forcing characters to navigate dynamic regional macro-hazards like sudden flooding and choking spore clouds.
Tier 3	7, 8 and 9	**Thistle-Bound Pathfinders:** Committing to dangerous, vital trade arteries like The Briar-Blight Contract where lethal localized flora demand strict tactical utilization of the Initiative Deck.
Tier 4	10, 11 and 12	**Wardens of the Emerald Sump:** Delving into shifting wetlands and contaminated bogs where environmental micro-realism features acidic toxicity and treacherous, changing terrain.
Tier 5	13, 14 and 15	**Crawlers of the Weeping Aqueducts:** Navigating a pitch-black gothic underworld where high Success Thresholds require flawless party synergy to overcome terrifying liquid ink horrors.
Tier 6	16, 17 and 18	**Scavengers of the Rusting Wreckage:** Exploring dangerous human-artifact biomes where jagged metal ruins shelter hyper-aggressive, armored predatory insects with punishing armor-breaking capabilities.
Tier 7	19, 20 and 21	**Masters of Shard Sorcery:** High-stakes magical combat against rogue outcasts wielding forbidden, reality-warping crystals that can permanently alter the layout of the battle map mid-encounter.
Tier 8	22, 23 and 24	**Champions of the Canopy:** High-altitude, vertical warfare where wind-shear hazards can completely sweep un-anchored combatants off lethal, swaying branch platforms.
Tier 9	25, 26 and 27	**Protectors of the Ancient Stalk:** Mythic-level defense of the central life-giving columns of the world against fully matured, world-consuming monstrosities that act as living, breathing dungeon maps.
Tier 10	28, 29 and 30	**Custodians of the Great Horizon:** Ultimate macro-tactical dominance where legendary adventurers decide the fate of the entire 200-mile magical zone, reshaping The Garden itself against apocalyptic ecosystem failures.



How Success Thresholds Scale by Tier

The Tier System provides The Gardener with a natural mathematical blueprint for scaling the world's difficulties. The core mechanics of the Success Threshold (ST) operate identically across both rulesets, regardless of your chosen module, as monsters grow more massive and environmental challenges become more severe, their baseline Success Thresholds (ST) predictably advance.

Typically, monster and challenge Success Thresholds advance by 1 point every two Tiers. This intentional progression curve ensures that heroes must rely more heavily on tactical cooperation, advanced gifts, and strategic Stamina management as they enter higher echelons of danger:

- **Tiers 1 and 2**: Typically feature a baseline ST of 1. Standard obstacles and entry-level undergrowth predators can be overcome with a single well-placed success.
- **Tiers 3 and 4**: Typically scale up to a baseline ST of 2. Challenges at this level are complex enough that a single success will fail; heroes *must* spend Stamina or coordinate abilities to generate multiple successes across their dice pools to break through.
- **Tiers 5 and Beyond**: Scale to a baseline ST of 3 or greater, representing monumental, world-tier threats that require master-level execution and heavy stamina investments to survive.

Resolution Rule for System Unity

Just like forging your character, the foundational rules of the resolution engine function with absolute consistency across both modules:

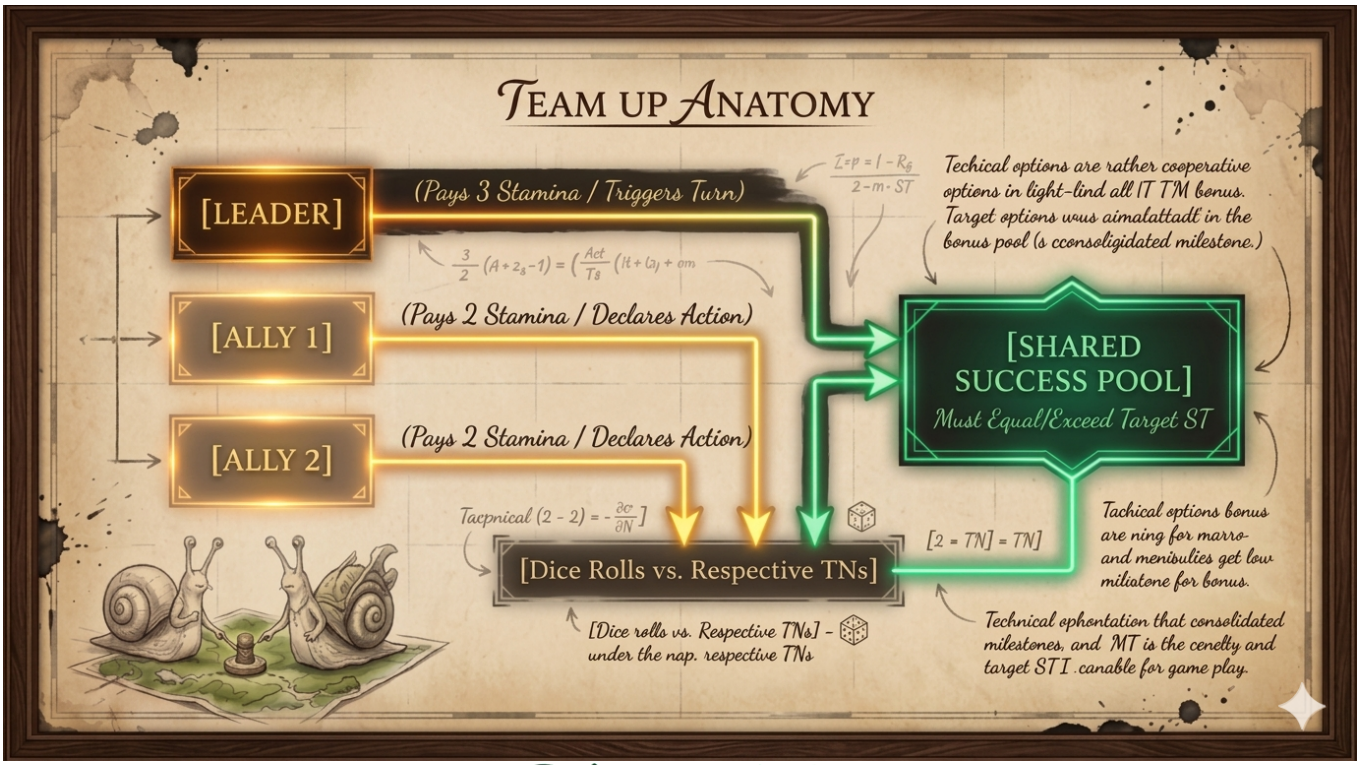
- **Identical ST Scale**: Both Beginner and Full Rules tables face the exact same Target Numbers (TNs) and Success Threshold (ST) scaling across the campaign Tiers. Because a baseline roll is always a single d12, players under both rulesets must decide when to strategically expand their pools to meet high-tier challenges.
- **Universal Stamina Purchasing**: Across both rulesets, players can actively tap their Stamina pool to buy additional d12 dice for their actions on a 1-to-1 basis. This core mechanic remains open and unrestrictive, letting you choose how deeply to burn your physical or mental endurance to alter the course of fate on critical, high-stakes tactical maneuvers.

STANDARD DIFFICULTY RATINGS

Task Difficulty	Typical Tier Baseline	Required Successes (ST)	Typical Gameplay Example Scenario
Simple	Tiers 1 & 2	ST 1	Forcing open a stuck, rotting nut shell using raw physical ability.
Standard	Tiers 3 & 4	ST 2	Bandaging an ally's cracked shell under pressure.
Challenging	Tiers 5 & 6	ST 3	Resisting the terrifying aura of a predatory beetle
Severe	Tiers 7 & 8	ST 4	Channeling volitile Ley-line energy from the Spire ruins.
Apocalyptic	Tiers 9 & 10	ST 5	Turning back the Avatar of a Diety through sheer force of will.

TEAM UP MECHANIC

When facing monstrous threats or legendary hardships with high Success Thresholds, a lone Gastron may find it physically impossible to succeed by themselves. In these desperate moments, survival hinges on coordination. The Team Up mechanic allows the entire party to synchronize their individual skills, attacks, and spells into a single collective pool of successes.



Initiating a Team Up & Stamina Costs

During combat, an active player can initiate a Team Up on their Turn by openly asking if anyone on their team wants to join forces.

- **Participation Threshold:** To lock in the maneuver, at least one other player must agree to join the effort.
- **The Leader's Cost:** The player whose turn it currently is becomes the Leader of the Team Up and must immediately spend 3 Stamina from their pool.
- **The Ally Cost:** Every other player jumping into the fray to assist must spend 2 Stamina.
- **Stamina Restriction:** If a character does not have the required Stamina available in their current pool, they cannot participate.
- **Party Scale:** There is no ceiling to this mechanic; any number of players, up to and including the entire adventuring party, can join a Team Up if they possess the Stamina to pay their entry cost.

Leadership Limits

While a character can freely spend Stamina to join as an assistant in as many Team Ups during a combat encounter as they want, they are bound by a strict leadership constraint: a player can only Lead one Team Up per combat encounter. Choose the absolute best moment to expend your turn's leadership.

Maneuver & Dice Resolution

Once the Stamina is paid and the combatants are locked into the initiative bracket, the tactical choreography begins:

- **Narrate the Plan:** Every participating player (including the Leader) must explicitly explain what their character is doing to contribute to the maneuver. An ally might declare they are striking a weak plate with a blade, using a skill like *Presence* to intimidate the foe, or weaving an intricate spell to distract the creature.
- **Roll the Dice Pools:** Based on their stated contributions, each participant makes their corresponding roll.
  - ***Attacking Characters*** make a standard attack roll (1d12 + appropriate modifier). Martial fighters utilize Body for melee strikes, scouts and rangers utilize Heart for ranged weapons, and spellcasters utilize Mind or Soul for Magic Attacks depending on their specific Class framework.
  - ***Spellcasters*** choosing utility spells may prompt a defensive response; the Gardener will roll the enemy's Test Roll against that spellcaster's specific Spell Difficulty Level.
- **Bolstering the Roll:** Just like standard individual checks, any player within the Team Up can choose to spend additional Stamina to add more d12 dice to their individual roll to maximize the party's overall success odds.

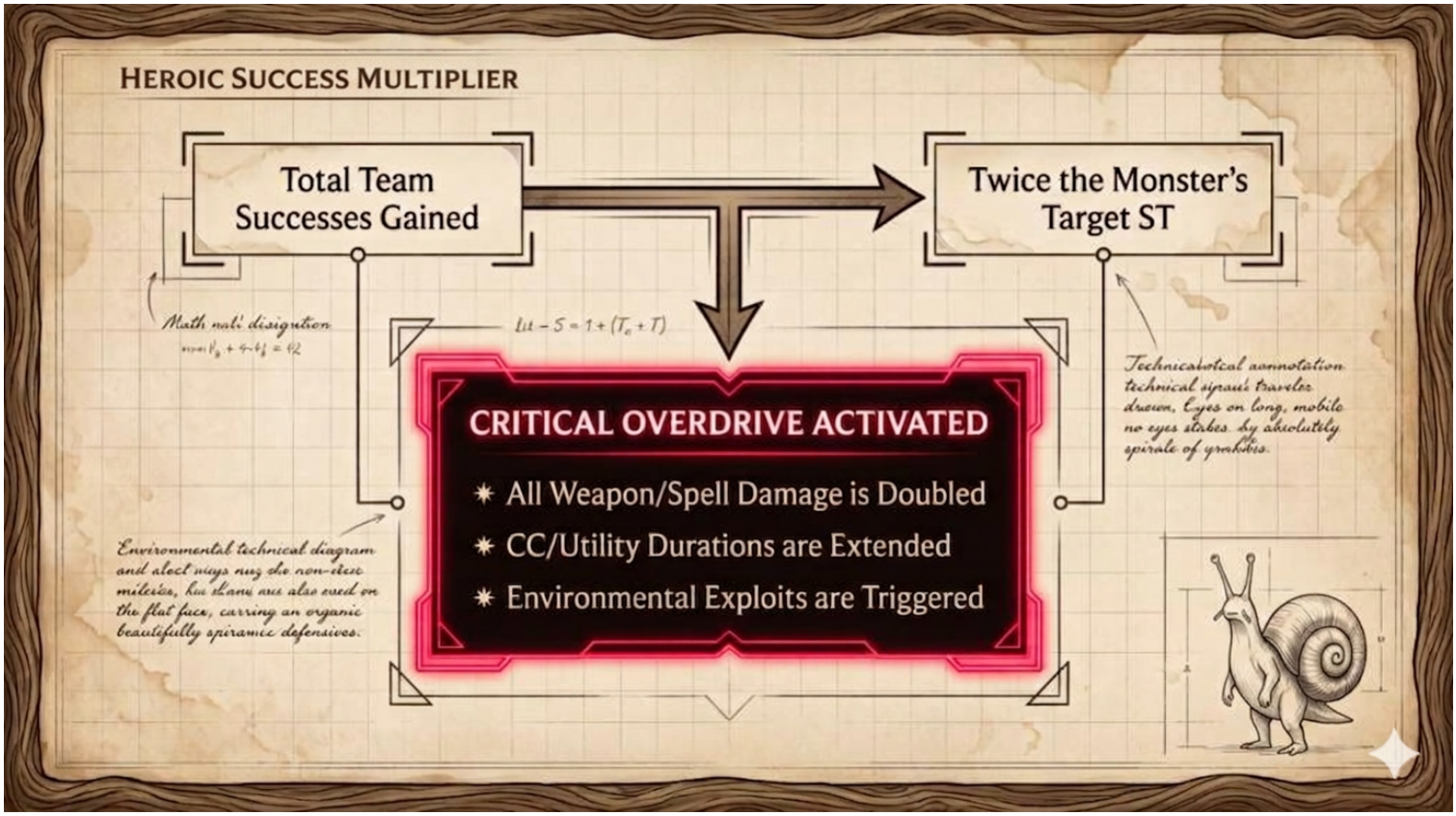
- **Count the Successes:** The individual final values of all rolls are compared against their respective Target Numbers (TNs). Every roll that equals or exceeds its TN contributes exactly 1 success to the shared party pool.

Outcome & The Heroic Success

To determine if the combined tactical effort bears fruit, compare the party's total accumulated successes directly to the enemy target's Success Threshold (ST):

- **Standard Success** (Total Successes ≥ Target ST): The Team Up succeeds overall. Every single party member who successfully hit or exceeded their individual TN applies their character's declared action, damage, or spell effects to the target. However, any character whose individual roll fell short of their specific TN fails to execute their part; they do not apply their weapon damage or skill results to the enemy.
- **Heroic Success** (Total Successes ≥ Twice the Target ST): If the total number of combined successes generated by the party is double (or more) the target's required ST, the maneuver triggers a Heroic Success. A Heroic Success unleashes massive tactical advantages:
  - ***Doubled Damage:*** All physical or magical damage inflicted by succeeding characters is automatically doubled.
  - ***Amplified Non-Damage Effects:*** Any non-damage utility effects or spells that succeeded are critically enhanced at the absolute discretion of The Gardener. For example, a confusion spell might have its duration significantly extended, or the chaotic impact might cause the target beast to trip over its own feet and fall completely prone on the battlefield grid.





IN-DEPTH MECHANICAL WALKTHROUGH

To completely cement how these intersecting resolution layers function on the tabletop grid, study the following play scenarios meticulously. These examples illustrate the tactical realities of individual endurance management and collective party cooperation.

Play Scenario A: The Solo Strike

The Character: Ferdinand, a Level 3 Woodland Snail Scout. Ferdinand has a Heart Modifier of +2. He is cornered by a Tier 1 Soldier Ant with a Shell Rating (which acts as the Target Number) of 11. Because it is a Tier 1 opponent, the combat challenge carries an ST of 1.

- **Baseline Choice:** Ferdinand's turn arrives. He declares a ranged strike using his Segmented Crossbow. By default, he rolls exactly one twelve-sided die (1d12). He rolls a 7.
- **Modifier Math:** Ferdinand adds his Heart Modifier (+2) to his die face value (7 + 2 = 9). Because a total of 9 is lower than the target TN of 11, this die yields 0 successes. If Ferdinand leaves the roll here, his crossbow bolt glides harmlessly off the ant's polished exoskeleton, resulting in a wasted action.

- **Spending Stamina to Alter Fate:** Recognizing the danger, Ferdinand decides to expend Stamina points before locking in his result. He spends 2 Stamina to immediately purchase 2 additional d12 dice, rolling them right away.
- **Extra Dice Results:** The two new dice slide across the moss, showing a 5 and an 11.
  - ***First extra die (5):*** Adding his Heart modifier yields a 7 (5 + 2). This is less than TN 11 (0 successes).
  - ***Second extra die (11):*** Adding his Heart modifier yields a 13 (11 + 2). Because 13 easily equals or exceeds the Target Number of 11, this die generates 1 success.
- **Resolution:** Ferdinand sums up his successes. His pool holds a total of 1 success. Since the target's Success Threshold is an ST of 1, Ferdinand successfully passes the challenge. The crossbow bolt punches through a joint in the soldier ant's legs, and Ferdinand applies his full weapon damage to its health pool.

Play Scenario B: The Tier 3 Chokepoint Team Up

The Situation: A party of three heroes—Corvo (Assaulter), Lanna (Garden Spirit), and Varus (Protector)—is holding a narrow crumbling bridge in the Spire ruins against a massive, armor-plated Horned Beetle. The beetle is a Tier 3 monster featuring a formidable Shell Rating (TN 13) and an advanced Success Threshold (ST of 2).

Because the beetle demands an ST of 2, a lone character rolling a single baseline d12 cannot defeat it on their own without using their own resources; the party decides to orchestrate a coordinated frontline assault.

- **Initiation & Resource Costs:** Varus's turn begins. He initiates a Team Up, calling out to Corvo and Lanna. Both agree to align their actions. Varus, acting as the Team Up Leader, spends 3 Stamina. Corvo and Lanna each spend 2 Stamina from their respective pools to join the maneuver.
- **Narrating the Synergy:**
  - ***Varus (Leader)*** declares he is using his shield to pin the Horned Beetle's lower mandibles to the stone floor. He will roll a melee challenge using his Body Modifier (+3).
  - ***Corvo (Ally 1)*** steps up to leap onto the creature's back, aiming his sword down at a cracked seam in its shell. He will roll a melee attack using his Body Modifier (+2).
  - ***Lanna (Ally 2)*** steps back, tracing an elemental sigil in the air to channel roots through the stone to snare the beast's back legs. She casts a spell, which forces the Gardener to roll a Test Roll against her fixed Spell Difficulty Level of 12.

- **Rolling the Pools:**
  - **Varus** rolls his single baseline d12, getting a 9. He adds his Body Modifier (9 + 3 = 12). This falls short of the Beetle's TN 13. Varus contributes 0 successes.
  - **Corvo** rolls his single baseline d12, getting an 11. He adds his Body Modifier (11 + 2 = 13). This perfectly matches the target TN 13, generating 1 success.
- Lanna's spell forces the Gardener to roll the beetle's defense. The Gardener rolls a 1d12 for the beetle and gets an 8. Because the beetle's roll of 8 fails to equal or exceed Lanna's Spell Difficulty Level of 12, the spell breaks through, generating 1 success.
  - Evaluating the Success Pool: The party reviews their collective pool. Varus generated 0, Corvo generated 1, and Lanna generated 1, bringing the party to a total of 2 successes.
- **Outcome**: The party's total of 2 successes perfectly satisfies the Horned Beetle's required Success Threshold of ST 2. The Team Up is a standard success! Varus's pinning move didn't generate a success, so he does not deal damage, but his effort allowed his allies to shine. Corvo's sword punches through the shell seam, inflicting full melee damage, while Lanna's root spell wraps around the beetle's legs, successfully entangling it on the battlefield grid.

Play Scenario C: The Legendary Canopy Heroic Success

The Situation: The same party has scaled the heights of the forest to Tier 4 (The Canopy Apex). They are facing an Apex Mantis. The mantis has a high Target Number (TN 14) and a daunting challenge rating (ST of 2). Varus has already led a Team Up in this fight, so this time Corvo steps up to serve as the Leader.

- **Initiation & Resource Costs**: Corvo launches the Team Up on his turn. He spends 3 Stamina to take the Lead. Varus and Lanna each spend 2 Stamina to back him up.
- **Narrating the Actions:**
  - ***Corvo (Leader)*** declares an all-out overhead strike on the mantis's head plate (Body Modifier +4).
  - ***Varus (Ally 1)*** charges in to draw the mantis's blades away from Corvo (Body Modifier +3).
  - ***Lanna (Ally 2)*** channels a radiant burst of soil energy to blind the creature's compound eyes (Soul Modifier +3).
- **Blowing the Reserves** (Stamina Stacking): Because this is a high-stakes moment, every character decides to burn extra stamina from their pools to purchase additional dice during their individual actions:

- *Corvo* spends 2 extra Stamina, rolling a total of 3 dice (1 baseline + 2 purchased).
- *Varus* spends 1 extra Stamina, rolling a total of 2 dice (1 baseline + 1 purchased).
- *Lanna* spends 2 extra Stamina, rolling a total of 3 dice (1 baseline + 2 purchased).

- **Dice Resolution**:
  - **Corvo** rolls an 8, 10, and 12. Adding his Body modifier (+4) results in calculated totals of 12, 14, and 16. Two of these rolls (14 and 16) meet or exceed the target TN 14. Corvo adds 2 successes to the pool.
  - **Varus** rolls a 7 and an 11. Adding his Body modifier (+3) results in totals of 10 and 14. One roll (14) matches the target TN 14. Varus adds 1 success to the pool.
  - **Lanna** rolls a 9, 11, and 12. Adding her Soul modifier (+3) results in totals of 12, 14, and 15. Two rolls (14 and 15) beat the target TN 14. Lanna adds 2 successes to the pool.
- **Cumulative Math**: The party counts their total successes: 2 + 1 + 2 = 5 successes.
- **Achieving the Heroic Threshold**: The Apex Mantis required an ST of 2. The party generated 5 successes, which is more than double the required threshold (2 x 2 = 4). The action triggers a Heroic Success!
- **Glorious Resolution**: Corvo's overhead sword strike breaks through, and his weapon damage is automatically doubled as he strikes a vital nerve. Varus successfully creates an opening, dealing doubled shield-bash damage. Lanna's radiant spell blinds the mantis so completely that the creature flashes with light, drops its blades, and falls prone on the forest floor, completely at the party's mercy for the next round.



Initiative Deck & Combat Flow

CHOREOGRAPHY OF BATTLE

When diplomatic measures collapse in the undergrowth and blades are drawn against the apex predators of *The Garden*, time fractures. To manage the split second reactions, frantic parries, and coordinated tactical positioning of high stakes combat, the game transitions into a structured, turn based sequence.

Rather than relying on classic, unchanging agility scores to lock a tabletop encounter into a rigid turn order, *The Garden* utilizes a shifting dynamic driven by a master Initiative Deck. Battle is a fluid, unpredictable exchange. Momentum surges back and forth across the mossy floor, where a lucky draw can grant your allies a string of critical actions, and a sudden twist of fate can hand absolute control directly to your enemies.

The single d12 resolution mechanic, shapes the fundamental tension of exploring the wild. When your character faces a trial, the raw roll of the die represents the chaotic, unpredictable forces of nature. It is your character's innate primary attributes, specialized training, and clever tactical positioning that drag you out of the clutches of pure luck, grounding your survival in deliberate heroic choices rather than blind fortune.

THE ANATOMY OF THE INITIATIVE DECK

The tactical heartbeat of combat is governed by a singular, pre-constructed deck of exactly 54 cards. This specialized engine is built with precise proportions, distributing ownership and chaotic anomalies across three distinct card categories:



The Party Cards (24 Total)

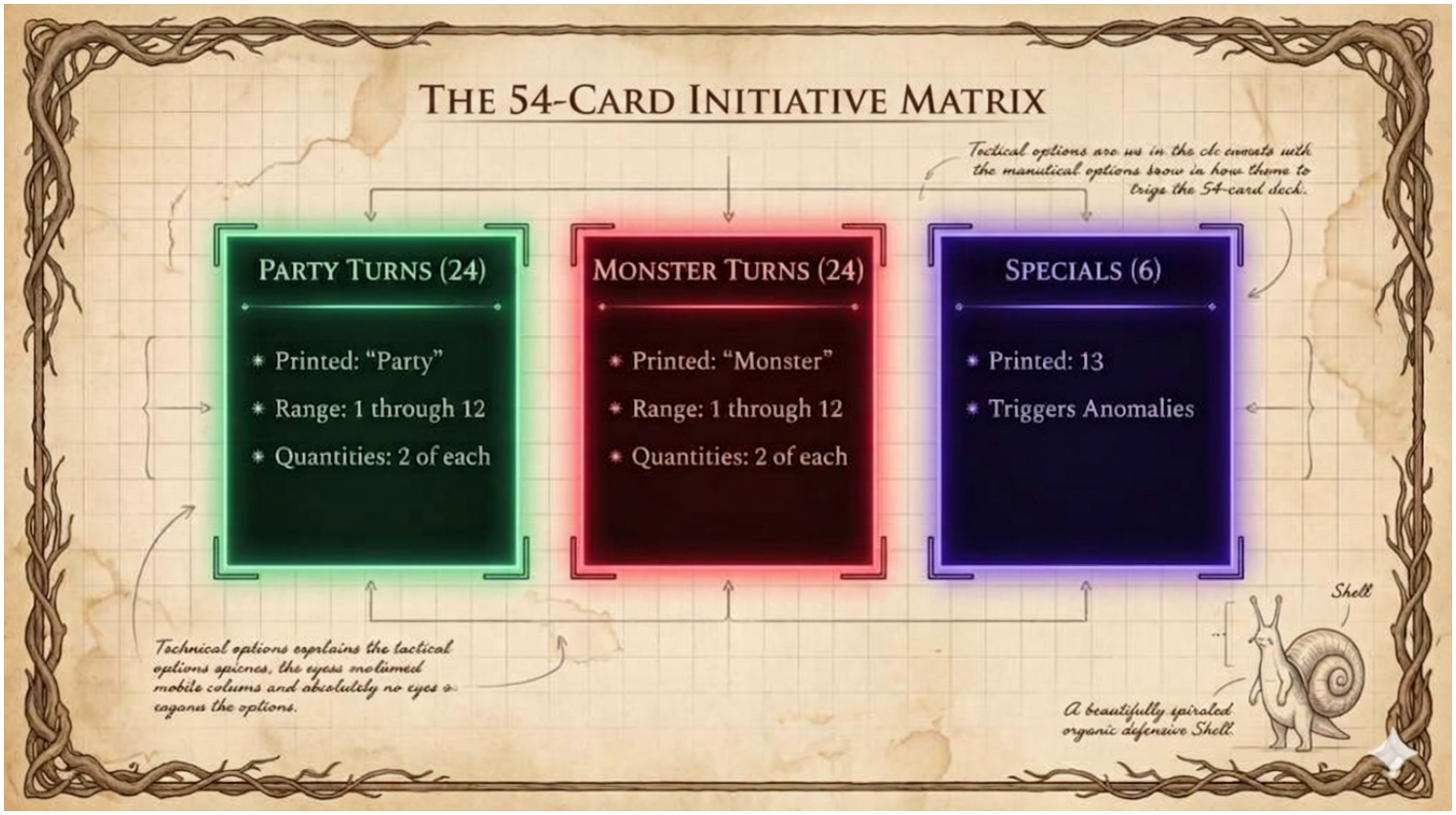
Exactly twenty-four cards within the matrix bear the word Party. These cards represent tactical openings for the player characters. They are explicitly numbered from 1 through 12, containing exactly two duplicates of each numerical value.

