

This is a collaboration article, brought together by the Knights in the North along with a number of guest contributors. It lists and describes a number of strange mushrooms and fungi, all ready for use at your DCC table.

Knight Moot #2: Fun with Fungi

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Bloomballs

by AMP

Description: One of the strange cultivars of the realms of the Elflands, bloomballs can sometimes be found in the mundane world in areas touched by the fey. They are delicate puffball mushrooms, ranging from fist-sized growths to fruit as big as a child's head.

The bloomballs are a light lavender in colour, and project a soft bioluminescence to their surroundings,

but this is by no means their most peculiar feature. Bloomballs process nutrients into helium, which eventually causes mature specimens to unroot and float softly in the air. Eventually the bloomball touches something and pops, releasing glittering spores into its surroundings and propagating the species.

Fey farmers and knowledgeable marsh gnomes often trap bloomball mushrooms with the aid of affable spiders. These delicate, floating lanterns are used to illuminate the secret celebrations of the fey, and

treasured by travelers in the marshes due to their weightlessness.

Harvesting and alchemical uses: Harvesting bloomballs is a very delicate task, requiring at least a passing familiarity with fungal lore (DC 20 skill check, reduced by having a spider assist the procedure). Bloomballs can be used to create bloomball lanterns, and it is said that the glittering spores can be used in rituals concerning the fey realm of Elfland.

Bloomball lantern: A bunch of floating bloomballs bound together by spiderweb; the bunch is extremely delicate, completely weightless, and provides lavender bio-illumination as a large lantern.



Ecology of the Ley Mushroom

by Sami Kouva

“Zurgo was an ordinary village. Its inhabitants maybe had to scuffle with a few stinkgoblins or an aggressive pack of wolves, but they mostly farmed their few fields and ran a little lumber yard nearby. They had recently made agreement with a group of hunters who traded furs and meat to provide Zurgo a more varied palate

than most other villages. The agreement with the hunters was a god send to this little place of civility in among the wilderness but alas, as with all good things their fortune started to unravel. When our party got to the village many of those hunters along with an unrelated group of adventurers had gone missing.

A chat with the locals revealed an ordinary story with a sinister twist. As part of the agreement with the village the hunters had kept watch of the vicinity, riddling stray goblins with arrows and reporting anything that could threaten the area. One of these reports included notes about a large wolf that seen in the vicinity of the village. The wolf had been acting oddly, as if trying to lure the hunters after it.

The note concluded that the wolf had looked weird and this along with its strange behaviour it didn't take long before an adventuring party of four headed out to investigate (“young and foolhardy men” said the innkeeper when I inquired about them). They never returned. Also, at least three hunters who went after the wolf had gone missing. The remaining hunters and trappers did not dare to go into the wilderness after them, mostly because one of the missing men had been their best tracker.

Cue in our adventuring group. After agreeing with the local officials about a reward for this inquiry, me and my colleagues took it upon ourselves to find out what horrible things were stirring in Zurgo.

I shan't recount every testimony and every horror story the fearful and inebriated locals conjured up for us. Suffice to say we were expecting at least a demon army from the pits of hell itself when we entered the woods.

It didn't take long before our tracker found traces of travelers carrying much heavier loads than your average hunter. We were expecting to find dead adventures in chainmail, slain by an ogre or something of the like. But the tracks told a different story: the party had stalked a heavily built wolf, and we were nearing its lair.

The lair was nothing out of the ordinary at first glance, but when our tracker got to the entrance he jumped backwards and informed us that "There's somethin' in the air. I don' know 'ow much it'll help, but drench some cloth an' put it on your mouth afore you follow me".

I must admit that the most unpleasant part of my inquiries is to dirty my boots and risk myself for the safety of some inbred serfs. Officially, I of course enjoy bringing safety and assistance to the needy...

As we lit our torches and lanterns and took out our weapons, our tracker seemed absent minded and sluggish. The lout was probably drunk, we must dock this from his pay when we return to civilization.

The cave itself was almost anticlimactic. One large room with a half-dozen corpses, lorded over by some sort of a wolf creature. Our first thought was that it was a simple demonic beast: nothing that couldn't be erased with a well-placed magic missile. I did just that, and that was when the spores exploded out of the disintegrating corpse. I suspected we'd walked in to a trap as the recumbent corpses suddenly jumped, crept or shambled towards us. Surprisingly we dispatched the mouldering zombies with ease.

After the battle I started a cursory exam of the bodies. To my horror (and academic interest, it should be added) I discovered that some of them were still alive when they attacked us. It seemed that some fungal or parasitic creature was affecting these unfortunates.

As I realized this, our tracker spoke out in a ragged voice: "Could I interest you in parlay, mister Helmut?". He was swiftly apprehended, as I suspect the weak-willed woodsman has been taken over by some demonic force released from the wolf-creature. We are currently interrogating him at the cave's entrance before we decide how to proceed further.

[At this point the journal contains multiple pages of unintelligible gibberish. One final note is legible,

written in forceful block-letters entirely unlike the previous flowing script]

THE MUSHROOM IS NOT FEEDING IT IS GESTATING JUSTICIA HAVE MERCY"

- Excerpt from the personal journal of adventurer and wizard Friedrich Helmut.

Description: A ley mushroom sprouts growths which can grow up to about the size of a man. It is usually found in places with some kind lingering or residual magical effect, such as the crossroad of ley lines from which it takes its name. The fungus grows a surprisingly extensive below-ground mycelium, and instinctively sprouts a dominant above-ground mushroom somewhere well hidden before it starts its feeding cycle.

The ley mushroom's feeding cycle begins when it can infect a living host with its spores. The spores are launched from its dominant growth, and take hold of a host unless a DC 14 