The Monster Cards (24 Total)

Exactly twenty-four cards within the matrix bear the word Monster. These cards dictate the offensive windows for the environmental threats managed by the Game Master. Like their heroic counterparts, they are explicitly numbered from 1 through 12, containing exactly two duplicates of each numerical value.

The Special Omen Cards (6 Total)

The final six cards in the sequence are Special Cards. Free from standard team alignment text, each of these cards features the ominous numeral 13. When drawn, these cards inject sudden narrative adjustments or environmental shifts into the battlefield layout, shaking up the positions of both friend and foe alike.



PHASE I: Step by Step Initiative Resolution

When a combat scene triggers, the master 54-card deck is shuffled thoroughly by The Gardener. The battle then breaks down into three distinct operational phases:

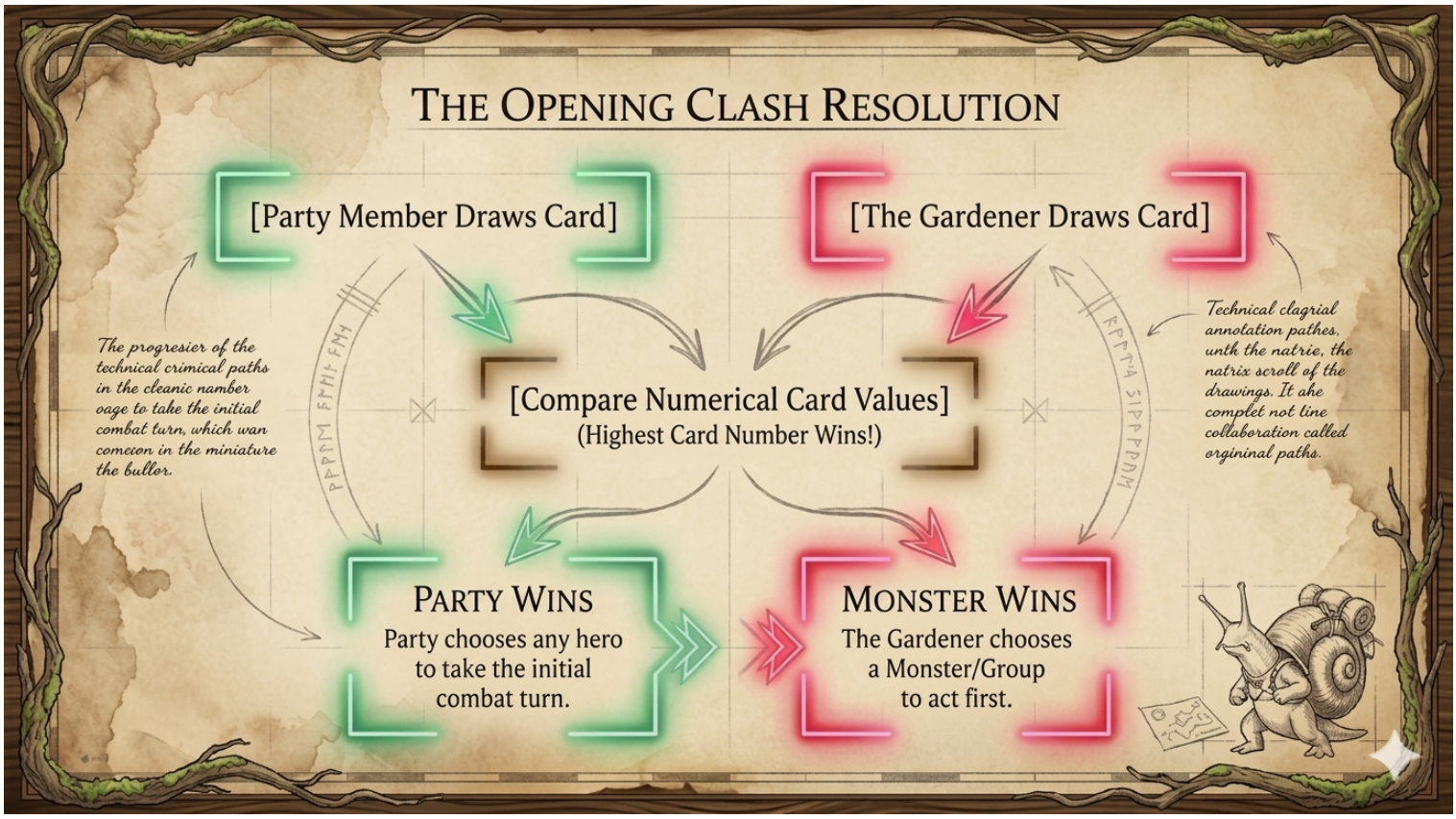
The Opening Clash (Clash Roll)

Before miniatures move or steel meets shell, the two factions must struggle for initial tactical positioning.

The Party Draw: The players designate exactly one party member to draw a card face-up from the Initiative Deck.

The Gardener Draw: The Gardener draws a card face-up from the deck.

The Comparison: The numerical values of the two drawn cards are compared directly. The side that drew the card with the highest face value wins the opening clash and claims the first turn of the encounter.



PHASE II: The Active Chain of Fate

Once the winner of the opening clash completes their first turn, the core momentum loop of combat begins. Rather than drawing cards at the beginning of a round, the momentum chain is maintained by an unbroken draw sequence executed immediately as actions wrap up:

- **The Actor's Duty:** As soon as a character or monster finishes their turn, the individual who just completed their actions must reach out and draw the next card from the Initiative Deck.
- **A Continuous Chain:** If the drawn card matches the current faction, momentum is preserved.
  - *If a hero finishes their turn and draws a Party card,* the player characters keep the upper hand. The party immediately decides which of their teammates who has not yet acted will claim the new turn window.
  - *If The Gardener finishes an enemy turn and draws a Monster card,* the dark forces retain control, and the wilderness strikes again.
- **The Momentum Break:** Faction momentum breaks the exact moment an opposing card is pulled. If a hero draws a *Monster* card, their faction's chain snaps instantly, and control passes over to The Gardener. Conversely, if The Gardener draws a *Party* card, control passes back to the players.

Faction Constraints and Limitations

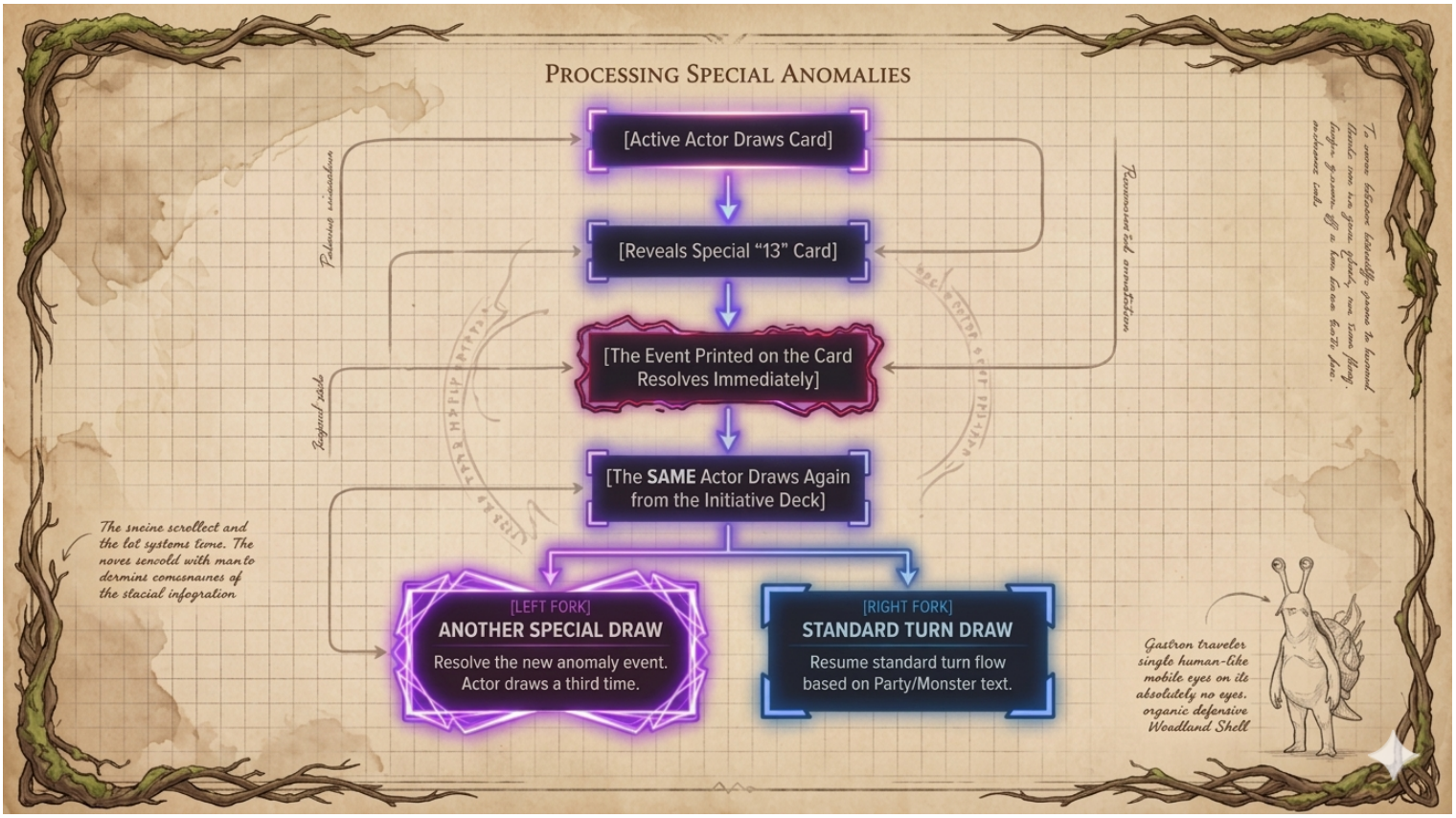
To ensure balance on the battlefield layout, both teams must follow strict tactical deployment rules during a momentum chain:

The Party Coordination Limit: When a *Party* card is drawn, the group holds total freedom to select any player character to take the turn. This allows the party to dynamically react to immediate threats, sending a protector to hold a line or a battle caster to unleash an area-of-effect spell when the layout demands it.

The Monster Rotation Mandate: When a *Monster* card is drawn, The Gardener chooses whether to take a turn with one of their independent "Solo" monsters or with an entire "Group" of matching monsters. However, to prevent a single lethal threat from pinning down the party indefinitely, The Gardener cannot activate the same monster or group again until they have cycled through and used all available monsters in the encounter area.

PHASE III: Processing the Special Anomalies (The 13 Cards)

The six special cards marked with the numeral 13 represent sudden disruptions in the environment—such as a falling rain droplet slamming into the dirt, a sudden snapping branch, or a volatile ley-line distortion from the Spire ruins.



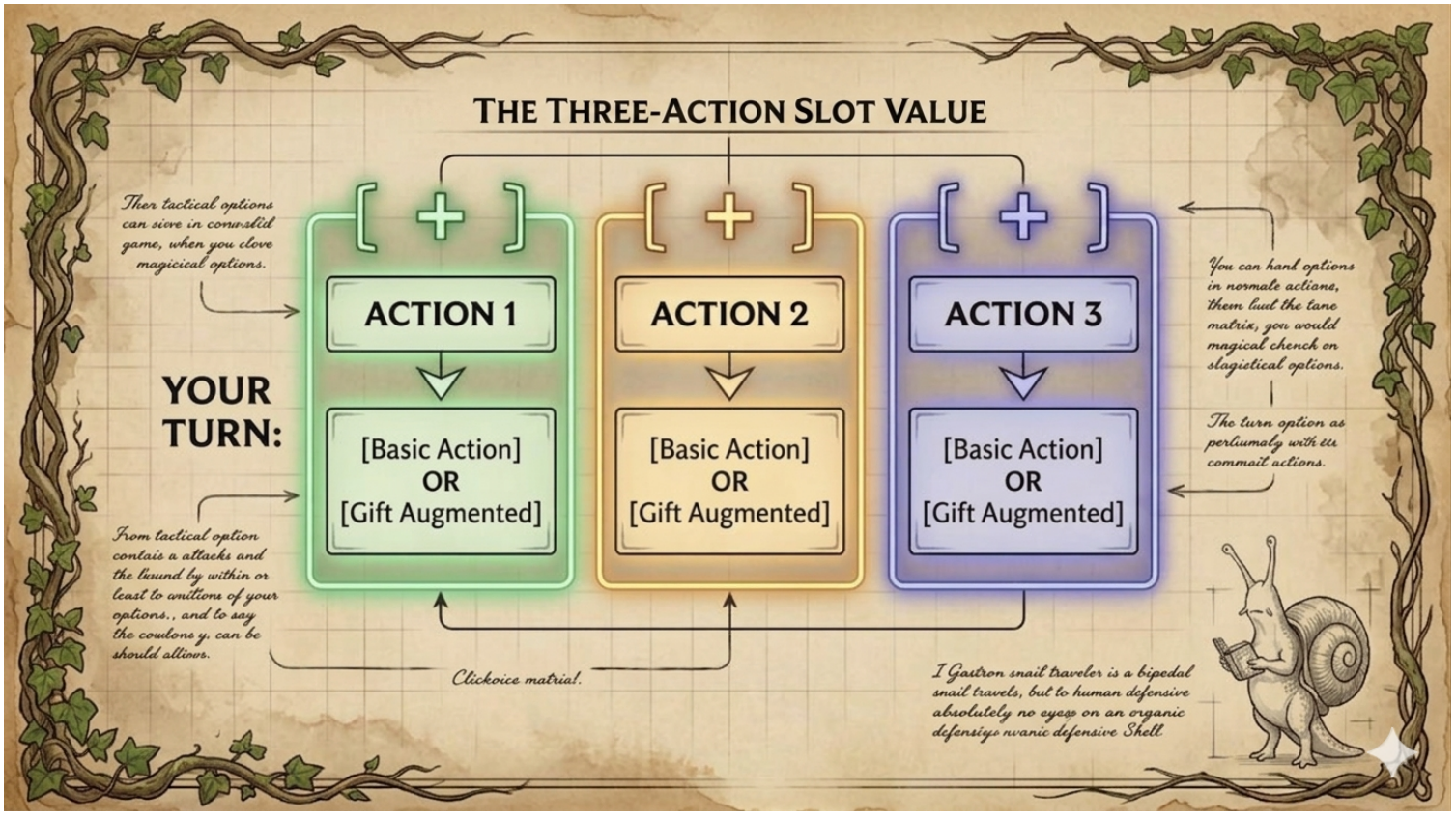
When a player or The Gardener draws a Special Card, the standard turn progression stops instantly to process the anomaly as follows:

1. **Immediate Interruption:** The standard turn loop freezes. The unique narrative text, hazard effect, or spatial adjustment printed on the Special Card resolves right away.
2. **The Follow-Up Draw:** Once complete, the person who originally drew the Special Card must draw from the deck a second time.
3. **Cascading Anomalies:** If this follow-up draw reveals *another* Special Card, the turn flow remains frozen. The text resolves immediately, and that same individual must draw yet again.
4. **Resuming the Flow:** This drawing sequence continues in a strict cascade until a card displaying either Party or Monster text is finally revealed. Once found, standard combat momentum resumes from that card's faction parameters.

TURN-BASED ACTION ECONOMY

When the Initiative Deck grants a turn to a participant, that combatant enters the absolute focus of the scene. Every character—with very few, highly restricted mechanical exceptions—receives exactly 3 Actions to spend on their turn.

This pool of three actions is entirely unrestrictive and completely customizable. A hero can choose to spend their actions on any combination of Basic Actions, mix different behaviors to navigate shifting combat situations, or completely focus their turn by executing the exact same baseline task three times in a row.



BASIC ACTIONS

A **Basic Action** represents the fundamental combat maneuvers available to every denizen of *The Garden*. These actions do not carry a separate resource premium and form the foundational toolkit of battle:

- **Tactical Movement (Move):** You spend 1 action to push your bipedal stance across the battlefield. Spending a single action on movement allows your character to traverse a number of squares on the grid up to your lineage's explicit Base Speed statistic.
- **Weapon Attacks (Attack):** You spend 1 action to strike a target within your equipped weapon's operational range. This basic attack triggers your standard $1d12$ resolution sequence plus your corresponding modifier.
- **Spells and Incantations (Cast):** You spend 1 action to harness spiritual or arcane power to channel a spell from your Class matrix, depleting your vital Magic Points.
- **World Interactions (Interact):** You spend 1 action to handle a physical element on the field, such as unlatching a wooden door, binding an ally's cracked shell under pressure, or forcing open a chest.

Mixing Actions in Play

Because you have total authority over your three action slots, you can combine Basic Actions fluidly to match the tactical landscape:

- ***The Long Sprint:*** If an enemy is far off, a character can spend all 3 actions on Movement. This allows them to move a distance up to their Base Speed three separate times consecutively on a single turn.
- ***The Calculated Advance:*** If a monster is just beyond your baseline strike range, you can spend 2 actions on Movement to clear the distance across the grid, and spend your remaining 1 action to Attack the target.
- ***The Stationary Onslaught:*** If you are already locked in melee combat with an undergrowth predator, you can spend all 3 actions to Attack, launching three consecutive martial strikes to shatter their defenses.

AUGMENTING TRADITION: GIFTS

When a character wishes to transcend basic physical limitations and accomplish something extraordinary, powerful, or supernatural, they tap into their specialized Gifts. Gifts represent a hero's unique training, ancestral magic, or specialized combat mastery that spans across different paths of life, available regardless of class boundaries.

Activation and Stamina Costs

Unlike Basic Actions, executing a special Gift demands immediate physical or mental exertion. To activate a Gift, a character must explicitly spend Stamina points from their pool. Every Gift has an explicit Stamina cost printed on its profile; if your current Stamina pool is lower than the cost, you cannot activate it.

Crucially, activating special Gifts does not grant you extra actions beyond your baseline turn allotment. Instead, Gifts are used to directly add to or completely replace one of your 3 standard actions.



Three Gift Catagories

Gifts found throughout the game progression matrix are divided into three distinct operational profiles:

1. **Passive Gifts**
   These permanent modifications represent constant physical training or passive supernatural awakenings. Once a Passive Gift is purchased and recorded on your character sheet, its tactical effects are constantly active. They do not require an action to activate, and they carry a zero Stamina cost to maintain.
2. **Active-Instant Gifts**
   An Active-Instant Gift delivers a powerful, immediate burst of tactical advantage. You pay the designated Stamina cost to activate the Gift on your turn, it alters or replaces one of your current actions to trigger an immediate combat effect, and the effect terminates as soon as that specific action resolves.

Gift Showcase:

Double Attack (Active-Instant)

The *Double Attack* Gift allows a martial hero to spend 1 Stamina point to transform their next basic attack slot into a devastating maneuver.

- ***The Mechanism:*** The hero consumes 1 of their 3 turn actions to launch an attack. Because they paid the Stamina premium for *Double Attack*, they roll 1d12 twice (applying their standard attack modifier to both rolls) to determine if they beat the enemy's Shell Rating Target Number.
- ***The ST Impact:*** These twin strikes are executed inside a single action window, meaning succeeding on both rolls contributes 2 successes toward overcoming an enemy's overall Success Threshold (ST).
- ***The Action Boundary:*** This special modification is strictly bounded. Once that single action slot finishes resolving, the effect ends. The character does *not* automatically double attack on their remaining action slots. If they wish to perform a Double Attack on their next action, they must explicitly pay the 1 Stamina premium once again to activate the Gift for that next slot.

3. **Active-Enduring Gifts**

An Active-Enduring Gift provides long-term tactical alterations to the battlefield. A character pays the explicit Stamina cost to initiate the Gift during one of their turn slots, and its unique mechanical effects, defensive barriers, or combat modifiers remain active for a specified duration across consecutive turns or rounds before dissipating.



OUT-OF-TURN INTERRUPTIONS: REFLEXES

Combat in *The Garden* is an interactive, fast-paced sequence where your involvement continues even when an enemy card is active. Characters can disrupt enemy positioning and defend their allies through out-of-turn maneuvers known as Reflex Actions.

Trigger Conditions & Stamina Premiums

A Reflex is a specialized action that sits completely outside your standard 3-action turn profile. You cannot simply use a Reflex whenever you want; instead, each Reflex has an explicit, strict Trigger Condition that must occur on the battlefield before it can be initiated.

1. **The Trigger Occurs:** An action on the grid meets the specific parameter of a Reflex (e.g., an enemy leaves a square you threaten).
2. **Gardener Notification:** The Gardener instantly flags the moment, informing the eligible player that they have an open window to execute a Reflex.
3. **The Stamina Cost:** To lock in the interruption, the player must instantly spend 1 Stamina point from their current pool. If their character sheet is drained of Stamina, they cannot react.
4. **The Tactical Interruption:** If paid, the player character immediately interrupts the active turn sequence, resolving their attack or movement before the triggering creature can finish its intended action. Once the Reflex concludes, the active creature resumes the remainder of its turn from its new position.

Universal Reflex Example: The Opportunity Strike

All living characters share a baseline mastery of the Reflex Attack. This action is triggered the exact moment an enemy creature attempts to move out of a space that your character physically threatens with an equipped melee weapon. When the creature moves to break away, you spend 1 Stamina, interrupt their path, and execute a melee attack strike. If you succeed, damage is dealt instantly before the creature finishes fleeing across the remaining grid squares.

Beast of the Undergrowth: Monster Mechanics

The primal threats, ravenous insects, and ancient constructs of the wild are bound by the exact same rules of engagement that govern the player characters:

Identical Action Pools: When a *Monster* card is drawn, the activated creature or group receives the exact same allotment of 3 Actions to spend on Basic Actions like moving, striking, or interacting across the grid.

Monster Gifts and Abilities: Creatures possess unique monstrous Gifts detailed directly inside their stat blocks. Just like heroes, monsters use these abilities to replace or augment their 3 standard actions, and they must spend Stamina points from their own pools to activate their supernatural actions or legendary attacks.

Monstrous Reflexes: Elite predators watch the party's movements closely. Monsters can expend their own Stamina out of turn to trigger dangerous Reflexes, interrupting a hero's movement or spellcasting if a player accidentally triggers their defensive parameters.

In-Depth Combat Walkthrough

To fully visualize how the 54-card Initiative Deck, momentum chains, Gifts, and Special anomalies lock together seamlessly during a tabletop engagement, review the following detailed play scenario.

Battle Configuration

A party of adventurers—including Corvo (Assaulter) and Lanna (Garden Spirit)—is ambushed in a deep root system by two distinct threats: a lumbering Stalking Spider (acting as a Solo monster profile) and a swarming hive of Soldier Ants (acting as a collective Group monster profile). The Master Initiative Deck is shuffled and placed on the table.

1. The Opening Clash

Before anyone steps onto the map, the party elects Corvo to draw for the opening momentum.

- Corvo draws a card from the deck: it is a Party card displaying a 9.
- The Gardener draws a card from the deck: it is a Monster card displaying a 4.
- *Result:* Because 9 is greater than 4, the Party wins the opening clash and claims the right to act first!

2. Turn 1: Player Choice (Party)

The party coordinates and decides that Corvo should lead the charge while the spider is exposed. Corvo begins his turn with exactly 3 Actions available.

- **Action 1 (Move):** Corvo spends his first action on movement. He uses his full Base Speed to sprint forward across the mossy floor, drawing close to the Stalking Spider.
- **Action 2 (Gift Augmented Attack):** He wishes to hit hard right away. Corvo declares a melee strike, but spends 1 Stamina point to activate the *Double Attack* Gift. This Active-Instant ability augments his second action slot. He rolls $1d12$ twice. Both final totals meet the spider's Target Number. Corvo has generated 2 successes in a single action slot!
- **Action 3 (Basic Attack):** For his third and final action, Corvo delivers a baseline strike. He rolls a single $1d12$. This roll hits as well, adding 1 more success.
- **The Follow-Up Draw:** With all 3 actions spent, Corvo's turn finishes. He draws the next card from the deck: it is a Party card (Number 7). The momentum chain holds!

3. Turn 2: Player Choice (Party)

Because a *Party* card was drawn, control remains with the heroes. The group designates Lanna to step into the spotlight. Lanna begins her turn with her allotment of 3 **Actions**.

- **Action 1 & 2 (Move):** The swarm of Soldier Ants is bearing down fast. Lanna chooses to spend her first two actions entirely on Movement, traveling twice her Base Speed to establish high cover within a cluster of glowing mushrooms.
- **Action 3 (Cast):** Safe from immediate lines of sight, Lanna uses her final action to cast a protective warding spell, spending her Magic Points to shield Corvo.
- **The Follow-Up Draw:** Her actions exhausted, Lanna draws the next card from the deck. She reveals a Monster card (Number 2). The party's momentum chain snaps instantly, and control passes across the table.

4. Turn 3: Wilderness Strikes (Monster)

Because a *Monster* card was pulled, The Gardener takes control. Looking at the battlefield, The Gardener decides to activate the Stalking Spider Solo profile first. The spider receives 3 Actions.

- **Action 1 & 2 (Move):** Enraged by Corvo's blade, the spider spends two actions crawling along a hanging root to skirt around Corvo's defenses.
- **Out-of-Turn Reflex Interruption:** As the spider enters an adjacent space to break away from Corvo's melee weapon reach, a trigger condition is met! Corvo decides to execute a Reflex Attack. He instantly pays 1 Stamina point from his pool. The spider's movement freezes mid-stride as Corvo interrupts out of turn to make an immediate strike. The roll succeeds, carving an early wound into the beast. Once resolved, the spider resumes its path, spending its movement actions to finish its re-positioning.
- **Action 3 (Attack):** Now in position, the spider spends its third action to strike at Corvo, though his defensive ward deflects the blow.
- **The Follow-Up Draw:** The spider's turn wraps up. The Gardener draws the next card from the deck: it is a Special Card stamped with the numeral 13!

5. Interruption: Resolving the Anomaly

The turn order freezes immediately to process the Special card. The card text reveals an environmental event: *A sudden subterranean tremor rocks the root system.*

- **The Event Resolution:** Every creature on the ground must test their agility or be slid 1 square sideways. Minis shift across the grid, altering the combat spacing.
- **The Anomaly Follow-Up Draw:** Because The Gardener drew the special card, they must immediately draw again to see who claims momentum. The Gardener draws a second time and reveals a Monster card (Number 11). Faction control remains with the monsters.

6. Turn 4: Wilderness Flows (Monster)

The Gardener retains control. However, due to the *Monster Rotation Mandate*, they cannot select the Stalking Spider again, as it has already acted. The Gardener must instead activate the Soldier Ants Group profile. The ants receive 3 Actions.

- **Action 1, 2, & 3 (Move):** The swarm pours down from the wall corner. Using all three actions for pure movement, they cover an immense distance across the grid to completely surround Corvo.
- **The Follow-Up Draw:** The ants finish their swarm maneuvers. The Gardener draws the next card from the deck, revealing a Party card (Number 10). The monster chain breaks, and control flips back to the player characters to continue the battle.

Wilderness Exploring & Hazards

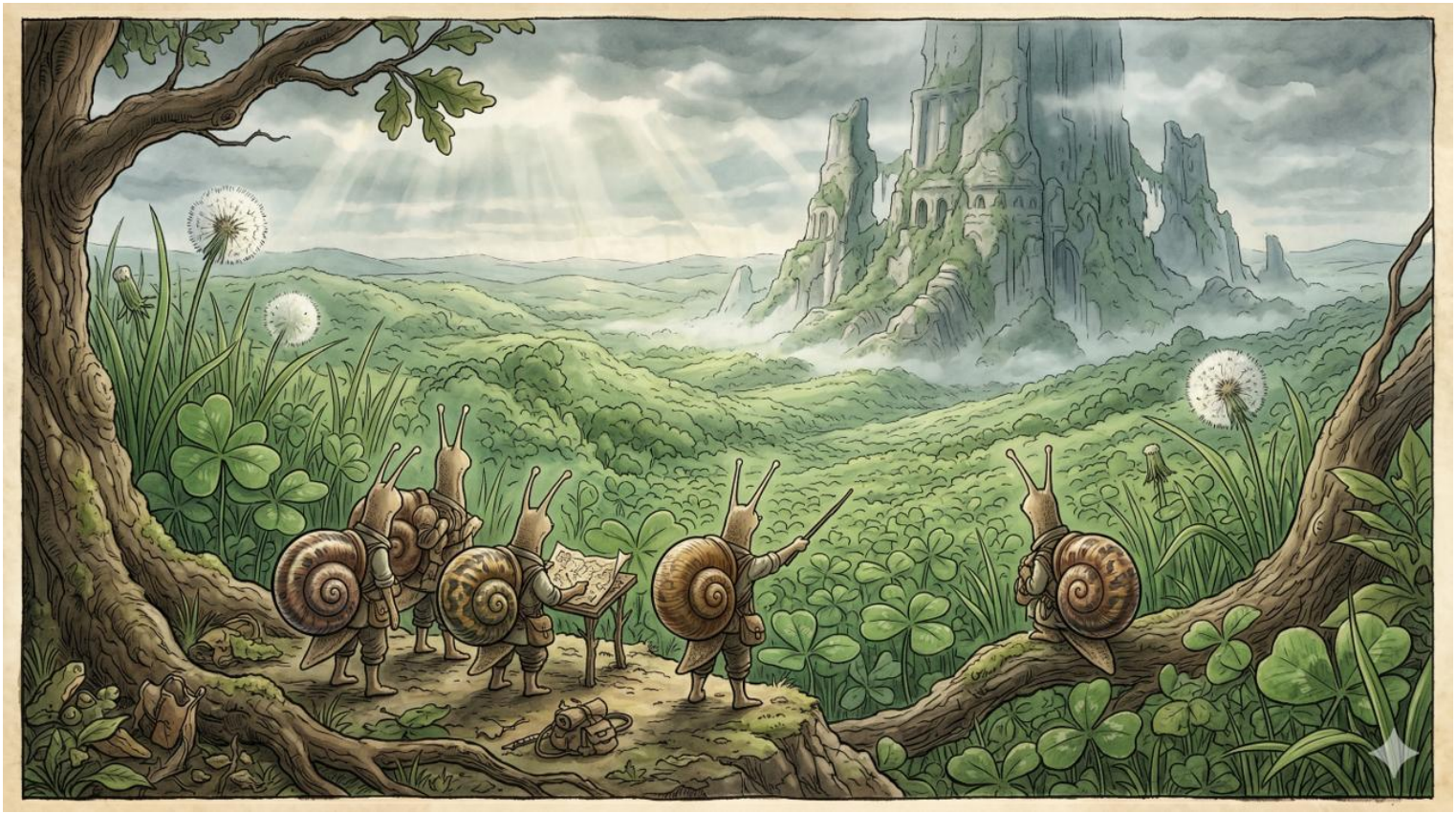
THE GREAT BEYOND: THE SPIRE

While the safety of Gastron civilization offers sanctuary beneath reinforced bark roofs, the true soul of *The Garden* lies in the untamed wilderness. Exploration is not merely a means of traveling between safe havens; it is a perilous journey through a macro-realist ecosystem where the environment itself acts as a living, breathing antagonist.

Unlike the tight, structured choreography of tactical combat, travel and exploration within *The Garden* is not turn-based. Adventurers are free to traverse the sprawling undergrowth, scale high root systems, and map ancient ruins without counting individual action slots or tracking movement restrictions. The passage of time and distance flows naturally through narrative exploration.

Gardener's Mandate: Universal Option

The rules and structures detailed within this section are designed to provide flavor, depth, and tension to your journeys, but their implementation is entirely up to The Gardener. Every rule here is completely optional. The Gardener holds total authority to use all of these systems, select only a few to emphasize a harsh environment, or bypass them entirely to favor a fast-paced, narrative travel sequence.



ANATOMY OF AN EXCURSION: TRAVEL ROLES

Journeying through the macro-wilderness is a monumental task that requires survival coordination. To give structure to long journeys, the party can organize themselves into an efficient survival unit by assigning specific Travel Roles.

Each role governs a specific category of basic actions and checks required to keep the party moving forward safely during the narrative exploration phase.

1. Trailblazer (Navigation)

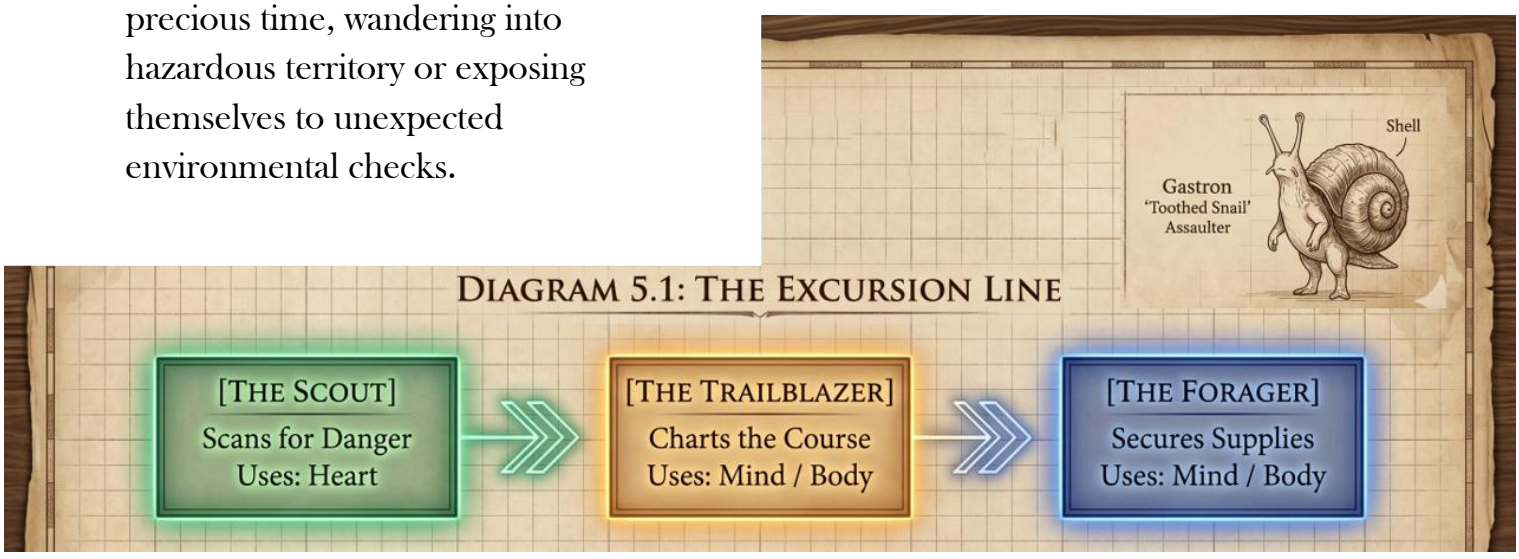
The Trailblazer commands the front of the line, charting the safest course through dense flora and shifting topography. When the party enters uncharted territory, the Trailblazer must utilize their Mind or Body stat to make navigation checks.

- ***On a Success:*** The party stays on course, avoiding dead ends, hazardous briar patches, or structural drop-offs.
- ***On a Failure:*** The party loses precious time, wandering into hazardous territory or exposing themselves to unexpected environmental checks.

2. Scout (Reconnaissance)

The Scout ranges ahead and along the flanks of the line, scanning the horizon for hidden apex predators, territorial boundaries, or structural weaknesses in the terrain. The Scout relies heavily on their Heart stat to detect anomalies.

- ***On a Success:*** The party spots incoming hazards or resting monsters early, granting them the choice to avoid the threat entirely or orchestrate an ambush.
- ***On a Failure:*** The party walks blindly into an ambush or triggers an environmental trap without warning.



3. Forager (Resource Management)

The Forager scours the immediate surroundings for clean morning dew, edible fungi, and fibrous mosses to replenish the party's supplies. The Forager typically utilizes their Mind or Body stat to identify safe vegetation.

- ***On a Success:*** The Forager successfully uncovers additional food or clean water, offsetting the party's daily resource consumption.
- ***On a Failure:*** The Forager uncovers nothing, or accidentally harvests toxic flora that threatens the party's health.

TIMING CRISIS: WHEN TIME MATTERS

While traversing the clear trails, tangled undergrowth, or muddy silt of *The Garden* does not cost players actions, the wilderness can instantly become deadly. The baseline rule of free, open-ended exploration shifts the exact moment a character's safety or choice of time becomes critical.

The Gardener will actively call for Turn-Based Actions outside of combat during high-stakes environmental crises. This occurs when a task is strictly time-dependent, forcing characters back into their standard 3-Action limits to see if they can beat the environment before catastrophe strikes.

Environmental Crisis Example:
The Quicksand Trap

Imagine the party is navigating a patch of unstable, waterlogged silt. Because exploration is fluid, they move across it freely. Suddenly, one of the adventurers steps into a hidden pocket of deep quicksand and begins to sink rapidly.

The Gardener instantly declares:
We are entering Turn-Based Action."

- **Constraint:** The clock is now ticking. The stuck character has a limited number of round cycles before they sink completely beneath the mire and are lost forever.
- **Action Sequence:** Every hero receives their standard 3 Actions on their turn to try and solve the crisis. The stuck character might spend actions making a raw Body test to fight the pull, while an ally might spend 1 action to move to the edge of the pit and a 2nd action to throw a fibrous rope.
- **Resolution:** Because the crisis is bound by rigid turns, every failed action or wasted slot brings the sinking character closer to doom, turning a simple environmental hazard into a thrilling race against time.

VOLATILE ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

When exploring *The Garden*, the weather and the landscape are living forces capable of shifting the balance of survival. If The Gardener chooses to enforce environmental hazards, these elements challenge the party's endurance without needing to track turn limits. Below are 3 examples of environmental hazards that The Gardener can use, but they are encouraged to come up with their own as well.

1. Torrential Droplet

To a creature standing mere inches tall, a sudden rainstorm is an aerial bombardment. Massive water droplets slam into the earth with terrifying force. Characters caught in an unsheltered area during a storm must make a Body check to withstand the physical impact, while the downpour rapidly alters the baseline terrain underfoot into slick, muddy silt.

2. The Gale Canopy

High winds that merely rustle the treetops create catastrophic wind tunnels along the forest floor. The Gale Canopy whips through the clover stems, tearing leaves loose and carrying heavy blinding dust particles. This severe weather increases the Target Number (TN) for all ranged weapon attacks and Heart-based Scout checks by +2.

3. The Morning Chill

As night falls over the root systems, the temperature drops rapidly, coating the environment in a restrictive layer of slick frost. The morning chill attacks physical endurance. At the start of each exploration hour spent in the deep chill, characters must choose to either expend 1 Stamina point to maintain their internal warmth, or suffer a -1 penalty to all physical actions as their limbs grow stiff.

SURVIVING THE WILD: EXPLORATION GIFTS

To push through the harshest environments, characters can learn specialized Gifts tailored specifically for overcoming the perils of the wild. These abilities allow adventurers to safeguard their allies and survive where lesser travelers would perish.

- **Sure Footed (Passive Gift)**: The character has mastered navigating treacherous terrain. Once added to a character sheet, they are naturally adept at crossing tangled brambles or loose mud pathing, keeping their footing completely without requiring additional balance checks from The Gardener.
- **Weather Hardened (Active-Enduring Gift)**: By spending 2 Stamina points, a character braces their shell and clothing against the elements. For the next hour of exploration, they are completely immune to the resource drains and stiffness of the *Morning Chill* or the impact of *Torrential Droplets*.
- **Nature's Whisper (Active-Instant Gift)**: A survivalist spends 1 Stamina point to instantly augment a Forager or Scout check. This Gift allows the character to roll 1d12 twice for the action, keeping the highest result to guarantee a vital success for the group's supply pool.

Magic Systems & Resource Pools

SPECTRUM OF THE REFRACTED FORCES

Magic in *The Garden* is not a singular, uniform art studied from an identical perspective. It is a tangible, biological power flowing through the very veins of the world, perceived and channeled in two fundamentally different ways depending on a hero's chosen calling. It pulses through the roots of ancient trees, radiates from volatile crystalline nodes in the Spire ruins, and glows softly within the morning dew.

For the brave player characters who wander the undergrowth, channeling this power demands absolute harmony between internal resolve and physical resilience. This spiritual and cosmic connection is governed by a vital, resource on your character sheet: Magic Points.



Garden Spirit Path: Spirit & Soul Energy

To those who follow the mystical path of the Garden Spirit, magic is an act of deep, natural communion. The power they draw from the soil, the flora, and the living world around them is felt as Spirit Energy or other times known as Soul Energy. It is fluid, restorative, and is deeply tied to the living ecosystem of *The Garden*.

Battle Caster Path: Arcane & Crystalline Energy

To those who walk the martial and competitive path of the Battle Caster, magic is a volatile tool of raw tactical force. The power they harness, often focused and amplified by the ancient structures of the world, is called by a few names, such as Arcane Energy, Magical Energy, or Crystalline Energy. It is sharp, structural, and perfectly engineered to reshape the battlefield through explosive force.

RESOURCE METRICS DEFINED

To survive the hazards of the wild and match the fury of apex predators, heroes must constantly balance their physical endurance against their supernatural reservoirs.

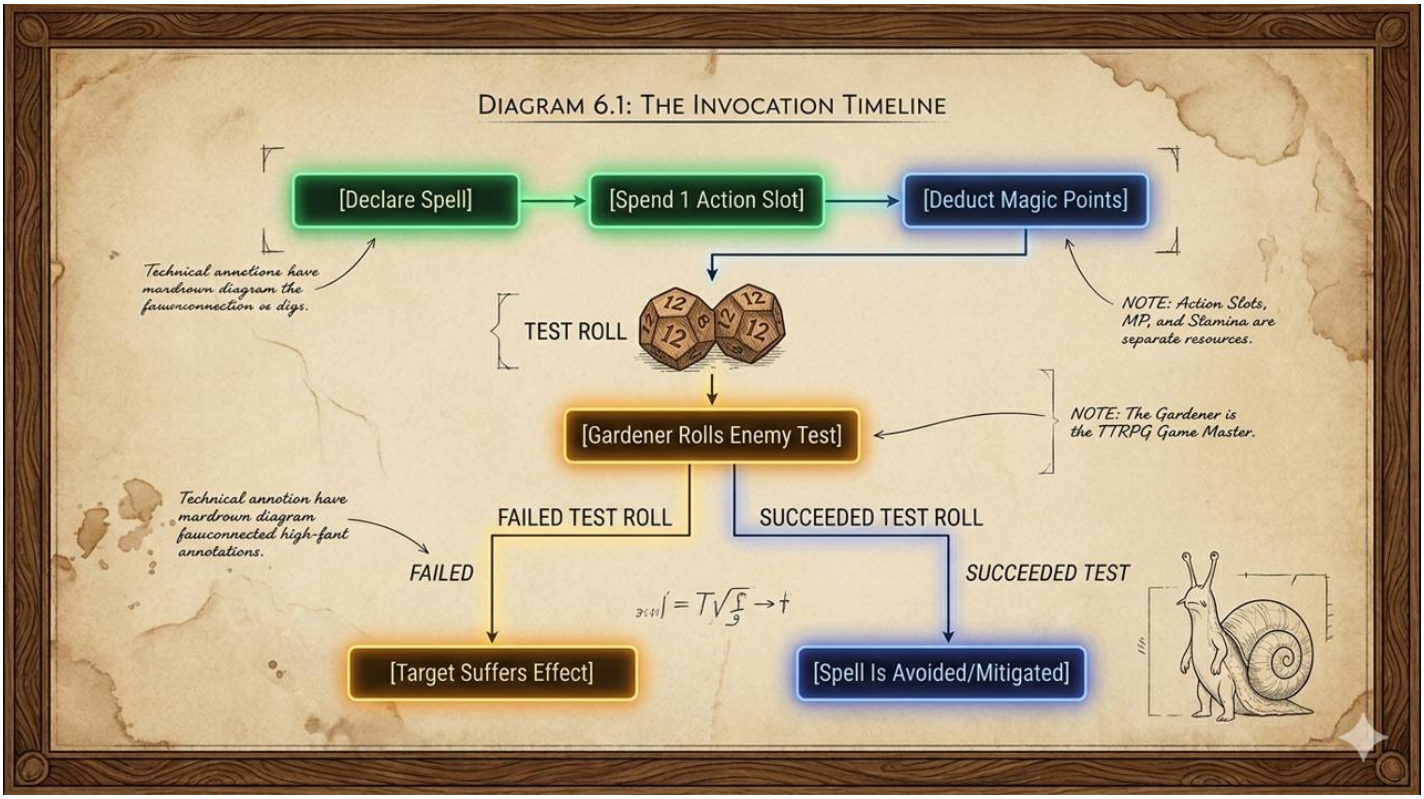
Magic Points (Supernatural Reservoirs)

Magic Points (MP) represent your character's internal capacity to channel the raw, volatile power of the world's natural forces. Whether shaping it into Spirit Energy or projecting it as Arcane Energy, manipulating the fundamental elements of nature are the same.

- **Core Allocation:** Your maximum Magic Points pool is heavily dictated by your chosen Class progression, scaling as your hero gains levels and breaks into higher campaign Tiers.
- **Spell Premium:** Every spell woven within *The Garden* carries a Magic Point cost printed on its description block. If your current MP reservoir is empty, connection to your magical source snaps, and you cannot cast.

LAWS OF INCANTATION: CASTING SPELLS

When a spellcaster decides to shape the battlefield by invoking their power, they must dedicate a piece of their turn's focus to the spell. Casting an incantation follows a precise sequence within the 3 Action system.



1. **Allocate the Action:** The spellcaster must actively spend a number of actions out of their 3 turn actions to perform the *Cast* basic action, depending on how many actions it takes to cast the spell. Most spells only require 1 action to cast.
2. **Deduct the Resource:** The player subtracts the spell's designated Magic Point cost directly from their character sheet.
3. **Establish the Difficulty:** The effectiveness of a spell is anchored to the caster's personal Spell Difficulty Level (SDL). This static target number represents the raw potency of your magic. Certain spells require the enemy to roll against this SDL in order to determine whether or not they are affected by the spell and to what extent. So spells do not require this and only require the spell caster to roll an Attack roll using their Spell Attack bonus and a d12 to see if they overcome the targets SR.
4. **The Gardener's Response (Test Rolls):** Unlike standard weapon attacks where the player rolls to beat an enemy's static defenses (SR), specific spells, including many area of effect incantations, force the target to react. The Gardener must roll in this case. A baseline Test Roll (+ the monster's corresponding attribute modifier) is compared to the spell casters Spell Difficulty Level (SDL).
5. **Evaluating the Arcane Effect:**
   - *If the Gardener's Test Roll fails to meet or exceed your Spell Difficulty Level*: The target is overwhelmed by your magic. The spell hits with full efficacy, inflicting conditions, shifting positioning, or dealing damage.
   - *If the Gardener's Test Roll equals or exceeds your SDL:* The creature successfully resists or dodges the brunt of the magical energy, mitigating or completely ignoring the spell's listed effects.

SPELL CLASSES & ENDURING RITUALS

While the cost of any incantation primarily draws from your Magic Points right at the beginning of casting in order to work, the spells across the magical paths actually fall into two operational design categories based on how long their magic grips the battlefield layout:

Instantaneous Invocations

Simple manipulation of local flora, tracking minor anomalies, or hurling volatile bolts of elemental lightning. These spells cost a set amount of Magic Points (MP) to execute inside a single action slot. Their magical effects, damage processing, or spatial shifts resolve immediately and do not linger into subsequent turns.

Enduring Rituals (Active-Enduring Spells)

Spells that lock a portion of your concentration into place to maintain an ongoing magical effect across multiple combat rounds. These require an upfront Magic Point investment to trigger and may have an ongoing Magic Point cost each round to maintain. The spell continues to alter the battlefield layout until its printed duration terminates or the caster's concentration is broken by taking a heavy hit from an enemy threat, or if the caster runs out of Magic Points needed to maintain the spells duration.

LAW OF DEPLETION

As a spell caster, managing your Magic Point resource pool is vital to ensuring you can maintain your ability to remain useful and effective when faced with challenges. In *The Garden*, draining your pool to zero carries direct, severe mechanical penalties that reflect physical and mental collapse.

Draining Magic Points to Zero

Draining your spiritual or arcane reservoir to zero induces Mental Burnout:

- The Severed Connection: You are completely cut off from the fonts of magic. You cannot cast any spells, even baseline incantations that cost a single point.

RECOVERY AND THE SANCTUARY HEARTH

Because resource pools drain quickly under the constant threat of combat and harsh environmental hazards, finding time to rest is paramount. Replenishing your Stamina and Magic Points requires the party to actively seek shelter and establish a camp.

- Taking a Nap (The Breather): Taking a brief, uninterrupted moment amidst relatively safe terrain allows heroes to bind minor wounds and catch their breath. Taking a Nap restores a small, flat portion of a character's maximum Stamina pool, but does not offer enough deep concentration to recover spent Magic Points.
- A Full Nights Sleep (The Sanctuary Hearth): Settling down for a full sleep cycle inside a safe haven, a fortified camp, or beneath a protective fungal canopy completely clears all penalties. A completed Nights Sleep fully restores both your Stamina Points and Magic Points pools back to their maximum values, prepping your adventuring party to face the challenges of the next campaign Tier.

MASTER SPELLBOOK INDEX

The following indices provide the statistical reference matrices and detailed functional breakdowns of every spell available within *The Garden*.

UNIVERSAL INCANTATIONS (ALL SPELLCASTERS)

These fundamental spells are available to any class capable of manipulating the elements or energy currents.

Quick-Reference Stat Matrix

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Magic Bolt	0	0	1 action	Medium	Inst	1 creature	You shoot forth a small magical bolt of energy from your finger tip.
Unravel Essence	3	3	1 action	Long	Inst	Current spell effect or active cast	Cancel a spell effect that is ongoing, or Cancel a Spell as it is being cast
Unravel Essence (Superior)	5	7	1 action	Long	Inst	Current spell effect or active cast	Cancel a spell effect that is ongoing, or Cancel a Spell as it is being cast

Comprehensive Descriptions

Magic Bolt (Tier 0):

Allows you to shoot forth a small magical bolt of energy from your finger tip, that can travel up to Medium Range to hit a target without expending any spell levels or magic points. The Magic Bolt does in damage, and your attack roll is .

Unravel Essence (Tier 3)

This spell can be cast to cancel out a spell that is already in effect OR as it is being cast. To cancel a spell that is already in effect the caster must make an opposed Casting Stat Test vs. the opposing Casters Spell Difficulty. If successful, the effect is cancelled. This spell can be cast as a Reflex in order to cancel a spell as it is being cast, but to do so costs 1 Stamina as per rules for Reflex Actions.

Unravel Essence (Superior) (Tier 5)

As Unravel Essence, Strike a magical effect with a pulse of spirit. Make an Opposed Test with your Primary Casting Stat (Soul for Garden Spirits and Mind for Battle Casters) against the original caster's Spell Difficulty to end the effect. For this test you can Spend 3 MP for a bonus to the roll (max).

BATTLE CASTER SPELLS

These spells are tailored for frontline spell-duelists who harness sharp, protective, and destructive crystalline configurations.

Quick-Reference Stat Matrix

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Antennae Arc	1	1	1 A	Long	Inst	1 creature	Magical blast of energy.
Brier Guard	1	1	1 A	Med	3 rnds+	1 creature	Protects from weapon damage.
Essence Read	1	1	1 A	Melee	Inst	up to 10 magical objects	Identify magical objects
Ghost-Glow	1	1	1 A	Melee	1 hour+	1 object	Manifest a floating ball of illumination.
Hive Pheromone	1	1	1 A	Med	5 mins+	1 creature	Distract target mind.
Needle Shot	1	1	1 A	Med	Inst	1 creature	Fires sharp energy needles.
Pheromone Spark	1	1	1 A	Med	1 min+	1 Target	Distracts with sharp sparks.
Root-Whisper	1	1	1 A	Self	15 mins+	Self	Understand and speak languages.
Seed-Drift	1	1	Reflex	Self	1 rnd+	Self	Creates slippery surface under foot.
Soul-Glow	1	1	1 A	Med	5 mins+	Self	Glow in social settings.
Spirit-Shell	1	1	Reflex	Self	1 rnd	self only	Temporary Shield Rating bonus.
Spore Cloud	1	1	1 A	Close	1 rnd+	Close Range radius area	Creates smoke cloud.
Sticky Sap	1	1	1 A	Med	1 min+	1 Target	Allows slowing or entangling a target.
Sticky Silk (Restrain)	1	1	1 A	Close	1 min+	Close Range diameter area	Restrains a target in an area.
Vibration Ping	1	1	1 A	Close	Inst	All within range	Detect hidden targets in an area.
Antennae Link	2	2	1 A	Spatial	1 hour+	2+ willing targets	Telepathic communication.
Beetle-Bulk	2	2	1 A	Close	1 min	1 target	Makes a target grow
Chitin Harden	2	2	1 A	Melee	10 mins	1 target	Hardens an ally's shell.
Glow-Burst	2	2	1 A	Close	Inst	wide range	Blinds target vision.

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Hunter's Focus	2	2	1 A	Melee	3 rnds	Self or 1 creature	Hunter's target marks.
Larva-Shrink	2	2	1 A	Melee	1 min	1 target	Makes a target shrink
Leaf-Lift	2	2	1 A	Melee	1 rnd+	1 creature or object	Ability to float up or down.
Leaf-Shield	2	2	1 A	Melee	1 min+	Self or 1 creature	Swirling barrier of leaves.
Mimic-Shimmer	2	2	1 A	Med	Up to 10 mins	Up to a cube that is 10' per side	Creates illusory image
Mind-Sting	2	2	1 A	Med	Inst	1 creature	Psychic attack damage.
Pollen Blind	2	2	1 A	Close	1 min	1 Target	Blinds target with dust
Sap-Sluggish	2	2	1 A	Close	1 min	1 creature	Reduces speed and actions
Wind-Step	2	2	1 A	Med	1 min+	Self	Assist or speed movement
Worker Ant	2	2	1 A	Melee	4 hours	self	Summon worker ant
Chameleon Hide	3	3	1 A	Melee	10 mins+	Self or 1 creature	Renders target invisible
Cloud-Brain	3	3	1 A	Med	1 min	1 creature	Mind control confusion
Colony Aegis	3	3	1 A	Close	2 rnds+	3 allies	Buffs Allies vs Magic.
Dew-Rush	3	3	1 A	Close	Inst	Self	Shakes and speeds Shell Rating
Dragonfly Wings	3	3	1 A	Melee	10 mins+	Self or 1 creature	Grants light speed
Echo-Blast	3	3	1 A	Close	Inst	cone range area	Sonic Boom and Knockback.
Elemental Husk	3	3	1 A	Melee	1 hour	self or 1 creature	Buff damage vs type
Grip-Silk	3	3	1 A	Melee	1 hour	Close Range radius area	Improved weapon grasp
Root-Lance	3	3	1 A	Long	Inst	line range area	Piercing root attack
Static Discharge	3	3	1 A	Close	Inst	Multiple Targets	Chain electrical damage
Sun-Singe	3	3	1 A	Med	Inst	Close Range radius area	Solar light burst damage
Swarm-Sense	3	3	1 A	Self	10 mins	self	Heightened awareness.
Amber Prison	4	4	1 A	Med	1 min	1 target	Traps target in resin
Exoskeleton Shed	4	4	1 A	Self	Inst	self only	Immune to status
Gale-Force	4	4	1 A	Long	Inst	Allies line	Wind tunnel travel attack

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Husk Buffer	4	4	1 A	Melee	1 min+	self or 1 creature	Absorbs low damage
Mana-Dampener	4	4	1 A	Long	3 rnds+	Mid-point range radius area	Counter blocks, spells.
Mind-Fog	4	4	1 A	Long	1 min	Close Range Radius area	Summon visions, confusion.
Muscle-Wither	4	4	1 A	Close	1 min+	Self or 1 creature	Lowers monster melee damage
Superior Chameleon Hide	4	10	1 A	Melee	1 hour+	Self or 1 creature	Sustained invisibility.
Thorax Bolt	4	4	1 A	Long	Inst	1 creature linked to Medium Range	Heavy lightning strike
Thorn-Brier Wall	4	4	1 A	Med	10 mins	wall up to 30'	Creates thorn wall.
True-Sight Pulse	4	4	1 A	Med	Inst	All within Medium Range	Reveals hidden traps
Venomous Lash	4	4	1 A	Melee	3 rnds	1 target	Fire whip with ongoing damage
Absolute Carapace	5	5	1 A	Self	Inst	self	Full immunity vs one type
Fold-Step	5	5	1 A	Med	Inst	self or 1 creature/willing target	Teleport self or use type
Mirror-Weave	5	5	1 A	Self	10 mins	Self	Directs incoming spells back at the source
Nerve-Fire	5	5	1 A	Melee	1 rnd	1 Target	Owner taking pain damage
Spirit-Sentinels	5	5	10 mins	Spatial	1 hour+	Spatial	Guard chokepoint
The Sky-Fall	5	5	1 A	Long	Inst	Large Range Radius area vs 20' height	Heavy projectile rain
Chain Despair	6	7	1 A	Med	1 min	Up to 4 targets	Chain decay link damage
Cortex Shred	6	7	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Psychic weapon for Mind damage
Drowsy Pollen	6	5	1 A	Close	Up to 10 mins	Up to 30' radius area within close range	Puts targets to sleep.
Elemental Infusion	6	7	1 A	Self	1 min	self	Buffs attacks with energy
Iron-Cortex	6	5	1 A	Melee	Inst	Self or 1 creature	Immune to physical attacks
Mycelial Maw (Trap)	6	8	1 A	Med	Inst	Self or 1 creature	Ground trap for targets
Pheromone-Puppet	6	9	1 A	Med	10 mins	1 creature	Mind control

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Razor-Swarm	6	8	1 A	Close	Inst	cone range area	Flying energy blades
Volatile Ember	6	9	1 A	Close	1 min	All within close range	Threat ACC for targets
Apex Fold-Step	7	8	1 A	Self	Inst	self +6 creatures or 4+ monsters	Flawless travel
Compost-Crasher	7	8	1 A	Extreme	Inst	All within extreme range up to four Close Range diameter circles	Heavy bombardment damage
Glow of Truth	7	8	1 A	Close	10 mins	self	X-ray sight of encryption
Hive Mind Control	7	10	1 A	Long	4 rnds+	up to 4 targets	Direct control of a group
Planar Collapse	7	12	1 A	Long	Inst	Close Range Diameter area	Recovers blocks of items
Soul-Siphon	7	8	1 A	Med	Inst	1 creature	A massive strike that drains the targets formal essence
Chameleon Hide (Mass)	8	12	1 A	Med	10 mins+	All characters	Makes a group of targets invisible
Great Decay	8	15	1 A	Med	Inst	1 Target	Massive damage and decay effect.
Monsoon	8	15	1 A	Extreme	up to 1 hour	All in area	Shifting weather storm
Realm-Rift	8	15	2 As	Med	5 mins	varies	Opens a gateway or tear
Unravel Existence	8	20	2 As	Long	Inst	Close Range Diameter area	A powerful wedge of energies
Root-Lock	9	25	1 A	Varies	4 rnds+	1 Creature	Prevents target action.
The Mind's Will	9	100	1 A	Varies	Varies	Varies	An ultimate appeal to the logic of the Garden for any effect
Total Essence Erasure	9	50	1 A	Close	Inst	1 target	Unmakes a creature's essence.
Amber-Stasis	10	50	1 A	Self	10+1 rnds	Self	Encapsulates the caster in a moment of frozen time

Antennae Arc (Tier 1)

You fire a bolt of raw kinetic force. Deal 1d8 + (Mind Mod x 2) damage. Spend 2 MP to add +1d8 damage (max +3d8).

Brier Guard (Tier 1)

You create floating blades of energy around a friendly target that attacks any creature that hits you with a melee strike, dealing 1d4 damage.

Essence Read (Tier 1)

Manifest a small optical thread that deciphers an object's utility rules or its properties. Can identify up to 10 items.

Ghost-Glow (Tier 1)

Manifest a floating ball of bioluminescence that follows you for 1 hour. Can be dimmed or brighten up to extreme distances.

Hive Pheromone (Tier 1)

Target must pass a Mind Test or consider you an ally for 5 minutes. Cannot be used in combat. +2 SP for each additional target.

Needle Shot (Tier 1)

Shoot tiny projectable barbs of organic crystals at a target at Medium range. Deal 1d4 + Mind Mod damage. Spend 1 MP for each additional needle (max 3 needles total).

Pheromone Spark (Tier 1)

You release a sharp, irritating spark at a target within Medium range. The creature must pass a Mind Test or suffer -2 to all physical attacks for 1 minute.

Root-Whisper (Tier 1)

You tap into the Canopy's dirty neural network to read, write, and speak any language for 15 minutes. Spend 1 MP to add +4 targets.

Seed-Drift (Tier 1)

Reflex: Create a slick surface under a target as they move to bypass you. He falls damage, spending 1 Action to rise.

Soul-Glow (Tier 1)

You weave shimmer, increases greeting interactions within Medium Range for 5 minutes.

Spirit-Shell (Tier 1)

Reflex: Create a force barrier granting +4 Shell Rating for 1 round. Spend 1 MP per extra point (max +4).

Spore Cloud (Tier 1)

Exhale a cloud of heavy mold spores. Creatures inside a Close Range block have a 50% hit chance. Lasts 3 rounds.

Sticky Sap (Tier 1)

You coat a surface or an enemy foot in sticky amber sap at a range of Medium. The target cannot move for 1 round if they fail a Body Test.

Sticky Silk (Tier 1)

A 10-foot diameter area becomes sticky. Creatures must pass a Body Test or have Speed reduced by -2 and double traveling cost.

Vibration Ping (Tier 1)

You pulse the ground, sending out a radar wave within your reach. You instantly detect the location of hidden or invisible targets.

Antennae Link (Tier 2)

Carrier can link up to 4 willing characters. It means they can communicate silently over distances under the high roots for 1 hour. Spend 2 MP for each additional target.

Beetle-Bulk (Tier 2)

Target grows 1 size. Gains 1d4 Melee Mod and +2 Body Stat for 1 minute. Health increases by +10 (disappears when ended).

Chitin Harden (Tier 2)

You drastically reinforce an ally's external shell. The target ignores the first 3 damage points from incoming physical strikes. Lasts 10 minutes.

Glow-Burst (Tier 2)

You fire a massive prism wave of sunlight. All creatures within Close Range must pass a Heart Test or become blinded for 1 round.

Hunter's Focus (Tier 2)

Target gains a +2 bonus to weapon attacks for 3 rounds. Spend 1 MP for an additional +1 bonus (max +4).

Larva-Shrink (Tier 2)

Target drops down 1 size. Melee hits suffer -2 damage, -2 Body Stat, and -2 Body Tests for 1 minute (min stat is +0).

Leaf-Lift (Tier 2)

You cause a selected target or object vertically to float 10'. Horizontal movement allows movement at normal speed. Lasts 2 rounds.

Leaf-Shield (Tier 2)

You spawn a barrier of razor sharp leaves in front of you. You gain +2 Shell Rating, and any enemy adjacent taking 1d4 damage.

Mimic-Shimmer (Tier 2)

Create a 10-foot cube illusion within Medium Range. Interaction requires a Mind Test vs Spell Difficulty to clear.

Mind-Sting (Tier 2)

You deliver a sharp psychic jolt to a target within Medium Range. Deal 1d6 + Mind Modifier damage. Target must pass a Mind Test or suffer -2 to their next attack roll.

Pollen Blind (Tier 2)

Throw a handful of blinding dirt at a target's eyes within Medium Range. Target must pass a Mind Test or have Speed halved, +2 Shell Rating, and cost +1 Action per action performed for 1 minute.

Sap-Sluggish (Tier 2)

Target must pass a Mind Test or have Speed halved, -2 Shell Rating, and cost +1 Action per action performed for 1 minute.

Wind-Step (Tier 2)

Gather a micro-vortex at your feet. You gain +2 Speed, you can pass over deep drops, and your jump distance increases by 10 feet for 1 minute.

Worker Ant (Tier 2)

Summons a small ant that can lift 200 lbs for 4 hours (Speed 4). Disappears when duration expires.

Chameleon Hide (Tier 3)

Target is invisible for 10 minutes. Ends immediately if target attacks. Spend 1 MP for +5 minutes.

Cloud-Brain (Tier 3)

Strike a target's mind. On hit, target must pass a Mind Test or take actions randomly for 1 minute.

Colony Aegis (Tier 3)

Up to 3 allies gain +2 for Tests against magical effects for 3 rounds.

Dew-Rush (Tier 3)

To gain speed boosts, Shell Rating increases by +4, and then gain +1 Action for 3 rounds.

Dragonfly Wings (Tier 3)

Target gains spectral wings and a light speed of 8 for 10 minutes. Spend 1 MP for +10 minutes.

Echo-Blast (Tier 3)

Release a powerful sonic boom. All creatures in a Close Range cone take 2d8 sonic damage and are pushed back 2 squares.

Elemental Husk (Tier 3)

Target takes half damage from a chosen energy type (Fire, Cold, etc.) for 1 hour. Spend 1 MP to choose an extra type.

Grip-Silk (Tier 3)

Fix weapon, low Range and Close Reflex. Target stays in hand for 1 hour. Cannot be disarmed.

Root-Lance (Tier 3)

An automated root spikes out from the ground under a target within Close Range. Deals 1d10 + Body Mod damage and knocks prone.

Static Discharge (Tier 3)

Chain electrical energy through up to 4 targets within Close Range of each other, dealing 2d10 lightning damage (Body Test for half).

Sun-Singe (Tier 3)

Focus light ray damage, targets inside 20' area (+ Mind Mod x 2) damage.

Swarm-Sense (Tier 3)

You connect to the collective consciousness of the Garden. For 10 minutes you cannot be surprised and have +2 to all Scout checks.

Amber Prison (Tier 4)

Target is locked in solid crystal. To get out, target or an ally must pass a Body Test vs Spell Difficulty for 1 minute. The enclosed target takes half damage from outside.

Exoskeleton Shed (Tier 4)

Target cannot be grappled or rest for 1 minute. Clear one status condition.

Gale-Force (Tier 4)

Wind tunnel blast attack. All structures in a line take 4d10 damage and are pushed back up to 4 squares. Any creature in the line takes 2d10 damage from debris.

Husk Buffer (Tier 4)

Target gains a pool of (Tier x 5) points. Damage is subtracted from this pool first.

Mana-Dampener (Tier 4)

A focus wave zone forces monsters to pass a Mind Test to use spells inside. Lasts 3 rounds.

Mind-Fog (Tier 4)

Unleash a psych-fog over a Close Range diameter. Target entities inside must pass a Mind Test or deal half damage for 1 minute.

Muscle-Wither (Tier 4)

Enforces a restrictive curse. On hit, target must pass a Body Test or subtract half its standard melee damage for 1 minute.

Superior Chameleon Hide (Tier 4)

As Chameleon Hide, but target remains invisible even after attacking. Lasts 1 hour. Spend 3 MP for +1 target.

Thorax Bolt (Tier 4)

Strike with electrical arc force. Deals (4d10 + Mind Mod) damage (Body Test for half).

Thorn-Brier Wall (Tier 4)

Conjure 3 sections of wall up to 30' total length. Creatures in the way take 1d8 damage or must pass a Body Test to escape.

True-Sight Pulse (Tier 4)

A wave out to Medium Range reveals invisible entries, clears Mind Traps or illusions within line of sight.

Venomous Lash (Tier 4)

Manifest a glowing whip. On hit, target takes 2d4 poison damage each turn for 3 rounds.

Absolute Carapace (Tier 5)

Full immunity to one type of elemental damage for 1 hour.

Fold-Step (Tier 5)

Transport yourself and 1 ally up to 60' away (Mind Test vs SDL). Fail results in being off target or lasting.

Mirror-Weave (Tier 5)

Alters wave radiant energy around your shell. For 10 minutes, when a spell is directed at you, the original caster must pass a Mind Test vs your Spell Difficulty. On a failure, the spell is reflected back onto the original caster. You may spend 2 MP to add +1 to your SDL for this test.

Nerve-Fire (Tier 5)

You target a medium or lower monster. It must pass a Heart Test or suffer 1d6 Core Stat damage and be incapacitated for 1 round.

Spirit-Sentinels (Tier 5)

Strategically observe a baseline location for signs of threat. Opposed Mind Test. Lasts 1 hour.

The Sky-Fall (Tier 5)

Downpour heavy grid debris into a Close Range circle (15 squares high). Targets take heavy impact damage upon falling.

Chain Despair (Tier 6)

Link the fate of your enemies. When one target takes damage, other linked entities take half. Max 4 entities can be linked. Test vs your Spell Difficulty. This lasts for 1 minute. Spend 2 MP for each secondary target beyond the first.

Cortex Shred (Tier 6)

You force a staggering psychic strike at close range target's mind. Target must pass a Mind Test or take 2d6 Mind Stat damage.

Drowsy Pollen (Tier 6)

Post 30' D. circle zone planting with heavy sleeping pollen fall for 1 minute. Targets context status sleep.

Elemental Infusion (Tier 6)

You infuse your body with energy. For 1 minute, your attacks deliver an extra +2d12 damage of a chosen energy (Fire, Cold, or Lightning).

Iron-Cortex (Tier 6)

Target becomes immune to standard, non-magical physical hits.

Mycelial Maw (Tier 6)

Manifest a trap of gnashing teeth made of mold spores. Triggers when an opponent walks onto the Close Range space, dealing 4d12 piercing damage and pinning it vs Heart Test or Shell Difficulty.

Pheromone-Puppet (Tier 6)

Fully control a target's next 3 Actions. Mind Test vs your Spell Difficulty level.

Razor-Swarm (Tier 6)

Manifest 12 blades of volatile energy. Make a Spell Attack for each. Each hit deals 1d8 damage.

Volatile Ember (Tier 6)

Boosts ACC for group weapon attacks. Deals +1d6 fire damage on successful hits for 1 minute.

Apex Fold-Step (Tier 7)

Transport up to 10 allies anywhere on the active theater map grid. No chance of being off target; failure simply cancels spell.

Compost-Crasher (Tier 7)

Calls down four heavy destructive clusters. Each deals 4d12 damage in a 4-space diameter loop. Heavy tremors.

Glow of Truth (Tier 7)

Target details illuminate up to Medium Range for 10 minutes. Detect hidden paths or traps.

Hive Mind Control (Tier 7)

Target group up to 4 targets. Direct control of action sequence.

Planar Collapse (Tier 7)

Target Zone open up to Long range array and briefly fold space; targets inside take maximum damage across Close Range Diameter terrain areas. Deal 6d12 damage from spatial shock.

Soul-Siphon (Tier 7)

Make a Spell Attack. On hit, target suffers 5d12 Soul damage.

Chameleon Hide (Mass) (Tier 8)

You and up to a number of allies equal to your Mind Modifier become invisible. If any one of the targets performs any kind of attack or casts an offensive spell, the effect immediately ends for all targets. This effect lasts for 10 minutes, but the duration can be extended for an extra 10 minutes for every extra MP spent at time of computation. Additionally, you can include more allies at a rate of 1 extra target per extra MP spent, up to a maximum of +5 additional allies.

Great Decay (Tier 8)

Accelerated biological ruin over a chosen target. Target must pass a Body Test or take 8d12 damage and lose 3 points of Health and Primary Ability Stats. Reduced to 1/2 on success. Spend 5 MP to target Soul Difficulty, max +3. Target can attempt to avoid the Drift with a standard Drift Check vs Soul Target if they are a Gastron.

Monsoon (Tier 8)

Call down a massive storm over a Large Range zone. Targets inside have halved range, are Blinded, travel at 1/2 Speed, and take 1d10 damage each round. Spend 15 MP each turn to maintain this spell. It can last for up to 1 hour if maintained.

Realm-Rift (Tier 8)

Opens a surface boundary between locations or other realms for 5 minutes. Can be used for transit or to summon things up to your Level.

Unravel Existence (Tier 8)

A powerful wave of magical energy that forces magical objects to pass a Soul/Mind Test (+5 target) or be unmade and items scattered.

Root-Lock (Tier 9)

Target must pass a Mind Test or suffer 115 Difficulty to all physical actions for 4 rounds.

The Mind's Will (Tier 9)

An ultimate appeal to the logic of the Garden for any effect. Mind Test vs Difficulty set by The Gardener.

Total Essence Erasure (Tier 9)

Form solid focus beam energy. Target must pass a Soul Test vs your Spell Difficulty or be reduced to 0 Health and Primary Ability Stats. Reduced to 00/50 Damage on a successful Soul Difficulty check. Target can attempt to avoid the Drift with a standard Drift Check vs Soul Target if they are a Gastron.

Amber-Stasis (Tier 10)

Encapsulates the caster inside a frozen bubble of compressed time for 10+1 rounds. You can take no actions except attacking without time passing or testing.

GARDEN SPIRIT SPELLS

These restorative invocations bind wood, weave protective foliage, and summon the ancient fungal grids of the underworld.

Quick-Reference Stat Matrix

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Ancestral Hunch	1	1	1 A	Self	Inst	self only	Guidance on choices
Bell of the Compost	1	1	1 A	Close	1rnd+	1 target creature	Deafens target with booming hum
Challenger's Scent	1	1	1 A	Med	1 min	1 target	Forces focus onto target
Drift-Seed	1	1	1 A	Med	Inst	1 target	Shoots organic projectiles
Fiber Stitch	1	1	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target creature	Closes surface wounds with fibers
Nature's Chorus	1	1	1 A	Med	5 mins	All within range	Distracts target ears with birds
Ray of Purity	1	1	1 A	Med	Inst	1 target	Clears decay status
Rigidity Flush	1	1	1 A	Med	1 min	1 target	Buffs defense vs blunt damage
Rotting Touch	1	1	1 A	Melee	3rnds	1 target	Inflicts ongoing wood rot damage
Seal the Wound	1	1	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Closes gaping cuts with sap
Sense Corruption	1	1	1 A	Close	Inst	Close range area radius	Detects toxic or corrupted targets
Shell Hardening	1	1	1 A	Melee	10 mins	1 target	Hardens armor carapace shell
Shell Padding	1	1	1 A	Melee	10 mins	1 target	Adds cushion to absorb hits
Spirit Sight	1	1	1 A	Self	10 mins	self only	See invisible energy trails
True Nature Gaze	1	1	1 A	Close	Inst	1 target	Discerns true form of anomalies
Clarity of the Dew	2	2	1 A	Close	Inst	1 target	Clears mind confusion conditions
Crack Shell	2	2	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Cracks target defenses
Dew Drop Touch	2	2	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Regenerates low health points
Dew of the Valiant	2	2	1 A	Close	3rnds	Up to 3 allies	Grants A speed bonuses
Echo of Life	2	2	1 A	Med	1 min	1 target	Creates spectral decoy double

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Garden's Endurance	2	2	1 A	Close	1 min	Up to 3 allies	Buffs physical saves vs hazards
Luminous Presence	2	2	1 A	Med	5 mins	self	Radiates soothing emerald light
Might of the Beetle	2	2	1 A	Close	1 min	1 target	Grants heavy lifting power
Nectar Infusion	2	2	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Restores minor stamina points
Read the Petals	2	2	1 A	Self	10 mins	self	Deciphers historical markers
Silent Canopy	2	2	1 A	Close	10 mins	20' area radius	Mutes all auditory noise
Soul Flare	2	2	1 A	Med	Inst	1 target	Releases burst of radiant light
Will of the Oak	2	2	1 A	Melee	1 hour	self or 1 target	Increases weight and stability
Chorus of Growth	3	3	1 A	Med	1rnd	30' dia. area	Forces sudden botanical growth
Dew Drop, Mass	3	3	1 A	Close	Inst	Up to 5 allies	Restores low health to a group
Ever Bloom Light	3	3	1 A	Close	1 hour	1 object	Permanent glowing leaf marker
Great Nectar Touch	3	3	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Restores mid-tier health
Luminous Pulse	3	3	1 A	Med	Inst	30' dia. cir.	Blinds enemies with soil energy
Might o'da Swarm	3	3	1 A	Self	1 min	self	Grants multiple insectile strikes
Purify the Humors	3	3	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Neutralizes deep poisons/toxins
Shelter	3	3	1 A	Med	8 hours	wall up to 20'	Weaves safety dome from branches
Soul Anchor	3	3	1 A	Melee	1 hour	1 target	Anchors spirit to prevent displacement
Soul Blade	3	3	1 A	Melee	3rnds	1 target weapon	Infuses attacks with spirit force
Spirit of the Sun	3	3	1 A	Long	Inst	line range path area	Fires a solar line ray beam
Whirling Spores	3	3	1 A	Close	3rnds	Close range dia. area	Distracts enemies with dust
Call the Scout	4	4	1 A	Med	10 mins	1 summon	Summons woodland scout spirit
Clarity of the Breeze	4	4	1 A	Long	Inst	All allies in line	Clears vision and gas hazards

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Fallen Cycle	4	4	1 A	Med	Inst	1 corpse or decay object	Returns items to topsoil compost
Grip of the Living	4	4	1 A	Med	1 min	Close range radius area	Tangling root matrix underfoot
Root Grip	4	4	1 A	Med	1 min	1 target	Pulls target down into soil
Spirit Surge	4	4	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Grants immediate A points
Spirit Tether	4	4	1 A	Long	3rnds	2 targets	Shares damage profile between keys
Spirit of the Star	4	4	1 A	Long	Inst	1 target	Heavy radiant piercing damage
Vines of Vitality	4	4	1 A	Melee	1 min	self or 1 creature	Grows vine limbs for attacks
Will of the Grove	4	4	1 A	Close	10 mins	Up to 4 targets	Links minds for communication
Banishment Bellow	5	5	1 A	Close	Inst	cone range path area	Sonic shout that pushes foes
Call the Warrior	5	5	10 mins	Spatial	1 hour+	1 summon	Summons frontline guardian beetle
Earthen Carapace	5	5	1 A	Melee	1 min	1 target	Full physical damage immunity
Solar Pillar	5	5	1 A	Long	Inst	Lg. range radius cir.	Continuous sun column damage
Spirit Sharpen	5	5	1 A	Melee	3rnds	1 target weapon	Boosts weapon threat values
Thicket of Honesty	5	5	1 A	Close	10 mins	30' area cir.	Prevents lie-telling in zone
Void Wither	5	5	1 A	Med	3rnds	1 target	Lowers monster defense attributes
Warden's Fence	5	5	1 A	Med	10 mins	wall up to 40'	Raises defensive boundary wall
Warden's Shout	5	5	Reflex	Close	Inst	All allies in range	Gives shield bonuses out of turn
Blight Dominance	6	7	1 A	Med	1 min	Up to 3 targets	Inflicts rotting curse status
Bloom of Health	6	7	1 A	Close	Inst	All allies within close range	Widespread health restoration
Call the Great One	6	8	10 mins	Spatial	1 hour+	1 elite summon	Summon towering ancient avatar
Commune with the Great Root	6	5	10 mins	Self	1 hour	self only	Pulls historical map memory

Spell	Tier	Base MP	Casting Time	Range	Duration	Targets	Short Description
Grave Sprout	6	7	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 fallen target corpse	Sprouts life energy from defeat
Great Nectar, Mass	6	7	1 A	Close	Inst	Up to 5 targets	High tier group healing burst
The Great Mending	6	8	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 target	Full health and condition reset
Warden's Decree	6	7	1 A	Close	3rnds	All allies in range	Team-wide defense modifiers
Bounty of the Garden	7	8	1 A	Close	Inst	Up to 6 allies	Fully restores all stamina points
Call the Behemoth	7	12	10 mins	Spatial	1 hour+	1 world summon	Summons legendary undergrowth colossus
Great Root Purge	7	8	1 A	Long	Inst	line range path area	Piercing root wall sweep
Hidden Path	7	8	1 A	Spatial	1 hour	2 created doorways	Links two far spatial positions
Sky's Fury	7	10	1 A	Long	3rnds	Lg. range area cir.	Heavy electrical lightning bolts
Warden of the Grove	7	8	1 A	Close	1 min	Self	Unlocks apex natural form traits
Colony Bloom	8	12	1 A	Extreme	Inst	All allies on map	Map-wide emergency restoration
Heart Collapse	8	15	1 A	Med	Inst	1 target	Severe crushing internal damage
Root Grip, Mass	8	12	1 A	Med	1 min	Lg. range radius cir.	Tangling root wall chokepoint
The Eternal Return	8	20	1 A	Melee	Inst	1 fallen hero spirit	Full restoration of a lost life
Garden’s Wrath	9	25	1 A	Extreme	3rnds	Entire map theater grid	Environmental tactical collapse
Glow of the Colony	9	15	1 A	Close	10 mins	All allies in range	Matrix connection communication
Verdant Mending	9	30	2 As	Close	Varies	Up to 5 allies	Links health pools for balance
The Garden's Whim	10	100	1 A	Varies	Varies	Varies	Total reality alteration request

Comprehensive Descriptions

Ancestral Hunch (Tier 1)

You call upon the echoes of past trailblazers. The Gardener must give you a truthful answer regarding the potential danger or viability of a choice you are about to make.

Bell of the Compost (Tier 1)

Manifest a hollow seed casing that rings with a booming hum. The target creature must pass a Soul Test or be Deafened for 3 rounds.

Challenger's Scent (Tier 1)

Spray a target with concentrated pheromones. For 1 minute, wild beasts prioritize attacking this target above all others unless harmed by another.

Drift-Seed (Tier 1)

Shoot organic projectiles. Deal 1d6 + Soul Modifier damage to a single foe at Medium range. Spend 1 MP for an extra seed (max 3).

Fiber Stitch (Tier 1)

Knit superficial surface wounds together using crawling plant fibers. Restores 1d4 + Soul Modifier health points to a touched creature.

Nature's Chorus (Tier 1)

Target ears are filled with illusory songbirds. Target must pass a Soul Test or suffer a -2 penalty to visual or auditory alertness checks for 5 minutes.

Ray of Purity (Tier 1)

Clear toxic grime or decay status. Instantly removes one biological condition (Poisoned, Sickened) from a target within Medium range.

Rigidity Flush (Tier 1)

Harden flesh cells against crushing trauma. Target ignores the first 2 points of blunt or bludgeoning damage from physical attacks for 1 minute.

Rotting Touch (Tier 1)

Inflict wood rot onto organic components. Touched target takes 1d4 decay damage each round for 3 rounds.

Seal the Wound (Tier 1)

Close gaping wounds using instant-setting tree sap. Restores 1d8 health points to a touched creature.

Sense Corruption (Tier 1)

Detect presence of toxins, blighted topsoil, or corrupted constructs within a Close Range radius.

Shell Hardening (Tier 1)

Reinforce a target's outer carapace. Increases Shell Rating by +2 for 10 minutes.

Shell Padding (Tier 1)

Cushions the inside of a shell. Target ignores up to 5 points of internal concussive damage. Lasts 10 minutes.

Spirit Sight (Tier 1)

Your eyes adjust to see the glowing currents of spiritual energy trails. Detect invisible tracks, anomalies, or illusions for 10 minutes.

True Nature Gaze (Tier 1)

Look upon an entity within Close range. Instantly discerns if they are under the effect of a shape-changing anomaly or illusion.

Clarity of the Dew (Tier 2)

Clear active mental confusion. Instantly removes the Confused or Dazed condition from a target within Close range.

Crack Shell (Tier 2)

Deliver a precise strike to an enemy's outer defenses. Lowers their Shell Rating Target Number by -2 for 3 rounds.

Dew Drop Touch (Tier 2)

Infuse a touched ally with pure morning condensation. Restores 2d4 + Soul Modifier health points.

Dew of the Valiant (Tier 2)

Up to 3 allies within Close range gain +2 Speed and an extra action slot during their next turn. Lasts 3 rounds.

Echo of Life (Tier 2)

Manifest a spectral duplicate made of loose leaves and moss within Medium range. Enemies must pass a Soul Test to distinguish it from the true hero. Lasts 1 minute.

Garden's Endurance (Tier 2)

Up to 3 allies within Close range gain a +2 bonus to all physical tests against environmental hazards or traps for 1 minute.

Luminous Presence (Tier 2)

You radiate a soothing emerald green light out to Medium range. Allies within this light gain +1 to all Heart and Soul checks for 5 minutes.

Might of the Beetle (Tier 2)

Infuse a target within Close range with mechanical weight. Double their carrying capacity and grant a +2 bonus to Body checks for 1 minute.

Nectar Infusion (Tier 2)

Inject a sweet, empowering fluid into a touched creature. Instantly restores 2 spent Stamina points to their pool.

Read the Petals (Tier 2)

You decipher historical signs written in local plant growth patterns. For 10 minutes, gain +4 to all exploration checks tracking ancient records.

Silent Canopy (Tier 2)

Mute all acoustic noise inside a 20' radius circle within Close range. No auditory communication or sound-based spells can pass through for 10 minutes.

Soul Flare (Tier 2)

Release a burst of concentrated radiant light at a target within Medium range. Deals 1d10 + Soul Modifier damage (Soul Test for half).

Will of the Oak (Tier 2)

Touched creature's mass increases significantly. They gain +3 to save tests against being pushed or knocked prone across the grid for 1 hour.

Chorus of Growth (Tier 3)

Force a sudden burst of botanical growth over a 30' diameter area within Medium range. Creates heavy difficult terrain layout blocks. Lasts 1 round.

Dew Drop, Mass (Tier 3)

Direct a spray of restorative condensation to up to 5 allies within Close range. Each target restores 1d10 + Soul Modifier health points.

Ever Bloom Light (Tier 3)

Permanent light source. Plant a glowing leaf marker onto an object within Close range that illuminates out to Medium range for 1 hour.

Great Nectar Touch (Tier 3)

Channel deep life currents into a touched creature. Instantly restores 3d8 + Soul Modifier health points.

Luminous Pulse (Tier 3)

Explode a pocket of pressurized soil energy across a 30' diameter circle within Medium range. Enemies caught must pass a Soul Test or be Blinded for 2 rounds.

Might of the Swarm (Tier 3)

Connect your focus to insectile reflexes. For 1 minute, whenever you perform a basic weapon attack action, you can instantly make a secondary minor strike dealing 1d4 extra damage.

Purify the Humors (Tier 3)

Cleanse systemic corruption. Instantly removes all deep poisons, paralysis statuses, or venom conditions from a touched creature.

Shelter (Tier 3)

Weave a protective dome from local branches up to 20' across. The barrier protects inside occupants from weather hazards and monsters for 8 hours.

Soul Anchor (Tier 3)

Anchor a target's spiritual connection. For 1 hour, they cannot be teleported, moved across planes, or spatially shifted against their will.

Soul Blade (Tier 3)

Infuse an equipped weapon with spirit force. For 3 rounds, all attacks with that weapon deal an extra +1d10 spiritual damage.

Spirit of the Sun (Tier 3)

Fire a continuous solar beam along a straight path line out to Long range. Deals 3d12 radiant damage to all targets in the path (Soul Test for half).

Whirling Spores (Tier 3)

Release a cloud of distracting fungal spores over a Close range diameter area. Enemy targets inside have a -2 modifier to all attack accuracy checks for 3 rounds.

Call the Scout (Tier 4)

Summon a spectral woodland animal scout spirit within Medium range. The spirit can move undetected through foliage to map layout details for 10 minutes.

Clarity of the Breeze (Tier 4)

Direct a powerful wind tunnel down a straight line out to Long range. Instantly clears away all fog of war, tracking gases, or cloud hazards.

Fallen Cycle (Tier 4)

Return a target corpse or decayed item to the topsoil compost layer. Instantly extracts remaining nutrient blocks to create fresh provisions.

Grip of the Living (Tier 4)

Turn topsoil hostile. Summons a tangling network of roots over a Close range radius area. Foes inside must pass a Body Test or be Restrained for 1 minute.

Root Grip (Tier 4)

Command a heavy root to pull a target down into the soil within Medium range. Target is pinned and cannot move for 1 minute (Body Test to break free).

Spirit Surge (Tier 4)

touch an ally to supercharge their action economy. Grants them 2 immediate basic action slots to use right away out of turn.

Spirit Tether (Tier 4)

Link the spirits of 2 targets within Long range. For 3 rounds, whenever one linked target takes damage, the other target takes an identical amount.

Spirit of the Star (Tier 4)

Project a hyper-concentrated radiant piercing spike at a target within Long range. Deals 4d12 piercing radiant damage.

Vines of Vitality (Tier 4)

Sprout multiple flexible vine limbs from your shell or shoulders. For 1 minute, you gain +2 reach and can perform basic attacks across additional squares.

Will of the Grove (Tier 4)

Link up to 4 targets within Close range into a neural communication grid. Allows silent telepathic speech across any distance in the zone for 10 minutes.

Banishment Bellow (Tier 5)

Unleash a sonic shockwave in a wide cone out to Close range. All enemy targets inside take 3d10 concussive damage and are pushed back 3 squares.

Call the Warrior (Tier 5)

Summons a heavily armored guardian beetle spirit into an adjacent square. The warrior has a high Shell Rating and defends chokepoints for 1 hour.

Earthen Carapace (Tier 5)

Coat a touched ally in thick, interlocking soil stone plates. Grants complete immunity to all standard, non-magical physical damage for 1 minute.

Solar Pillar (Tier 5)

Call down a continuous column of intense solar energy onto a Large range radius circle. Foes inside take 4d12 radiant damage each round.

Spirit Sharpen (Tier 5)

Sharpen a target weapon's energy signature. For 3 rounds, the weapon's resolution dice pool rolls expand by +1d12 for attack strikes.

Thicket of Honesty (Tier 5)

Weave an area aura over a 30' diameter circle within Close range. Any character inside is naturally prohibited from speaking deliberate lies for 10 minutes.

Void Wither (Tier 5)

Inflict a decaying field over a target within Medium range. Reduces their primary defense attributes and Shell Rating by -4 for 3 rounds.

Warden's Fence (Tier 5)

Raise a massive defensive wall of ancient ironwood up to 40' long within Medium range. Blocks all enemy movement and physical projectiles for 10 minutes.

Warden's Shout (Tier 5)

Reflex: When an ally within Close range is targeted by an attack, shout to instantly grant them a +4 Shell Rating defense bonus before the hit lands.

Blight Dominance (Tier 6)

Inject a spreading rot curse onto up to 3 targets within Medium range. Targets take 3d6 decay damage each round and cannot regain health for 1 minute.

Bloom of Health (Tier 6)

Release a massive wave of restorative soil energy to all allies within Close range. Instantly restores 5d10 health points and clears all debuffs.

Call the Great One (Tier 6)

Summon a towering ancient avatar spirit into an adjacent theater map grid square. The elite summon delivers sweeping area attacks for 1 hour.

Commune with the Great Root (Tier 6)

Connect your consciousness directly to the world tree grid. Pulls full map records, historical landmarks, and enemy positions across the zone. Lasts 1 hour.

Grave Sprout (Tier 6)

Touch a fallen creature's corpse to instantly sprout a vibrant field of life energy. All allies adjacent to the corpse restore 3d12 health points.

Great Nectar, Mass (Tier 6)

Direct a massive cascade of restorative nectar to up to 5 targets within Close range. Restores 5d12 health points to each target.

The Great Mending (Tier 6)

Channel absolute restorative force into a touched target. Instantly fully resets their health pool to maximum and clears every negative status condition.

Warden's Decree (Tier 6)

Proclaim a field mandate. For 3 rounds, all allies within Close range gain +3 to their Shell Ratings and primary defense attributes.

Bounty of the Garden (Tier 7)

Direct a wave of absolute physical revitalization to up to 6 allies within Close range. Instantly fully restores their Stamina pools to maximum.

Call the Behemoth (Tier 7)

Summon a legendary undergrowth colossus spirit. The world summon possesses massive health, occupies a 4x4 grid space, and fights for 1 hour.

Great Root Purge (Tier 7)

Command a row of ancient root walls to smash forward along a straight line path out to Long range. Deals 6d12 crushing damage.

Hidden Path (Tier 7)

Shape 2 glowing wooden doorways at separate spatial positions across the map. Characters can pass through one door to instantly step out the other for 1 hour.

Sky's Fury (Tier 7)

Summon a massive electrical lightning storm over a Large range area circle out to Long range. Three lightning bolts strike random targets each round for 3 rounds (6d12 damage).

Warden of the Grove (Tier 7)

Unlock your character's apex natural avatar form. For 1 minute, you double your size, gain +50 temporary health, and your melee attacks deal double successes.

Colony Bloom (Tier 8)

Release a map-wide wave of emergency restoration. Instantly restores 8d10 health points to every single ally currently on the active theater map theater grid.

Heart Collapse (Tier 8)

Inflict a severe crushing weight onto a single target's life force within Medium range. Target takes 8d12 heavy internal concussive damage.

Root Grip, Mass (Tier 8)

Raise a massive chokepoint network of ancient root walls over a Large range radius circle. All enemies caught are Restrained and cannot act for 1 minute.

The Eternal Return (Tier 8)

Perform an ultimate ritual over a fallen hero's spirit within Melee range. Instantly restores the character to life at full health, clearing all death penalties.

Garden's Wrath (Tier 9)

Cause the entire theater map grid to shift and collapse. Roots shatter paths and rocks fall everywhere for 3 rounds. Enemies take 10d12 damage each round.

Glow of the Colony (Tier 9)

Establish an unbreakable matrix connection among all allies within Close range. Allows instant telepathic sharing of action slots and views for 10 minutes.

Verdant Mending (Tier 9)

Weave a profound balance bond across up to 5 allies within Close range. For the duration of the combat, their health pools are unified and balanced evenly.

The Garden's Whim (Tier 10)

An ultimate appeal to the primordial force of *The Garden*. Fully alters local reality, landscape layouts, or enemy statuses at the absolute discretion of the caster.

Gear & Loadout Constraints

TOOLS OF THE UNDERGROWTH

In a world where a falling raindrop can strike with the force of a catapult and a foraging beetle is a towering colossus, survival depends entirely on the quality of your equipment. For the bipedal Gastrons exploring *The Garden*, physical items are categorized under a single, definitive term: Gear.

Whether you are anchoring your life to a reinforced defense, swinging a weighted blade at a predator, or managing sparse provisions in a storm, your Gear is the ultimate boundary between a successful extraction and being lost to the wilderness.



PARADIGMS OF THE SHELL

A character's primary choice of defensive hardware is their Shell. Unlike standard roleplaying games where armor is worn loosely over the body, Gastrons physically embed their gear, tools, and structural modifications directly into or onto this organic, load-bearing armor shell.

Understanding Shell Statistics

Your choice of Shell dictates your entire tactical profile across both modules:

- **Shell Category**: Divided into Light, Medium, or Heavy, establishing your core weight bracket.
- **Shell Rating**: The static defense target number (TN) an enemy must equal or exceed with a 1d12 roll to successfully hit you.
- **Damage Reduction**: Heavy shells absorb kinetic impact, subtracting this flat value from any damage suffered.
- **Body Required to Use**: The raw physical Body stat modifier required to carry the shell's immense weight without buckling.
- **Max Heart Mod for SR**: The maximum amount of your natural Heart modifier you are permitted to add to your baseline Shell Rating to boost your defenses. Heavy shells lock this agility bonus to a flat zero.

Ruleset Split: Beginner vs. Full Rules

- **Beginner Ruleset**: In these tables on Shells and other equipment, players that are using the Beginner Ruleset do not have to worry about weight or space (slot) requirements for the Shell they choose to buy. All players get a Shell to start the game for free and for Beginner Ruleset users, they only have to worry about whether or not their Body stat is high enough to properly use a Shell and it's Max Heart Modifier that they can add to the Shell Rating. If a player using this ruleset wants a new Shell they will have to buy it, so at this point they need to be concerned with its cost. This works in a similar fashion for Weapons and other equipment in that those using this ruleset get some starting equipment and whatever weapons they want for free during character creation, and will only have to worry about the cost of any new Weapons or Gear after that point.
- **Full Ruleset (Advanced)**: Activating the Full Rules reveals advanced weight penalties. Heavy shells permanently reduce your battlefield Speed, apply a negative modifier to physical Gift resolution rolls, and impose a severe Casting Penalty that lowers your *Spell Difficulty Level (SDL)*. Crucially, your Shell also sets your Total Slots Available, your entire inventory capacity.

SHELL TABLE

Equipment	Type	Weight	Slots Available	Body Required	Max Heart Mod	Cost
Adamantium Shell	Heavy Shell	60	8	18	0	750 Petals
Cobalt Shell	Heavy Shell	50	7	16	0	750 Petals
Diamond Shell	Heavy Shell	70	8	14	0	1500 Petals
Titanium Shell	Heavy Shell	55	8	12	0	75 Petals
Brass Shell	Medium Shell	20	5	10	2	50 Petals
Bronze Shell	Medium Shell	15	5	6	2	45 Petals
Calcite Shell	Medium Shell	30	5	6	2	75 Petals
Iron Shell	Medium Shell	40	7	4	2	200 Petals
Steel Shell	Medium Shell	45	7	4	2	50 Petals
Copper Shell	Light Shell	10	4	0	4	10 Petals
Crystal Shell	Light Shell	8	4	-3	4	5 Petals
Mithril Shell	Light Shell	12	4	-4	4	10 Petals

Shell Descriptions

Adamantium Shell: A heavy shell design that is preferred by Assaulters for its excellent protective qualities, yet still provides them with decent movement. It requires great strength to don this armor and use it in combat.

Cobalt Shell:A deep blue, magically resonant shell. It provides superior defense while feeling oddly light to the wearer.

Diamond Shell: The ultimate protection. This shell has been magically infused with crystallized carbon, making it a literal fortress.

Titanium Shell: The peak of mundane engineering. It is virtually impenetrable to all but the strongest Tier 3 monsters.

Brass Shell: A light shell design that is preferred by Assaulters for its decent protective qualities, yet still provides them with excellent movement. It does require a decent amount of strength to don this armor and use it in combat.

Bronze Shell: A standard choice for veteran Protectors; heavy, but offers excellent resistance to physical strikes.

Calcite Shell: Naturally hardened with mineral deposits. It feels like stone and is nearly as difficult to crack.

Iron Shell: A medium shell design that is preferred by Assaulters for its very good protective qualities, yet still provides them with good movement. It does require a fairly significant amount of strength to don this armor and use it in combat.

Steel Shell: Forged from scavenged Massive-steel. It provides a daunting Shell Rating for front-line fighters.

Copper Shell: A basic shell reinforced with thin copper plates. Reliable and affordable for new Assaulters.

Crystal Shell: The shell of choice for those that study and wield the powers of the Mind. This shell gives only a small amount of protection, but it doesn't hinder the movements needed to wield Magical Power.

Mithril Shell: Incredibly light and impossibly strong. It offers high protection without the typical weight of metal.

MELEE WEAPONS

When hostile threats block your passage through the roots, closing the distance is paramount. Melee Weapons draw directly upon a hero's physical prowess, altering the damage dealt and formatting unique tactical approaches on the battlefield.

The close quarters armaments developed by survivalists in *The Garden* are uniquely balanced for Gastron travelers, requiring precise physical requirements to lift, sweep, or pierce effectively. From versatile hatchets designed to hack through thick brambles to elegant thrusting blades, your chosen weapon transforms raw attributes into offensive successes.

MELEE WEAPON TABLE

Equipment	Weight	Slots	Cost
Brier-Hatchett	2	1	5 Petals
Charge-Stinger	6	3	10 Petals
Compost-Crusher	10	4	10 Petals
Grass-Sliver	2	1	10 Petals
Great-Cid Hewer	7	3	30 Petals
Husk Cleaver	4	2	10 Petals
Leaf-Blade	3	2	15 Petals
Root-Ram	10	3	20 Seeds
Sap-Log	2	1	10 Seeds
Shell-Breaker	2	2	15 Petals
Sow-Spike	3	2	1 Petal
Stem-Ripper	6	3	50 Petals
Thistle-Pike	18	4	5 Petals
Thorny Sliver	1	1	2 Petals
Warden's Pole-Thorn	6	4	200 Petals

Brier-Hatchett: A light, balanced axe made from a sharpened stone or shell, as effective in a frantic melee as it is when flung across the grass.

Charge-Stinger: A long, reinforced piercing weapon designed after a wasp's stinger, meant for high-impact strikes during a mounted charge.

Compost-Crusher: A heavy, two-handed hammer featuring a stone head bound with thick vines, designed to pulverize anything it strikes.

Grass-Sliver: A nimble, lightweight blade optimized for quick thrusts and parries in the dense, tangled undergrowth of the Garden.

Great-Cid Hewer: A massive, two-handed blade of obsidian-like husk, built for wide, devastating swings capable of felling a Formicid in a single blow.

Husk Cleaver: A heavy-headed tool forged from a sharpened beetle carapace, balanced for sweeping arcs that can bypass thick fibers or armor.

Leaf-Blade: The quintessential versatile weapon, forged into the elegant shape of a willow leaf and balanced for strikes with one or both hands.

Root-Ram: A massive, knotty section of an ancient root that relies on sheer momentum and its immense weight to shatter shells.

Sap-Log: A dense, petrified length of branch weighted with hardened resin, used to deliver blunt, crushing trauma to a target's shell.

Shell-Breaker: A sturdy tool with a heavy, weighted head designed specifically to dent metal armor or crack the most stubborn chitin.

Sow-Spike: A simple, reliable piercing weapon tipped with a sharpened barb that can be wielded in melee or thrown at range.

Stem-Ripper: A formidable two-handed blade edged with microscopic serrations like a saw-grass leaf, offering incredible reach and cutting power.

Thistle-Pike: An exceptionally long polearm harvested from a giant thistle, used to strike enemies from safely behind a defensive front line.

Thorny Sliver: A jagged spike harvested from a carnivorous vine, double-edged and easily tucked away for quick, close-quarters punctures.

Warden's Pole-Thorn: A long, sturdy reed topped with a broad husk-blade and a piercing barb, ideal for keeping larger predators at a distance.

RANGED WEAPONS

For scouts, rangers, and tactical survivalists, striking from a position of relative safety is a vital doctrine. Ranged Weapons utilize ammunition parameters and operational range brackets to hit targets all across the battlefield.

These ballistic tools dominate spatial sightlines, keeping the wilderness threats at arm's length. These ranged tools are built to engage elite predators from secure high branches, and striking at them with arrows, stones, or bolts accurately.

RANGED WEAPON TABLE

Equipment	Weight	Slots	Cost	Description
Arbalest of the Canopy	18	4	50 Petals	A large, powerful wood-and-silk mechanism that fires heavy splinters with enough force to pierce the toughest of exoskeletons.
Bramble-Bow	2	2	25 Petals	A small, maneuverable bow perfect for skirmishing through the weeds and firing accurately on the move.
Cricket-Bow	5	2	25 Petals	A standard-sized mechanical bow that balances ease of use with the stopping power needed to down a charging rodent.
Flight-Spike	2	2	50 Seeds	A light, flexible shaft of hollow wood balanced for flight, allowing a warrior to strike with piercing force from afar.
Great-Silk Bow	2	3	50 Petals	A tall, flexible bow carved from a single resilient branch and strung with spider-silk, offering superior range to master the open clearings.
Needle-Splinter	0.25	1	5 Seeds	Aerodynamic spines taken from a desert cactus, weighted at the base for a balanced throw and quick, distracting punctures.
Snap-Reed Caster	3	1	75 Petals	A compact mechanical device made of flexible reeds and silk-string, used for rapid, silent, and stealthy volleys.

OTHER EQUIPMENT (GEAR)

This general classification includes adventuring tools, secondary items, light sources, and vital utility items required to successfully navigate environmental hazards and secure a safe camp or exploration path.

The miscellaneous survival kit holds your expedition together. Draining your action economy means nothing if your pack lacks the raw utility to bridge environmental drop offs, scale vertical bark walls, or preserve nourishment when a flash downpour settles over the basin.

GEAR TABLE

Equipment	Weight	Slots	Slots Added	Cost	Description
Abacus	2	0.4		2 Petals	A device consisting of wood, rods and beads, that can be used to assist in complex calculations
Acid (vial)	1	0.2		25 Petals	A small vial of acid. There is not enough acid in this small vial to be very dangerous for enemies, but it definitely has its uses.
Alchemist's fire (flask)	1	0.2		50 Petals	A flask of Alchemists fire, that if thrown will cause whatever, or whoever it hits to suffer 1d6+2 damage, and any regular wood, paper, light cloth, etc, that is in the area it hits will catch on fire.
Antitoxin (vial)	0	0		1 Petal	A small vial of Antitoxin that is good for 1 dose. It can be used to help recover from poisoning.
Arrows (20)	1	0.2		1 Petal	A small grouping of Arrows (20)
Backpack	5	0	3	2 Petals	A pack designed to be carried and provide additional slots for equipment. Due to its design it only takes up 1 equipment slot itself, yet provides 4 slots. You can only use 1 backpack at a time.
Ball bearings	2	0.4		1 Petal	Small bag containing 1,000 small ball bearings that, with some imagination, could be useful in many situations.
Barrel	70	14	20	2 Petals	A Large wooden barrel with iron straps holding it together. It is extremely cumbersome to carry around.
Basket	2	0.4		40 Seeds	A small light weight basket
Bedroll	7	1.4		1 Petal	A pad, blanket and small pillow, wrapped up together in a tight roll to make it easier to travel with.
Bell	0	0		1 Petal	A small little brass bell
Blanket	3	0.6		50 Seeds	A thin woolen blanket. It may not be much, but its better than nothing when trying to sleep during cooler nights in the wilderness.
Blessed water (flask)	1	0.2		25 Petals	A flask of water that has been imbued with Soul Energy. It can be anathema to creatures that are unliving, or creatures from Realms that are in Direct Opposition to The Garden Realm.
Block and tackle	5	1		1 Petal	A set of pulleys and sturdy spider-silk rope. Perfect for hoisting massive loot or lifting a fallen companion back into their shell.
Book	5	1		25 Petals	A rare collection of bound paper or dried leaves. Contains lore, maps, or sketches of the "Massives" (humans) who once roamed the Garden.

Bottle, glass	2	0.4		2 Petals	A scavenged or blown glass container used to store potions, nectar, or captured "Murk-Spawn" samples.
Bucket	2	0.4		5 Seeds	A simple vessel made of carved wood or a hollowed-out nut shell. Essential for transporting water or gathering seeds.
Caltrop (bag of 20)	2	0.4		1 Petal	Sharpened rose thorns or jagged metal shards. Scatter them to hinder pursuing predators; especially effective against soft-bellied crawlers.
Candle	0	0		1 Seed	A slow-burning stick of beeswax or rendered tallow. Provides dim light for late-night dungeon crawls through rotted logs.
Case, Crossbow bolts	1	0.2	1	1 Petal	A small leather case that is designed to carry crossbow bolts. Due to it's compact nature, and good design, even though it only takes up a small amount of space itself, it is able to hold up to 60 crossbow bolts.
Case, Map or scroll	1	0.2		1 Petal	A leather tube that is capped on each end. The cap on either end can be removed to slide a rolled up scroll or map into the case. After replacing the cap, the case is water tight.
Chain (10 feet)	10	2		5 Petals	Interlinked loops of iron or bronze. Far more durable than rope, though quite heavy for a smaller traveler to haul.
Chalk (1 piece)	0	0		1 Seed	A compressed stick of mineral dust. Used by Scouts to mark trails or by Battle Casters to draw temporary runes.
Chest	25	5	10	5 Petal	A sturdy box with a latch. Often used by merchant caravans to protect Petals and Seeds from the elements.
Climber's kit	12	2.4		25 Petals	A collection of pitons, boot-spikes, and a harness. Mandatory for navigating the sheer cliffs of the Stone Border.
Clothes, common	3	0.6		50 Seeds	Simple tunics and leggings made of coarse fibers like dandelion fluff or woven grass.
Clothes, costume	4	0.8		5 Petals	Brightly dyed and elaborate outfits, often imitating the patterns of butterflies or exotic flowers.
Clothes, fine	6	1.2		15 Petals	Soft, shimmering garments made of pure spider-silk, reserved for the elite of the Garden.
Clothes, traveler's	4	0.8		2 Petals	Durable, multi-layered clothing designed to withstand mud, thorns, and long treks through the brush.
Component pouch	2	0.4	2	25 Petals	A pouch specifically designed to carry the components needed for the casting of either Garden or Battle Magic. It can only hold spell components.
Crossbow bolts (20)	1.5	0.3		1 Petal	a small grouping of Crossbow bolts (20)
Crowbar	5	1		2 Petals	A heavy iron lever. Provides leverage for prying open stubborn snail-shells or lifting heavy stones.
Fishing Tackle	4	0.8		1 Petal	Fine silk line and hooks fashioned from bent needles. Used to catch minnows in the Garden ponds or small insects in the brush.
Flask or tankard	1	0.2		2 Seeds	A personal drinking vessel. Usually carved from polished wood or cast from light copper.
Grappling hook	4	0.8		2 Petals	A three-pronged hook attached to a rope. Vital for ascending the Great Trellis or crossing narrow gaps in the canopy.
Hammer	3	0.6		1 Petal	A Hammer that is typically used for pounding Pitons into Rock, but could be used for carpentry or other mundane purposes.
Hammer, sledge	10	2		2 Petals	A Large hammer with a long wooden handle and a heavy iron head. Normally used in mining for breaking up rocks.

Healer's kit	3	0.6		5 Petals	A kit that is full of bandages, small vials of oils and pastes made from healing herbs. Can be used on small cuts, scrapes, abrasions, etc.
Hourglass	1	0.2		25 Petals	A precise glass instrument filled with fine silt. Used to track time during high-stakes Garden Spirit rituals.
Hunting trap	25	5		5 Petals	A spring-loaded metal jaw designed to snap shut on the legs of intruding beasts or low-tier monsters.
Ink (1 ounce bottle)	0	0		10 Petals	A dark, permanent liquid derived from crushed berries or octopus-beetle secretions.
Ink pen	0	0		2 Seeds	A carved quill or a fine reed used for transcription and mapping the ever-shifting biomes of the Garden.
Jug or pitcher	4	0.8		2 Seeds	A larger ceramic or wooden vessel for communal drink or storing large quantities of valuable nectar.
Ladder (10-foot)	25	5		10 Seeds	Lightweight wooden slats tied together. Ideal for reaching the lower branches of the "Grand Oaks."
Lamp	1	0.2		50 Seeds	A small metal lantern that burns oil. Safer and more reliable than a candle when navigating windy garden paths.
Lantern, bullseye	2	0.4		10 Petals	An oil lantern that is enclosed with the exception of a small window that is covered by a blinder. When the blinder is moved out of the way, the lantern creates a beam of light that can penetrate normal darkness for up to 40 feet, but only illuminates a path 5 feet wide.
Lantern, hooded	2	0.4		5 Petals	A lantern that is covered by a hood mechanism, to block out the light when it is desireable to do so. The hood can be pulled back to allow the lantern to shine light similar to that of a regular torch.
Lock	1	0.2		10 Petals	A mechanical device requiring a key. Used to secure chests or the heavy gates of Garden outposts.
Lockpicks	1	0.2		2 Petals	Tools used by those who desire to gain entry to secured areas, disable dangerous traps, or things such as that.
Magnifying glass	0	0		100 Petals	A rare lens that makes tiny details visible. Often used by Garden Spirits to study ancient micro-runes.
Manacles	6	1.2		2 Petals	Heavy metal restraints designed to fit the wrists of bipedal insectoid or snail-folk prisoners.
Mess kit	1	0.2		20 Seeds	A kit consisting of metal utensils, a small cup, and a small plate and bowl.
Mind Crystal	0	0		50 Petals	A crystal that would fit easily in the palm of your hand. A Mind Crystal is thoroughly saturated with Mind Energy which assists Battle Casters with maintaining their focus, thus replacing the need for simple physical components for casting spells.
Mirror, steel	0.5	0.1		5 Petals	A circle of steel about 6 inches in diameter, that is shined to such a polish that is acts as a mirror.
Oil (flask)	1	0.2		10 Seeds	A flask of oil that is normally used in conjunction with a lantern.
Paper (1 sheet)	0	0		20 Seeds	A thin, bleached material made from pressed wood pulp. Highly valued for its smooth writing surface.
Parchment (1 sheet)	0	0		10 Seeds	High quality material on which to write. Parchment is a necessity for those that wield magic to write down magical incantations, whether it be within the spellbook of a Battle Caster, or loose pages creating a magic scroll of either Garden or Battle Magic.
Perfume (vial)	0	0		5 Petals	A potent scent used by socialites to mask the smell of damp earth or to attract specific beneficial insects.

Pick, miner's	10	2		2 Petals	A heavy-headed tool used for cracking stones or harvesting minerals from the rocky soil of the Under-Garden.
Piton	0.25	0.05		5 Seeds	Small metal spike with a ring on its end, designed to be hammered into stone and have ropes run through it to assist in climbing
Poison, basic (vial)	0	0		100 Petals	A vial containing 1 dose of a basic Poison.
Pole (10-foot)	7	1.4		5 Seeds	10 foot long wooden pole
Pot, iron	10	2		2 Petals	A heavy, deep vessel made of cast iron. Essential for any campsite, it can withstand the hottest cookfires to brew healing teas or stew scavenged roots. Its weight also makes it a decent improvised shield or a noisy alarm if hung near a camp's entrance.
Vial of Royal Jelly (fantastic)	0.5	0.1		8000 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 4d4+4 Health
Vial of Royal Jelly (major)	0.5	0.1		4000 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 3d4+3 Health
Vial of Royal Jelly (normal)	0.5	0.1		2000 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 2d4+2 Health
Vial of Royal Jelly (minor)	0.5	0.1		50 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 1d4+1 Health
Vial of Nectar (heroic)	0.5	0.1		1500 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 16d6+16 Health
Vial of Nectar (fantastic)	0.5	0.1		800 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 8d6+8 Health
Vial of Nectar (major)	0.5	0.1		400 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 4d6+4 Health
Vial of Nectar (normal)	0.5	0.1		200 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 2d6+2 Health
Vial of Nectar (minor)	0.5	0.1		20 Petals	A potion that when imbibed, will restore 1d6 Health
Pouch	1	0.2	1	50 Seeds	A small pouch that can hold up to 10 Potions or Healing, or other similar sized objects
Quiver	1	0.2	1	1 Petal	Designed to attach to a users shell without taking up much space, this item can hold 100 Arrows in it.
Ram, portable	35	7		4 Petals	A heavy, iron-capped log or a solid metal bar designed for two people to wield. It is the ultimate solution for "un-locking" reinforced hive-doors or breaking through the hardened mud walls of a burrow. Using it provides a significant bonus to Body tests made to break down structures.
Rations (1 day)	2	0.4		50 Seeds	1 days worth of trail rations. While not the most delicious, they will sustain you.

Robes	4	0.8		1 Petal	Long flowing Robes that are typically worn by those in exalted positions within the Order of the Mind.
Rope, hempen (50 feet)	10	2		1 Petal	50 feet of basic rope made from Hemp
Rope, silk (50 feet)	5	1		1 Petal	50 feet of rope made from Silk. Takes up less space than Hempen Rope, and also is stronger.
Sack	3	0.6	3	1 Seed	A sack that when empty and folded up only takes up a small amount of space, but when unfolded can hold up to 3 slots worth of stuff.
Scale, merchant's	3	0.6		5 Petals	A balanced tool used to weigh Seeds and Petals during high-value trade negotiations.
Sealing wax	0	0		50 Seeds	Melted and stamped to ensure the privacy of royal decrees or secret Battle Caster correspondences.
Shovel	5	1		2 Petals	Wooden handled shovel used for digging
Signal whistle	0	0		5 Seeds	small whistle that lets out a shrill sound when used
Signet ring	0	0		5 Petals	A ring bearing an insignia or crest that is typically custom created for the buyer. Normally denotes status or possibly membership in a prominent organization
Soap	0	0		2 Seeds	Bar of soap used for cleaning
Soul Crystal	0	0		50 Petals	A crystal that would fit easily in the palm of your hand. A Soul Crystal is thoroughly saturated with Soul Energy which assists Garden Spirits with maintaining their focus, thus replacing the need for simple physical components for casting spells.
Spellbook	3	0.6		50 Petals	A book whose pages are good quality parchment, used for the recording of incantations by those who use Battle Magic.
Spikes, iron (10)	5	1		1 Petal	Thick wedges driven into surfaces to hold ropes or keep doors wedged shut against the wind.
Spyglass	1	0.2		1000 Petals	A collapsing tube of lenses. Allows a Scout to spot a Warped Mantis-Drifter from several hundred yards away.
Tent, two-person	20	4		2 Petals	A portable shelter made of treated leaves or silk. Protects against the Garden's frequent, torrential "Mist-Storms."
Tinderbox	1	0.2		50 Seeds	A small kit containing flint, steel, and dry moss. The most reliable way to start a fire in the damp wild.
Torch	1	0.2		1 Seed	A torch casts a good amount of light in a 20 foot radius from it. For an additional 20 feet beyond that it casts a small amount of light.
Vial	0	0		1 Petal	Glass vial that is large enough to contain 1 dose of some type of liquid substance
Waterskin	5	1		20 Seeds	Waterproofed leather sack for carrying water for you to drink
Whetstone	1	0.2		1 Seed	A stone used for sharpening bladed weapons.

Gifts & Stamina Resurgence

THE SOUL OF EXERTION: STAMINA MECHANICS

In the macro-realist wilderness of *The Garden*, physical greatness is not a limitless resource. While magic pulls from the external currents of the world, a hero's true physical conditioning, somatic reflexes, and tactical focus are governed entirely by their **Stamina pool**. Stamina represents the raw spark of life-force and physical endurance that allows a bipedal Gastron to survive an encounter with massive predators or push past baseline evolutionary boundaries.

Flow and Spending of Endurance

Stamina acts as your primary resource currency during tactical combat rounds and high-stakes environmental crises. A character sheet tracks their current Stamina pool, which expands and deepens as heroes grow in experience. On any active turn, or out-of-turn reflex moment, Stamina is actively spent to alter the course of fate:

- **Dice Purchasing Scale:** When a character faces a daunting task or a high Success Threshold (ST), a single baseline $d12$ roll is rarely enough to secure victory. A player can actively tap their internal reserves, spending Stamina points directly from their pool on a **1-to-1 basis to purchase extra d12 dice** for their check. This represents a hero pushing their muscles and focus to mathematically force an opening.
- **Team Up Contributions:** When a massive apex predator demands a coordinated party assault, Stamina is the required entry price. Initiating a Team Up maneuver as the Leader demands an immediate expenditure of **3 Stamina points**, while every individual ally stepping into the fray to coordinate their actions must contribute **2 Stamina points** from their current pools.
- **Reflex Interruption Costs:** Moving or reacting out of turn to disrupt an enemy's plans requires swift somatic reflexes. Every out-of-turn **Reflex Action** (such as an Opportunity Strike) costs a flat premium of **1 Stamina point** to activate. If your physical reserves are completely bone-dry, your body cannot keep pace with your reactions, and you are prohibited from interrupting.

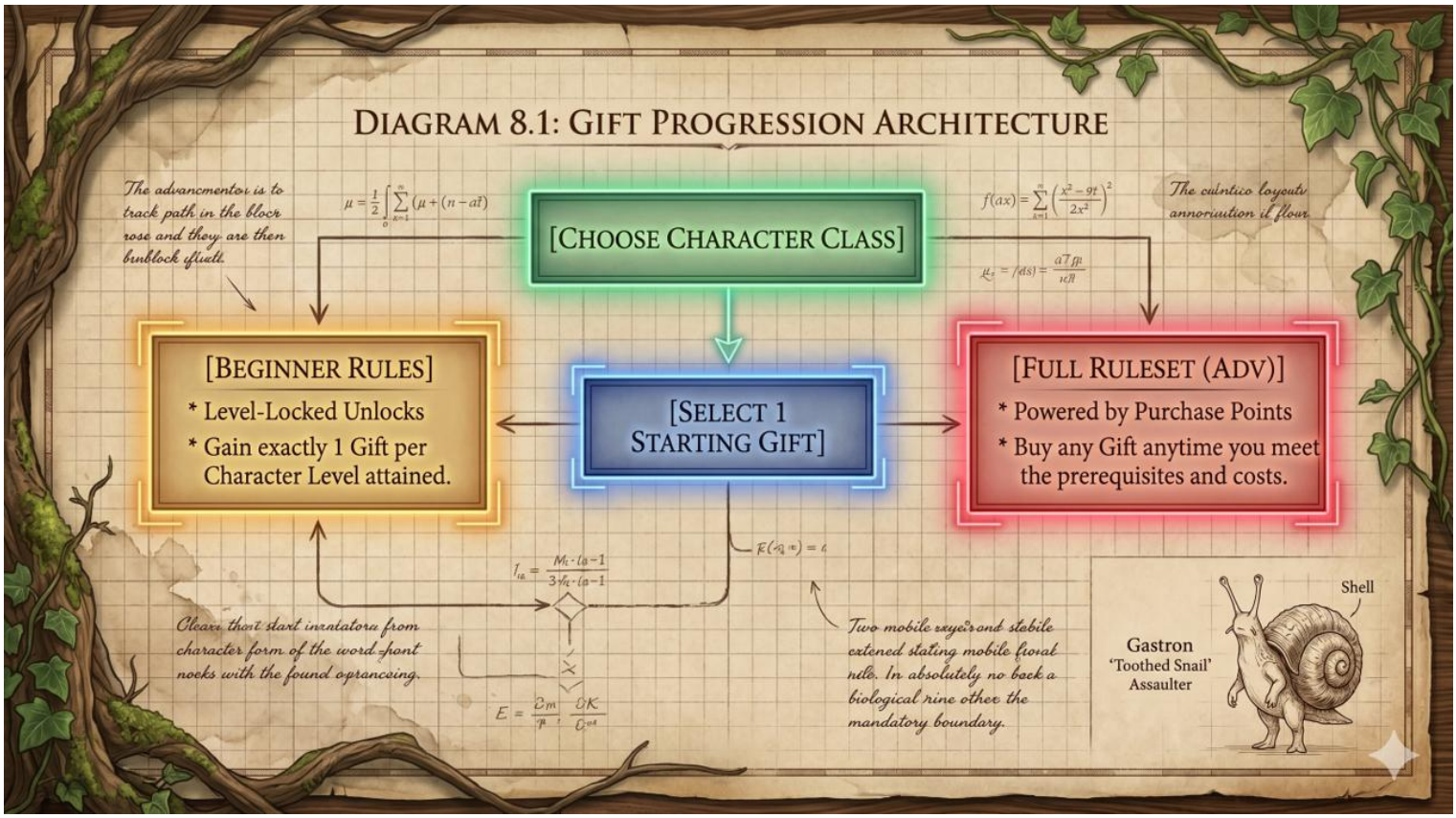
Threshold of Collapse: Physical Exhaustion

Because Stamina fuels your offense, your defenses, and your dice pools simultaneously, burning through your reserves too quickly carries direct, severe penalties. Draining your Stamina pool to **exactly zero** induces a state of complete **Physical Exhaustion**:

- **Immediate Turn Termination**: If your Stamina pool hits zero during your active turn, your turn ends immediately. Any remaining slots within your 3-Action allotment are instantly lost as fatigue grips your character's frame.
- **Reflex Paralysis**: While resting at zero Stamina, your character is functionally paralyzed by fatigue. You are entirely unable to perform out-of-turn Reflex Actions, leaving you completely exposed when a monster card flips over in the Initiative Deck.
- **Dice Pool Freezing**: You cannot expend resource points to purchase extra $d12$ dice, forcing you to rely solely on baseline single-die rolls until you can find sanctuary at a camp to rest and recover.

ACQUISITION MODALITIES: TWO PATHWAYS TO POWER

Every adventurer begins their journey with a core specialty. At Step 1 of character creation, regardless of which ruleset module your table chooses to enforce, your chosen **Class** determines your starting point. Every Class outlines a choice of four unique, specialized features; from this array, the player selects exactly **1 Starting Gift** to write onto their character sheet. The way your hero unlocks and masters subsequent features as they progress through the campaign Tiers depends entirely on the ruleset of your campaign:



Beginner Ruleset Path: Level-Locked Training

Under the streamlined Beginner Ruleset, character development follows a traditional, linear milestone format.

- **The Level Progression Link:** As your character increases in level, their growth is automatic and predictable. For each character level attained beyond the 1st, you are permitted to select exactly **1 additional Gift** from the master options available to add to your sheet.
- **Simplicity and Speed:** This pathway bypasses complex resource tracking or financial cost calculations, allowing players to focus entirely on learning their new features as they enter higher Tiers of play.

Full Ruleset Path: The Purchase Point Economy

For players seeking advanced customization, deep tactical trade-offs, and true structural build-crafting, the Full Ruleset introduces an open-ended financial progression driven by **Purchase Points**.

- **Defining Purchase Points**: Purchase Points represent a tangible, structural currency earned through exploration victories, completing excursions, and discovering ancient Spire archives; independent of your character level.
- **Unrestricted Customization**: Rather than waiting for a level milestone to grant you a feature, your advancement is completely unlinked from linear tracks. A player can choose to purchase as many Gifts as they want at any given moment, provided they possess two structural keys:
  - **Prerequisites**: The character must meet any background training, attribute minimums, or previous talent layers required by that specific feature.
  - **Sufficient Funds**: The player must actively spend the required number of Purchase Points from their accumulated total to buy the feature and permanently engrave it onto their character sheet.

Anatomy of a Gift

Gifts represent a hero's extraordinary mastery, martial maneuvers, or specialized supernatural traits. They are not added in addition to your standard 3-Action turn profile; instead, they function as an explicit way to **add to, modify, or completely replace** one of your standard basic actions.

Every feature recorded from the master index is categorized under one of three distinct operational designs, dictating how their costs are managed on the grid:

1. **Passive Gifts:** Passive Gifts represent permanent biological adaptations, extensive training, or constant structural focus. Once a Passive Gift is purchased and recorded on your character sheet, its unique mechanical effects are **constantly active**. They do not consume one of your 3 turn actions to activate, and they carry a **zero Stamina cost** to maintain. They permanently alter how your basic actions resolve or protect you from environmental hazards.

2. **Active-Instant Gifts:** An Active-Instant Gift represents a sudden, powerful burst of physical exertion or combat focus. To activate this feature, you must spend the designated Stamina cost *at the exact moment* you declare the corresponding action slot on your turn. The Gift temporarily augments or replaces that specific action, and its unique mechanical benefits terminate the moment that action finishes resolving.
3. **Active-Enduring Gifts:** An Active-Enduring Gift provides a sustained, long-term alteration to your combat capabilities or the surrounding layout. A character spends a turn action and pays the explicit Stamina cost to initiate the feature, and its unique combat modifiers, tactical barriers, or movement benefits **remain active for a specified duration** across consecutive rounds before safely dissipating.

HISTORIES IN MOTION: SCENARIOS AND EXAMPLES

To ensure absolute clarity regarding how Stamina spending, Action limits, and Gift activations intersect seamlessly on the tabletop grid, study the following in-text combat scenarios.

Play Scenario A: The Active-Instant Strike (Double Attack)

Imagine Corvo (the Assaulter) is engaged with a Soldier Ant. Corvo begins his active turn with his standard pool of **3 Actions** and a healthy Stamina pool. He wishes to maximize his offensive output using his *Double Attack* Gift, which is an Active-Instant feature costing **1 Stamina point**.

1. **Action 1 (Move):** Corvo spends his first basic action on tactical movement, shifting 2 squares forward to close with the ant.
2. **Action 2 (Augmented Attack):** Corvo decides to attack. Before rolling, he declares he is activating *Double Attack* and instantly deducts 1 Stamina point from his character sheet. This Active-Instant cost modifies this single action slot. Corvo rolls **1d12 twice** for the attack, adding his attack modifier to both face values. Both rolls exceed the ant's Target Number, contributing **2 successes** inside a single action slot toward overcoming the creature's Success Threshold.
3. **Action 3 (Basic Attack):** For his final action slot, Corvo makes a baseline basic attack. Because the Active-Instant effect of the previous slot has fully terminated, this attack is a standard single-die roll. He rolls a single $d12$, scoring 1 more success. His turn ends, and he reaches out to draw the next card from the Initiative Deck.

Play Scenario B: The Reflex Interruption

Later in the same combat encounter, a monster card is drawn, activating a Stalking Spider. The spider attempts to skitter away from Varus (the Protector) to strike a vulnerable ally.

1. **The Trigger Condition**: The spider moves out of a grid space that Varus physically threatens with his melee weapon. This immediately triggers the universal Reflex condition: *Opportunity Strike*.
2. **The Interruption**: The Gardener flags the moment. Varus decides to react out of turn. He instantly deducts **1 Stamina point** from his current pool to fuel the Reflex Action.
3. **Resolution**: The spider's turn freezes mid-movement. Varus makes his standard melee attack roll against the spider's defense TN. He scores a success, dealing weapon damage and halting the spider's momentum before it can escape his reach. Once the damage is processed, the frozen turn unpauses, and the spider resolves its remaining actions from its pinned position.

GIFT DIRECTORY

The following ledger details the complete, finalized list of evolutionary talents, physical maneuvers, and specialized training traits available to characters in *The Garden* or as we call them, Gifts.

Anticipation (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 8
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift grants you the ability to draw 2 initiative cards by spending a Stamina. Look at both and choose 1 and the other gets returned to the bottom of the initiative deck.

Athletics Training (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: Body Stat of 6 or Higher

Description: This Gift gives you a +1 bonus to all Athletics Tests. This can be taken multiple times and its effects do stack.

Battle Rager (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Must either be a Level 3 or Higher Assaulter or have a Body Stat of 15 or higher and be Level 3 or Higher.

Description: This Gift allows you to go into a Frenzy. You disregard your own personal safety, but instead gain bonuses to your damage on a successful Melee Attack. Going into a Frenzy costs 2 Stamina Points. While Frenzied you do an additional 1/2 of your Body Modifier in damage on top of your normal damage. This damage increases by an additional 1/2 of your Body Modifier at 8th level, 13th level and 18th level. The downside is that while you are Frenzied you also take a -2 penalty to your Shell Rating. Frenzy lasts until the end of the current battle in which it was initiated, then it stops. It also stops if you are knocked unconscious, or you choose to end it.

Bodybuilder (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: Body Stat of 6 or Higher

Description: This Gift allows you to withstand more damage. You receive 1 extra Health per character level. You can only take this gift once.

Bullseye (Tier 5)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to focus your ranged attack on an opponents weak point. You spend 1 Stamina and subtract an amount you choose from your Attack Bonus for a ranged attack, applying that amount to your damage. You must choose how much you wish to subtract from your roll before you make the roll.

Bully (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: None

Description: This gift allows you to make a single attack with a melee weapon against an enemy. If you hit and do damage, you can spend 1 Stamina to force the enemy to make an opposed Body Test against you. If they succeed then nothing else happens. If they fail then you can choose to either knock them prone, or push them a number of squares away from you, equal to the difference between the Body Tests. If you have not moved yet, and you choose to push them, you may move with them up to your remaining speed.

Cat Burglar (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 10
Prerequisite: Level 10 or above and have the Thievery Gift

Description: Your time spent practicing your thieving skills has paid off and now you get an additional bonus to all things related to Thievery (Seediness and Sneaking) equal to 2 times your Heart Modifier instead of just 1 times your Heart Modifier.

Charge (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to spend 1 Stamina Point and one of your actions to run directly at your enemy and perform one single attack with a melee weapon. You must move at least 2 squares in a straight line toward your target. When charging you gain a +4 to your Attack roll and a +4 to damage if you hit.

Create Add-on (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you the ability to create Magical Add-ons for your shell.

Create Magic Shell (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you the ability to create a unique Magical Shell.

Create Magic Weapon (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you the ability to create a unique Magical Weapon

Deadly (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Level 6 or above

Description: This Gift will allow you to do massive damage vs an opponent. You may spend up to 3 Stamina Points before you roll to hit. If you hit the target, you roll your regular damage for the attack and add any damage modifiers you have, then roll an additional damage die for each Stamina Point you spent and add that to your damage.

Divide and Conquer (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Have the Double Attack Gift

Description: This Gift allows you to divide up your multiple attacks amongst your enemies for a cost of 2 Stamina. Your targets must be within range of your Melee attacks and you cannot move between attacks unless a different Gift states otherwise.

Double Attack (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: Level 5 or above

Description: This Gift allows you to attack twice with ONE attack action with a melee weapon at the cost of 1 Stamina. Cannot be stacked with other gifts that increase the amount of time you attack unless specifically noted.

Efficient Shell (Tier 5)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to add 1 extra Shell Slot to whatever Shell you are wearing. Player chooses if this is a Weapon slot or an Equipment slot, and this choice is locked in once chosen. Can be selected multiple times (Max 4 times) and player chooses which type the new slot is each time.

Epic Stamina (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 9
Prerequisite: Have the Increased Stamina Gift 4 times.

Description: You increase your stamina maximum by 3. Must have the Increased Stamina Gift as a Prerequisite. Additionally, when you rest for 2 hours consecutively you regain all of your expended stamina. You can benefit from the rest only once in a 24 hour period. This Gift can be selected up to a Max of 4 times.

Fast Firing I (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: Level 5 or above

Description: This Gift makes you quicker at firing ranged weapons. You can now attack twice with ONE attack action using a ranged weapon for a cost of 1 Stamina. Cannot be stacked with other gifts that increase the amount of times you attack, unless specifically noted.

Fast Firing II (Tier 5)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Level 10 or above and have the Fast Firing I Gift

Description: This Gift makes you quicker when it comes to firing ranged weapons. You can now attack three times with ONE attack action using a ranged weapon for a cost of 2 Stamina. Cannot be stacked with other gifts that increase the amount of times you attack, unless specifically noted.

Fast Firing III (Tier 7)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: Level 15 or above and have the Fast Firing II Gift

Description: This Gift makes you quicker when it comes to firing ranged weapons. You can now attack four times with ONE attack action using a ranged weapon for a cost of 3 Stamina. Cannot be stacked with other gifts that increase the amount of times you attack, unless specifically noted.

Fast Stamina Recovery (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: None

Description: A character with this gift can regenerate half of their stamina (rounded down) if they spend their entire turn doing a "Recovery" action.

Fate Blessed (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 10
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to spend 1 Stamina Point to reroll after the results are revealed. This can be for any roll but you must take the results of the new roll. The character with this gift can do this 3 times per day.

Focus the Body (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Have the Martial Artist Gift

Description: This Gift grants a character with the Martial Artist Gift, the ability to use the Body Modifier + their Character Level/5 as damage reduction. To activate this ability the character must spend 1 Stamina. This ability only functions if they choose the Shell-less option as their shell choice. Once activated this will last for 10 minutes.

Focus the Heart (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Have the Martial Artist Gift

Description: This Gift grants a character with the Martial Artist Gift, the ability to use the Heart Modifier + their Character Level/5 as their Shell Rating. To activate this ability the character must spend 1 Stamina. This ability only functions if they choose the Shell-less option as their shell choice. Once activated this will last for 10 minutes.

Focus the Mind (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Have the Martial Artist Gift

Description: This Gift grants a character with the Martial Artist Gift, the ability to use the Mind Modifier + their Character Level/5 as Shell Equipment Slots. This ability only functions if they choose the Shell-less option as their shell choice.

Focus the Soul (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Have the Martial Artist Gift

Description: This Gift grants a character with the Martial Artist Gift, the ability to use the Soul Modifier + their Character Level/5 as Shell Weapon Slots. This ability only functions if they choose the Shell-less option as their shell choice.

Hardened Shell (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift provides a +1 increase to Damage Reduction of your Shell. This Gift can be taken multiple times (Maximum 4) and it's effects do stack. To activate this ability the character must spend 1 Stamina. Must NOT be Shell-less for this Gift to work. Once activated this will last for 10 minutes.

Heavy Shell Expert (Tier 6)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: Have the Medium Shell Expert Gift

Description: This Gift allows you to use the Heavy Shells with no penalties to Speed. In the base game there are no penalties for wearing certain shells. In that case this Gift is not available.

Heroic Stamina (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 7
Prerequisite: None

Description: If you spend more stamina than the number of successes require for a difficult test, you can choose to automatically succeed in the test. You cannot heroically succeed in the test as you do not actually roll, but you do succeed.

Hidden Strike (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 7
Prerequisite: Either be a Scout or have a Heart Stat of 16 or Higher

Description: This Gift will allow you to do an extra 1d12 damage if you strike a target that is unaware of your presence. In order for an enemy to be unaware of your presence you must be hidden, but this only applies to the first time you hit with an attack that round. You must spend a standard action to hide and then make an opposed test of your Sneaking vs. the targets Noticing. If you succeed in this test you are hidden and the target is unaware of your presence. This gift does stack. For example, if a character has taken this gift twice they can add an extra 2d12 damage if they hit a target that is unaware of their presence.

Hide in the Open (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: Have the Hidden Strike Gift

Description: This Gift will allow you to attempt to Hide from an opponent, even if there is very little to Hide behind. As long as you keep 1 ally directly between you and an opponent, you can roll an opposed Sneaking Test vs. an opponents Noticing Test Roll. If you succeed, you are effectively hidden from their view. Spend 1 Stamina to activate.

Hit and Run (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Have a Speed of at least 6

Description: This Gift allows you to use some of your movement, perform a Melee attack against a single enemy, and then use the rest of your movement to move away without them being able to use a Reflex to attack you. This Gift can be combined with the Divide and Conquer gift, allowing you to divide your attacks between multiple enemies as you move up to your Speed. For example, if you had a speed of 6 and you had both this gift and Divide and Conquer, you could move 1 space to engage with an enemy and then attack them, then move 3 more spaces to close and attack another enemy, then move 2 more spaces away. Spend 1 Stamina to activate.

Increased Stamina (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: None

Description: Your Stamina maximum increases by 1. Therefore, you will have 1 more stamina maximum than what is normally listed for your level. This Gift can be selected up to a Max of 4 times.

Magic Bolt (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 1
Prerequisite: Either be a Battle Caster or a Garden Spirit

Description: Allows you to shoot forth a small magical bolt of energy from your finger tip, that can travel up to Medium Range to hit a target without expending any spell levels or magic points. The Magic Bolt does 1d6+ your casting modifier in damage, and your attack roll is 1d12+ your Magical Attack Modifier.

Magical Juggernaut (Tier 7)
Purchase Points: 10
Prerequisite: Have the Magical Warrior Gift and either be a Battle Caster or a Garden Spirit

Description: By taking this Gift you can now wear shells with no penalties to your casting. This Gift reduces the casting penalty of a shell to zero. In the advanced rules, heavier shells and shells not specifically designed for casting have penalties to your Stat Tests for Casters. If not playing with the advanced rules this Gift is not available.

Magical Warrior (Tier 5)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Either be a Battle Caster or a Garden Spirit

Description: By taking this Gift you can now wear shells with less penalties to your casting. This Gift reduces the casting penalty of a shell to half, with a penalty of 1 point being the minimum. In the advanced rules, heavier shells and shells not specifically designed for casting have penalties to your Stat Tests for Casters. If not playing with the advanced rules this Gift is not available.

Martial Artist (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift gives the ability to strike an opponent with either an empty hand or their feet as a reflex after making a successful attack with either a melee weapon or an unarmed combat strike.

Martial Arts Master (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 10
Prerequisite: Level 3 or above and have the Martial Artist Gift

Description: Those with this Gift have focused their Martial Arts training and achieved a level of Mastery that allows the power of any Unarmed Combat Strikes to increase as their Character Levels Increase.

Meditation (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Be a Garden Spirit

Description: A Garden Spirit can take this gift to allow them to meditate for 1 hour in order to recover 1/4 of their Magic Points.

Medium Shell Expert (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to use Medium Shells with no penalties to Speed. In the advanced rules shells will have penalties to different things, including Speed, Spell Casting, etc. If you are not using the advanced rules this Gift will not be available.

Multi-Cast (Tier 7)
Purchase Points: 8
Prerequisite: Be Level 6+ and either be a Battle Caster or a Garden Spirit

Description: Upon taking this Gift a caster can choose to cast up to 2 spells with ONE action. Activating this Gift costs 2 Stamina Points. If they choose to do this, the highest spell cast can be no higher than a level 4 spell and the second spell can be no higher than a level 2 spell.

Multi-Targeting (Tier 6)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Have the Fast Firing I Gift

Description: This Gift allows you to divide up your multiple attacks amongst your enemies. Your targets must be within range of your Ranged attacks and you cannot move between attacks. Spend 1 Stamina to activate.

Nimble (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 7
Prerequisite: Heart Stat of 5 or above

Description: This Gift allows you the ability to dodge an opponents attacks more easily. You get a +1 Bonus to your Shell Rating. You can choose this gift multiple times, up to a max of 4 times, and its effects stack. Spend 1 Stamina to activate. Once activated it lasts for 10 minutes.

Quadruple Attack (Tier 7)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: Level of 13 or above and have the Triple Attack Gift

Description: This Gift allows you to attack four time with ONE attack action with a melee weapon. Cannot be stacked with other Gifts that increase the amount of times you attack, unless specifically noted. Spend 3 Stamina to activate.

Skill Add (Empathy) (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift adds a +1 bonus to Tests for a skill you have chosen from the list below. You can take this Gift multiple times for the same skill and the effects do stack, however you cannot choose the same skill more than 4 times.

- Empathy
- Falsehoods
- Fast Talk
- Magical Energies
- Medicines
- Nature
- Noticing
- Past Knowledge
- Performance
- Presence
- Searching
- Seediness
- Sneaking
- Soul Energies

Soulsinger (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Have a Soul of 10 or above, and be either an Assaulter, a Protector, or a Scout

Description: This Gift gives the ability to cast Garden Magic spells in a limited fashion through the use of song. It can be done either with an instrument or with your voice. Those with this gift now have access to the spells of a Garden Spirit but only up to 3rd level spells and the amount of Magic Points they have is half of what a full Garden Spirit has.

Sprinter (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to spend 2 Stamina Points to temporarily increase your Speed. When this is done it doubles your speed for the round. This Gift can only be taken once.

Stand Your Ground (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to Spend a Stamina Point to maintain your position. When you do this, you gain a +4 to Body Tests to avoid being moved from the square you are in. Additionally, you gain a +2 bonus to your Shell Rating.

Strafing Attack (Tier 6)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Have a Speed of at least 6

Description: This Gift allows you to use all of your turn to move up to your Speed while making Ranged attacks at a single enemy. This gift can be combined with the Multi-targeting gift, allowing you to divide your attacks between multiple enemies as you move up to your Speed. So if you had this and the Multi-targeting gift you can use an action to use this ability, which allows you to move and perform your multiple attacks all as 1 action. This leaves you with 1 remaining action this turn, however, when this gift is used during a turn, your remaining action cannot be used for any type of attack or spell. The remaining action can only be used for moving, interacting with objects (i.e. move up to your speed, draw a sword, pick up an object on the ground, open a door, etc). Spend 2 Stamina to activate. Once activated lasts for 10 minutes.

Strengthen Spell (Tier 6)
Purchase Points: 7
Prerequisite: Level 10 or above and be either a Battle Caster or a Garden Spirit

Description: This Gift gives you the ability to maximize the amount of damage that a spell does to its targets. When you cast a spell that deals variable damage (i.e. 2d6, 4d8, etc), you may spend more to maximize the damage. The cost to maximize the damage is however much you spent to cast the spell in the first place, including any additional points you spent to increase difficulty, duration, etc. For example, if you spend 4 on the spell, and then another 3 to increase the difficulty of the targets test, that is a total cost of 7. To Maximize this spells damage you would spend another 7 at the time of casting for a total of 14 spent. The benefit is the amount of damage dealt by the spell is at its maximum.

Study Break (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Be a Battle Caster

Description: A Battle Caster may take this gift to allow them to take 1 hour in deep study, in order to regain 1/4 of their total Magic Points. This can only be done once per day.

Study Language (Amphibian) (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 1
Prerequisite: Have a Mind Stat of 8 or above, or be a Battle Caster, or be a Garden Spirit

Description: By taking this Gift you now read, write and speak fluently in a Language that you choose from the list below. You may take this Gift more than once, choosing a different Language each time:

- Amphibian
- Ancients
- Aquatic
- Aracnid
- Avian
- Burrow-speak
- Common
- Darkone
- Flora
- Insectoid
- Lizard
- Mammal
- Spirit

Study the Mind (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 1
Prerequisite: Be a Battle Caster

Description: You are now trained in the basic knowledge of Battle Magic and how it interacts with other forces within the Realm. This gives you a bonus of +1 to make a Magical Energies Test to attempt to figure out what a spell is as it is being cast, or the general nature of an existing magical effect. To do this you make a Magical Energies Test vs. the Difficulty set by the GM. Without this Gift a character can attempt the same type of test, but does so with a -5 penalty to their roll.

Study the Mind (Advanced) (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: Be a Battle Caster and have the Study the Mind Gift

Description: The advanced study you have undergone in this subject now grants you an additional bonus towards making your Magical Energies Test to attempt to figure out what a Battle Magic spell is as it is being cast, or the general nature of and existing magical effect. This bonus is on top of the bonus you received from the Basic Study the Mind Gift, and is equal to 1/4 of your current level (rounded down).

Study the Soul (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 1
Prerequisite: Be a Garden Spirit

Description: You are now trained in the basic knowledge of Garden Magic and how it interacts with other forces within the Realm. This gives you a bonus of +1 to make a Soul Energies Test to attempt to figure out what a spell is as it is being cast, or the general nature of an existing magical effect. To do this you make a Soul Energies Test vs. the Difficulty set by the GM. Without this Gift a character can attempt the same type of test, but does so with a -5 penalty to their roll.

Study the Soul (Advanced) (Tier 4)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: Be a Garden Spirit and have the Study the Soul Gift

Description: The advanced study you have undergone in this subject now grants you an additional bonus towards making your Soul Energies Test to attempt to figure out what a Garden Magic spell is as it is being cast, or the general nature of and existing magical effect. This bonus is on top of the bonus you received from the Basic Study the Soul Gift, and is equal to 1/4 of your current level (rounded down).

Sword and Sorcery (Tier 3)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: Be either a Battle Caster or a Garden Spirit

Description: This Gift allows you to cast a spell that has a range of melee and a casting time of 1 action or less as a part of a melee attack with a weapon you are wielding. If you choose to do this, and you hit with your melee weapon attack, you do damage from the melee attack as you would normally, but you also deliver the spell through the weapon to your target. Resolve the results of the spell according to its spell description. If you miss with the attack, the spell automatically fails, and any Magic Points spent on the spell are gone as if you had cast the spell normally.

Take Aim (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift gives you a +1 bonus to your attack when using ranged weapons. This can be taken multiple times (Max 4 times) and its effects stack. Spend 1 Stamina to activate. Once activated lasts for 1 minute.

Teller of Tales (Tier 2)
Purchase Points: 6
Prerequisite: Level 10 or above and either an Assaulter, a Protector, or a Scout

Description: This Gift gives the ability to cast Battle Magic spells in a limited fashion through the use of Telling Stories. Those with this gift now have access to the spells of a Battle Caster but only up to 3rd level spells and the amount of Magic Points they have is half of what a full Battle Caster has.

Telling Blow (Tier 6)
Purchase Points: 4
Prerequisite: None

Description: This Gift allows you to subtract from your Attack Bonus for a melee attack and apply that amount to your damage. You must choose how much to subtract from your roll before you roll the attack. Spend 1 Stamina to activate.

Tend Wounds (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: Soul Stat of 8 or above or be a Garden Spirit

Description: This Gift, which comes naturally to the Garden Spirit, allows you to assist wounded companions. 3 times per day you may spend 1 Stamina Point, which will allow an ally to regain 1d4+3 Health.

Thievery (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 3
Prerequisite: Have a Heart Stat of 12 or above or be a Scout

Description: This Gift allows you to pick pockets, pick locks, find and disarm traps, hide from enemies and move quietly. It grants you a bonus equal to 1/4 of your current level to Seediness and Sneaking. Without this gift a character can still attempt to hide and move quietly with no penalty, but attempting to pick locks/pockets/disarm traps/etc is done with a -5 penalty.

Triple Attack (Tier 6)
Purchase Points: 5
Prerequisite: Level 9 or above and have the Double Attack Gift

Description: This Gift allows you to attack three times with ONE attack action with a melee weapon. Cannot be stacked or combined with other Gifts that increase the amount of times you attack, unless specifically noted. Spend 2 Stamina to activate.

Tumbling Training (Tier 1)
Purchase Points: 2
Prerequisite: Heart Stat of 6 or above

Description: This Gift gives you a +1 bonus to all Acrobatics Tests. This can be taken multiple times and its effects do stack.

Gardener's Manifest

ARCHITECT OF THE UNDERGROWTH

Every epic saga woven through the dense roots, glowing crystalline nodes, and shifting shadows of The Garden requires a central anchor. While the players step into the role of courageous protagonists, breathing life into their Gastron adventurers and guiding them through treacherous terrain, your calling is entirely unique. You are The Gardener, the master narrator, the arbitrator of tactical laws, the living heart of the world itself.

The success of an excursion into the wild does not rest on memorizing rigid tables, but on your ability to cultivate an immersive, unforgettable experience at the gaming table. Your role is to balance absolute mechanical precision with narrative theater, to push the boundaries of your players' survival instincts while actively creating spaces for their characters to execute breathtaking, awesome feats of heroism.

To truly master the art of the undergrowth, a Gardener must closely observe the players around the table. Every player responds to the dangers of *The Garden* differently. By identifying what truly drives each player in your gaming party, you can seamlessly tailor your custom adventure arcs, encounter traps, and monster behaviors to feed their specific preferences, keeping them fully engaged within the game world.



SEVEN SPIRITS OF ENGAGEMENT

Soul of Acting (The Roleplayer)

There are players who view their character sheet not as a collection of math, but as a living, breathing identity. These players thrive on escaping into character, adopting unique voices, and forming deep social attachments. They want to experience the emotional reality of a world within the undergrowth.

Engage players who embrace the spirit of acting by:

- Providing frequent opportunities to develop their character's unique personalities, flaws, and moral compasses amidst the dangers of the wild.
- Allowing them to negotiate regularly with local merchants, eccentric wilderness hermits, and civilized faction leaders.
- Weaving distinct roleplaying elements directly into combat initiatives, giving enemies speaking lines or tactical demands mid-fight.
- Incorporating historical elements from their backgrounds directly into the central plot threads of your current campaign.

Drive for Exploration (The Trailblazer)

For some, the ultimate thrill is uncovering what lies beyond the safety of the Spire's shadows. These players want to map the uncharted root systems, discover ancient overgrown temples, and pull hidden artifacts from the forgotten deep.

Engage players who desire exploration by:

- Dropping subtle narrative clues and environmental breadcrumbs that hint at cosmic threats or lost treasures yet to be revealed.
- Rewarding them with unique structural anomalies, hidden paths, or ancient provisions when they dedicate active turns to thoroughly checking their surroundings.
- Providing rich, evocative descriptions of exciting environments, drawing heavily on macro-realist themes to paint picture-perfect landscapes.
- Giving your monsters cultural secrets, localized habits, or regional variations that can be researched and discovered.

Spark of Instigation (The Catalyst)

These players are eager to make things happen, even if it means stepping directly into a perilous trap. They despise stagnation and would rather rush headlong into an unpredictable encounter to face immediate consequences than endure a moment of boredom.

Engage players who like to instigate by:

- Allowing their immediate choices to directly and permanently alter their physical surroundings or political standing.
- Including highly tempting, volatile interactive elements in your maps, such as a humming crystalline node or a fraying root rope that practically begs to be touched.
- Letting their reckless choices occasionally drop the entire party into a tight mechanical spot, forcing an emergency tactical pivot.
- Populating your settlements with feisty, unpredictable characters who match the instigator's high energy and chaotic drive.

Fury of Fighting (The Skirmisher)

To these tactical combatants, the game is won through martial dominance. They favor bold, aggressive actions over long analytical deliberations, looking for any valid excuse to draw their weapons and kick the tar out of villains and monsters.

Engage players who live for the fight by:

- Springing sudden, unexpected ambush encounters on the party when they traverse seemingly safe terrain zones.
- Vividly describing the absolute havoc, shattered shells, and kinetic impacts their attacks and spells unleash upon the enemy lines.
- Including massive horde encounters filled with numerous lower-tier threats, allowing them to cleave through waves of enemies effortlessly.
- Interrupting long diplomatic negotiations or slow travel sequences with the sudden arrival of an apex predator card.

Art of Optimization (The Tactician)

These players view character building as a fine-tuned engineering puzzle. They seek out peak combat performance, studying the interaction between Gifts, attribute modifiers, and equipment slots to demonstrate their absolute superiority on the battlefield layout grid.

Engage players who focus on optimization by:

- Ensuring a steady, reliable progression track for gaining new features, advanced spells, and character levels.
- Utilizing highly desired, rare magical gear or pristine custom weaponry blueprints as explicit hooks for your major excursions.
- Designing specialized combat encounters that perfectly align with their specific build style, allowing their character's custom mechanics to shine brilliantly.
- Providing quantifiable, static rewards—such as bonus experience points or currency seeds—for successfully navigating noncombat hazards.

Joy of Problem Solving (The Strategist)

These players view the game as a complex mental contest. They love to scrutinize a merchant's true motivations, untangle a villain's hidden machinations, solve layout puzzles, and orchestrate airtight tactical assault plans before a single die is rolled.

Engage players who look to solve problems by:

- Including environmental blockades, ancient locking mechanisms, and cryptic traps that prioritize clever deduction over raw physical stat tests.
- Active-enduring rewards: Granting explicit in-game benefits, surprise rounds, or structural advantages if the party spends time mapping a flawless ambush plan.
- Occasionally allowing a brilliant strategy or flawless deduction to completely bypass a major hazard, granting the players an elegant, clean victory.
- Creating villains and factions with highly complex, multi-layered motives that cannot be solved by simply swinging a blade.

Craft of Storytelling (The Author)

For the author, the game is an exercise in collective myth-making. They want to contribute directly to an unfolding narrative arc, feeling a deep personal investment when their character's actions ripple outward to reshape the fate of *The Garden*.

Engage players who prioritize storytelling by:

- Using their character's personal histories and ancestral lineages to actively sculpt the overarching lore of the active campaign.
- Ensuring that every individual encounter, whether a social greeting or a brutal skirmish, advances the story or reveals a new piece of the plot puzzle.
- Allowing their choices during critical narrative intersections to fundamentally steer future events and alter the landscape layout of regional zones.
- Giving your primary villains clear ideals, bonds, and tragic flaws that the heroes can actively discover and exploit during a final confrontation.

LAW OF THE FERTILIVE CANVAS: REAPING YOUR OWN WORLD

Beyond the tactical parameters and environmental indexes laid out within these pages, a Gardener must remember one golden truth: *The Garden* is entirely your canvas. While this guidebook provides a meticulous foundation of structural laws, attribute mathematics, and conflict-resolution loops, these rules are not rigid stone walls meant to imprison your creativity. Instead, they are living root systems designed to support your table's imagination. As The Gardener, you are fully empowered to shape, alter, prune, or expand this system to the unique needs and creative desires of your players.

If your group thrives on high-stakes mechanical tension and intricate inventory mathematics, you are encouraged to lean heavily into the Full Ruleset. Conversely, if your players prefer a fast-paced, narrative-focused storybook style, you have the absolute authority to completely omit encumbrance penalties, disregard complex slot limitations, or completely bypass any advanced tracking subsystems that slow down your momentum. You and your players are the ultimate judges of what constitutes engagement. If a specific rule dampens the mood of an excursion, discard it or adapt it on the fly to serve your group's playstyle.

Ultimately, the grandest stories told under the canopy are those born from collective joy and shared imagination. The true heart of tabletop roleplaying games is not found in absolute compliance with written text, but in the laughter, tension, and unforgettable memories created around the layout board. Work closely with your party, listen to their feedback, and never fear experimenting with homebrew mechanics or tailored house rules. Do whatever it takes to optimize the fun at your table, for you are the true master of this landscape, and your word is the final law of the wild.

BESTIARY UNVEILED: SEEDING YOUR FIRST ENCOUNTERS

As you prepare to step behind the screen and breathe life into the wilderness, your narrative will inevitably collide with the native dangers of the undergrowth. To ensure you are fully armed to challenge your players from their very first excursion, the upcoming section of this manual is dedicated entirely to a mini bestiary. Within its pages, you will discover a dozen meticulously crafted monsters, each complete with its own specialized behavior profile and full tactical stat block. These initial threats are designed to populate your grid maps immediately, providing a diverse array of challenges that scale perfectly across your opening game sessions.

From aggressive worker factions defending their territory to camouflaged predators waiting patiently in the root shadows, this introductory gauntlet offers a rich cross-section of *The Garden's* ecosystem. Each profile details not only the creature's raw combat math—such as its Shell Rating, Success Thresholds, and damage outputs—but also its specific tactical instincts and thematic habits under the canopy. Use these dozen foundational entities as the bedrock for your first encounters, adjusting their numbers to test your party's survival limits and ignite the spark of heroic conflict at your table.

Undergrowth Bestiary

NATIVE THREATS OF THE ECOSYSTEM

To navigate the root systems of *The Garden* is to walk among leviathans. For a Gastron traveler, a simple foraging beetle is a armored colossus, and a hive of ants represents a highly disciplined, militaristic empire. As The Gardener, you can deploy these twelve foundational entities immediately into your grid maps to test your party's survival instincts, tactical positioning, and resource management.

TIER 1 MONSTERS: GROUND-LEVEL THREATS

Aphid Tiller

Type: Beast

Tier: 1

Shell Rating (SR): 6

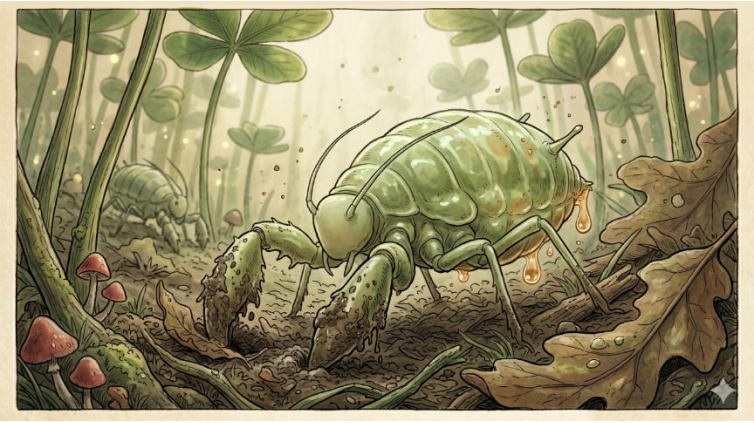
Success Threshold (ST): 1

Base Health Points: 12

Movement Speed: 3 Squares

Stamina Pool: 2

Attack Action: *Spade-Leg Gouge* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 1 vs. SR); Deals 1d4 Piercing damage.



ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Damp topsoil valleys, the undersides of decaying baseline foliage, and domestic agricultural zones cultivated by the larger ant colonies.

Normal Behavior: The Aphid Tiller is an exceptionally docile herbivore, spending its entire existence churning through soil mulch to feed on trapped root sap. They are entirely non-aggressive, fighting only when backed into an inescapable corner or when their feeding rhythms are violently interrupted.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. Tillers congregate in mindless, docents herds. They are frequently captured, herded, and fiercely protected by Formicid factions, who milk them for their sweet, energy-rich chemical secretions.

Formicid Scout

Type: Civilized Humanoid (Formicid)

Tier: 1

Shell Rating (SR): 8 (Leaf Leathers)

Success Threshold (ST): 2

Base Health Points: 15

Movement Speed: 5 Squares

Stamina Pool: 3

Attack Action: *Thorn Spear* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 2 vs. SR); Deals 1d6 Piercing damage (Reach 2).

Special Ability: *Pheromone Alert* (Costs 1 Stamina) — Instantly grants a +2 Initiative bonus to all allied Formicids within 5 squares on the tracker.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Established boundary trails, open grass clearings, and the subterranean access tubes surrounding major underground formic fortresses.

Normal Behavior: Scouts are highly alert, fiercely loyal, and move with disciplined speed. They do not seek out unnecessary conflicts unless a traveler violates marked territorial boundaries; however, the moment an intruder is flagged, they prioritize alerting nearby patrol squads over individual glory.

Societal Structure: Civilized. Scouts belong to a rigid, highly structured caste society answering directly to the local Nest Matriarch. They communicate seamlessly through complex chemical languages and specialized antennae clicks, operating with total military coordination.



Garden Root-Borer

Type: Vermin

Tier: 1

Shell Rating (SR): 7 (Mineral Cap)

Success Threshold (ST): 2

Base Health Points: 18

Movement Speed: 2 Squares (Burrow 2)

Stamina Pool: 2

Attack Action: *Dissolving Bite* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 1 vs. SR); Deals 1d6 Acid damage and reduces the target's Damage Reduction by 1 for the remainder of the encounter.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Deep interior root systems, rotting timber stumps, and the dark, moist spaces beneath shifting slate stones.

Normal Behavior: Root-Borers are driven entirely by a destructive hunger for raw plant fibers. They spend their life cycle chewing paths through living tissue, completely indifferent to the chaos they cause. They lash out blindly at any moving object that creates vibrations along their feeding paths.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. Borers operate as solitary pests, completely ignoring others of their kind unless competing directly for a scarce, highly concentrated pocket of sweet root resin.



Mite Scavenger

Type: Vermin

Tier: 1

Shell Rating (SR): 5

Success Threshold (ST): 1

Base Health Points: 8

Movement Speed: 6 Squares

Stamina Pool: 2

Attack Action: *Serrated Nip* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 3 vs. SR); Deals 1d4 Slashing damage.

Special Ability: *Swarm Tactics* — Gains a cumulative +1 bonus to hit for every other allied Mite adjacent to the target threat.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Decomposing leaf floor mats, abandoned burrows, and the damp shadows beneath large fungal shelves.

Normal Behavior: Cowardly yet incredibly persistent, Mite Scavengers run from single, well-armed travelers. However, they gather immediately when the scent of blood or fresh tissue enters a zone. They act as the cleanup crew of the undergrowth, attacking only when they possess overwhelming numbers.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. They form chaotic, uncoordinated swarms driven entirely by collective feeding frenzies, lacking any internal hierarchy or protective intelligence.



Stalking Root-Spider

Type: Beast / Predator

Tier: 2

Shell Rating (SR): 10

Success Threshold (ST): 3

Base Health Points: 32

Movement Speed: 5 Squares (Climb 5)

Stamina Pool: 4

Attack Action: *Venomous Pounce* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 3 vs. SR); Deals 1d8 Piercing damage, and the target must pass a Body check (Difficulty 12) or suffer the Poisoned status condition.

Special Ability: *Ambush Reflex* (Costs 1 Stamina) — If hidden, it can execute its attack action out of turn when an enemy moves within 3 squares.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Vertical bark walls, hollow spaces inside ancient root channels, and narrow chasms within the deep undergrowth brambles.

Normal Behavior: A patient apex ambush predator. The Root-Spider can sit perfectly still for hours, utilizing its natural camo to disappear into its surroundings. It ignores non-threatening movement, saving its energy to strike targets that wander directly into its strike radius.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. Fiercely territorial and solitary, these spiders view their own kind as either rivals to be driven off or immediate food sources.



Vespian Skirmisher

Type: Civilized Humanoid (Vespian)

Tier: 2

Shell Rating (SR): 11 (Segmented Copper)

Success Threshold (ST): 2

Base Health Points: 28

Movement Speed: 2 Squares (Fly 6)

Stamina Pool: 4

Attack Action: *Serrated Rapier* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 4 vs. SR); Deals 1d8 Slashing damage.

Attack Action: *Barbed Stinger* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 2 vs. SR); Deals 1d6 Piercing damage plus 1d4 Poison damage.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: High branch clearings, paper-husk hanging citadels, and the open air spaces directly below the main canopy leaf line.

Normal Behavior: Arrogant, swift, and highly aggressive, Vespian Skirmishers police the high skies. They view all ground-dwelling species as lower lifeforms to be taxed, driven off, or harvested for resources. They utilize their superior flight metrics to perform hit-and-run strafing strikes on targets below.

Societal Structure: Civilized. They belong to a militarized imperial monarchy governed by strict martial contracts. Honor and standing within the swarm are determined entirely by combat successes and the collection of fine materials for the high hives.



Armored Seed-Weevil

Type: Beast

Tier: 2

Shell Rating (SR): 13 (Heavy Carapace)

Success Threshold (ST): 3

Base Health Points: 40

Movement Speed: 2 Squares

Stamina Pool: 3

Attack Action: *Rammed Snout* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 1 vs. SR); Deals 1d10 Bludgeoning damage and shoves the target 2 squares backward.

Special Passive: *Natural DR* — The Weevil possesses a static Damage Reduction of 2 against all non-magical slashing and piercing attacks.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Oak valleys, walnut groves, and dry forest floor areas where heavy seeds and nuts collect.

Normal Behavior: Slow, deliberate, and near-impenetrable, the Seed-Weevil moves through the world like a living boulder. It is entirely indifferent to travelers, completely focused on locating and breaking open heavy seed pods. It turns its destructive power against characters only if they attempt to steal its food source.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. They wander the groves in small, indifferent family groups, occasionally competing with other herbivores through non-lethal head-butting matches.



Bramble-Thorn Mantis

Type: Beast / Predator

Tier: 2

Shell Rating (SR): 9

Success Threshold (ST): 3

Base Health Points: 35

Movement Speed: 4 Squares (Climb 4)

Stamina Pool: 5

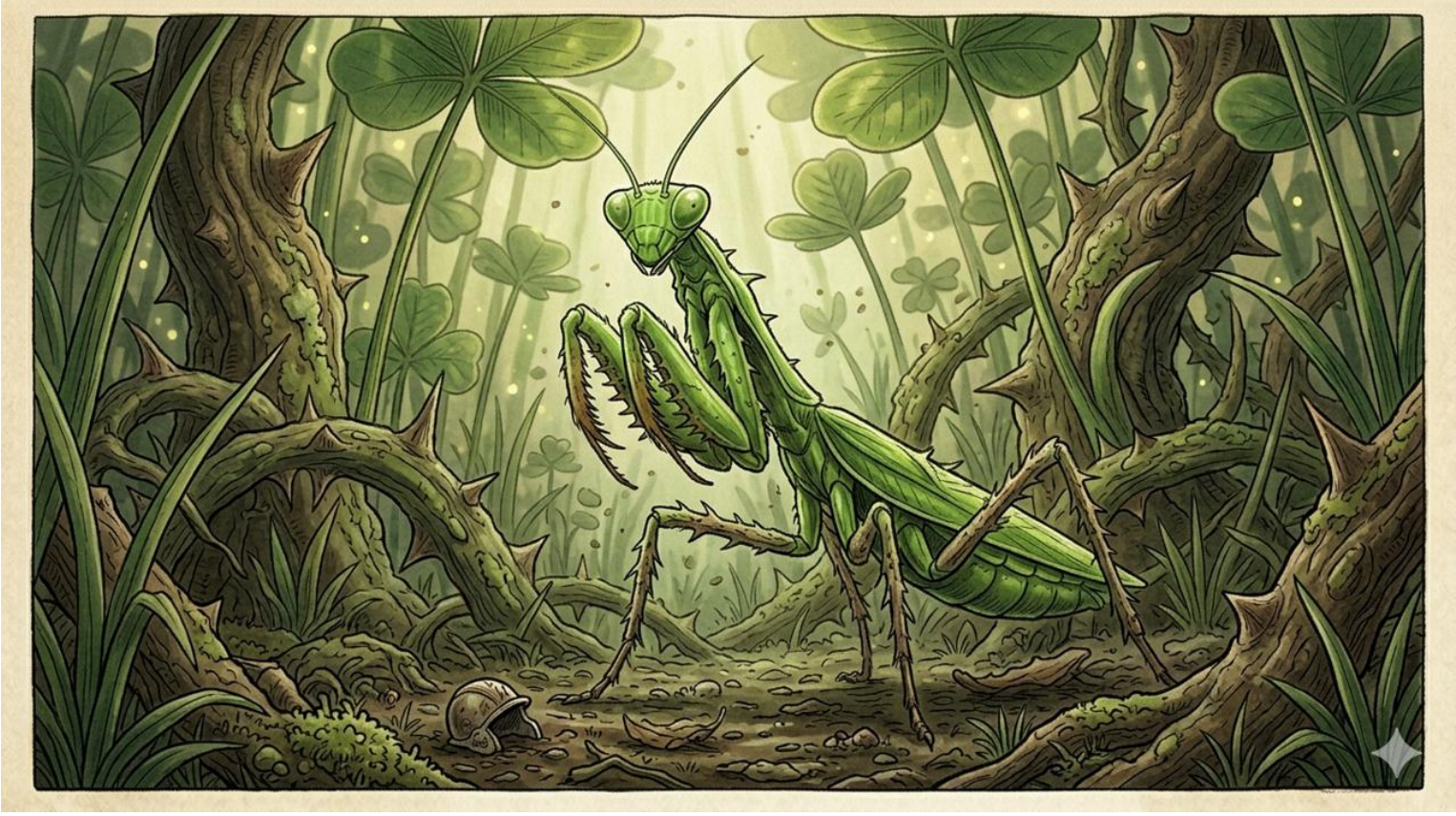
Attack Action: *Scything Grasp* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 4 vs. SR); Deals 1d12 Slashing damage and inflicts the Restrained status condition on targets of equal or smaller size.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Thick berry patches, rose briars, and any tangled vertical shrubbery where light filters through the leaves.

Normal Behavior: The Mantis is a cold, calculated hunter that relies on total concealment within thorn bushes. It waits for travelers or large insects to pass beneath its perch before dropping down with devastating force. It coordinates its strikes with alarming speed, executing pinned targets first.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. Cannibalistic and solitary. They tolerate no other predators within their hunting grounds, often killing and consuming smaller competitors.



Bombardier Soldier

Type: Beast

Tier: 3

Shell Rating (SR): 11

Success Threshold (ST): 4

Base Health Points: 55

Movement Speed: 4 Squares

Stamina Pool: 4

Attack Action: *Crushing Mandibles* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 3 vs. SR); Deals 1d8 Bludgeoning damage.

Attack Action: *Thermal Chemical Blast* (Costs 2 Stamina) — Ranged Blast (Cone 3, Close Range); Deals 2d8 Fire/Acid damage to all targets in the path.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Volatile underground sulfur springs, dry rotted log interiors, and rocky crags where reactive minerals collect.

Normal Behavior: Irritable and easily agitated, the Bombardier Soldier patrols its domain aggressively. It uses its internal chemical chambers to spray boiling, caustic fluid at anything it considers an existential threat, creating hazardous zones across the grid.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. Soldiers are often found defending defensive nesting sites alongside smaller worker beetles, acting as heavy organic artillery for the colony.



Formicid Phalanx

Type: Civilized Humanoid (Formicid)

Tier: 3

Shell Rating (SR): 14 (Ironwood Armor & Acorn Shield)

Success Threshold (ST): 4

Base Health Points: 60

Movement Speed: 3 Squares

Stamina Pool: 5

Attack Action: *Serrated Broadsword* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 4 vs. SR); Deals 1d10 Slashing damage.

Special Ability: *Form Shield Wall* (Costs 1 Stamina) — Allies directly behind or adjacent to the Phalanx gain a flat +3 bonus to their Shell Rating until the start of the Phalanx's next turn.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: High-security treasury vaults, royal palace gates, and frontline trench systems during territorial resource wars.

Normal Behavior: The Phalanx represents the absolute peak of disciplined military force under the canopy. They never break formation, acting as a living shield wall to isolate and eliminate high-priority threats with mechanical, cold efficiency.

Societal Structure: Civilized. They hold high officer ranks within the Queen's guard networks, managing subordinate scout units and enforcing Imperial law across captured trade routes.



Crystalline Stag Beetle

Type: Magical Beast

Tier: 3

Shell Rating (SR): 12

Success Threshold (ST): 5

Base Health Points: 75

Movement Speed: 3 Squares

Stamina Pool: 4

Attack Action: *Crystalline Vice* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 5 vs. SR); Deals 2d6 Piercing damage and locks the target in place.

Special Ability: *Resonant Discharge* (Costs 2 Stamina) — Emits a pulsing wave of magical force. All targets within 2 squares are knocked back 3 spaces and lose 2 Stamina points from their pools.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

- **Primary Habitat**: Ancient leyline clearings, deep underground caverns rich with mineral deposits, and areas immediately surrounding active crystalline nodes.
- **Normal Behavior**: Serene yet immensely powerful, the Stag Beetle spends its time absorbing environmental magic. It ignores standard organic life entirely, but responds with immediate, explosive fury if a caster draws magical power nearby or attempts to chip away at its crystalline armor structure.
- **Societal Structure**: Non-civilized. A solitary, mystical guardian of the deep spaces, completely unique in its elemental adaptation.



Great Burrowing Centipede

Type: Vermin / Apex Predator

Tier: 3

Shell Rating (SR): 10

Success Threshold (ST): 5

Base Health Points: 80

Movement Speed: 5 Squares (Burrow 4)

Stamina Pool: 6

Attack Action: *Paralytic Clamp* — Melee Strike (1d12 + 4 vs. SR); Deals 1d12 Piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a Body check (Difficulty 14) or suffer the Paralyzed condition for 1 round.

Special Ability: *Thrashing Segment Storm* (Costs 2 Stamina) — Attacks all targets currently adjacent to any part of its multi-square body.

ECOSYSTEM PROFILE

Primary Habitat: Uncharted depths, ancient graveyard roots, and loose subterranean soil tunnels beneath Tier 3 hazard zones.

Normal Behavior: The absolute terror of the underground. Driven by an insatiable, endless predatory hunger, it tracks prey through ground vibrations before bursting up through the soil to swallow them whole. It fights with relentless fury, using its massive length to control and dominate spatial lanes on the grid.

Societal Structure: Non-civilized. A solitary, ancient apex monster that avoids its own kind unless engaging in brutal, world-shaking battles over prime hunting territory.



Glossary & Index

LEXICON OF THE UNDERGROWTH

Navigating the dense root structures, volatile seasonal shifts, and intricate tactical mechanics of *The Garden* requires a unified command of its technical and systemic language. This final section serves as the definitive anchor for players and Gardeners alike, providing an exhaustive glossary of core terminology followed by a highly comprehensive index mapping the architectural rulesets, character creation parameters, and inventory catalogs detailed throughout this manual.

GLOSSARY

Active-Enduring Gift
A classification of specialized physical talents or somatic maneuvers that requires a character to spend a designated action slot and pay an upfront Stamina Point cost to initiate. Its unique tactical benefits, defensive enhancements, or environmental modifiers remain continuously operational on the battlefield layout for a specified duration across consecutive combat rounds before safely dissipating.

Active-Instant Gift
A classification of physical masteries or extraordinary combat maneuvers whose designated Stamina Point cost must be actively paid at the exact split-second the player declares the corresponding action slot on their turn. The mechanical augmentation or action replacement applies strictly to that single slot, terminating completely the moment the action finishes resolving on the grid.

Auxiliary Caster
A character who does not belong to a dedicated spellcasting class but has unlocked a minor connection to the world's supernatural currents by explicitly purchasing specialized features—specifically the *Teller of Tales* or *Soulsinger* Gifts. They calculate their maximum pools and learn spells at half the standard rate of primary spellcasters.

Base MP
A fixed, static value of starting Magic Points inherently granted by a character's choice of a dedicated spellcasting Class, serving as the foundational floor upon which their scaling intelligence or spiritual modifiers build.

Body Required
The minimum raw physical metric an adventurer must possess to carry, wield, or don heavy items—such as high-tier melee armaments or reinforced Shell protection plates—without buckling under the weight or suffering crippling operational penalties on the tactical map grid.

Casting Penalty
A severe advanced penalty applied to characters wearing heavy or non-magically resonant Shell armor modifications. This constraint active-enduringly lowers the character's casting capabilities or imposes negative modifiers to their Spell Difficulty Level (SDL) checks under the advanced Full Ruleset.

Core Resource Pools
The fundamental, calculated statistics recorded on a character sheet—specifically Health Points (HP), Stamina Points (SP), and Magic Points (MP)—that directly dictate a Gastron traveler's physical vitality, operational energy, and supernatural limits within the ecosystem.

Damage Reduction (DR)
A static protective value possessed by medium and heavy Shell modifications that absorbs incoming kinetic force, subtracting a flat number directly from any raw damage suffered before it reduces the character's current Health Points pool.

The Drift
The dangerous, vegetative twilight state a Gastron character falls into the exact moment their current Health Points pool is reduced to zero. Entering *The Drift* signals that a character's shell has sustained catastrophic structural cracks, leaving them actively dying until stabilized.

Gear
The singular, definitive systemic term used to categorize all physical equipment, adventuring tools, armor plates, utility hardware, and primary weapons carried by a bipedal Gastron explorer into the wild.

Gift
An extraordinary biological adaptation, advanced martial maneuver, or highly specialized training feature that players acquire to customize their characters. Gifts do not add extra actions to a turn; instead, they function to expand, alter, or completely replace standard basic actions.

Main Casting Stat
The primary driving attribute modifier used by a spellcaster to channel magical forces and calculate their maximum resources. Battle Casters utilize their analytical *Mind* score, while Garden Spirits rely on their deeply resonant *Soul* score.

Max Heart Mod for SR
The absolute ceiling of natural agility a character is permitted to add from their *Heart* attribute modifier to augment their baseline Shell Rating defense target. Heavy armor structures tightly contract this capability, often locking this bonus to a flat zero.

Passive Gift
A permanent biological modification or constant psychological focus whose unique mechanical advantages are perpetually operational once recorded on a character sheet. Passive Gifts require no action slots to initiate and demand zero Stamina Point expenditures to maintain.

Physical Exhaustion
The state of absolute physical collapse induced the exact moment a character's Stamina pool is drained to zero. Physical Exhaustion instantly terminates the character's active turn, paralyzes their out-of-turn reflex options, and freezes their ability to purchase extra dice.

Purchase Points (PP)
The dedicated advancement currency utilized exclusively under the advanced Full Ruleset. Purchase Points are earned through exploration victories and discovered Spire archives, allowing players to freely buy custom traits, skills, and Gifts provided they meet any baseline prerequisites.

Shell
The primary choice of load bearing, organic defensive hardware worn by a Gastron character. Shells serve as the structural anchor where items, secondary gear, and weapon modifications are physically embedded directly onto the character's frame.

Shell Rating (SR)
The static, mathematical defense target number (TN) assigned to a character's equipped Shell armor layer. Enemy threats must equal or exceed this target value with a 1d12 roll to successfully land a physical blow in combat.

Stamina Pool (SP)
The absolute lifeblood of an explorer's tactical options on the field. Stamina represents the internal reservoir of endurance actively spent on a 1-to-1 basis to buy extra d12 dice, execute powerful combat Gifts, fund Team Up maneuvers, or trigger out-of-turn Reflex actions.

Success Threshold (ST)
The cumulative number of individual successful dice rolls a party or single character must secure during an encounter or crisis check to fully overcome a complex threat or completely bypass a major hazard.

Target Number (TN)
The definitive numerical difficulty milestone set by a specific rule or dictated by the Gardener that a 1d12 die roll must equal or exceed to achieve a valid success during an attribute check or attack sequence.

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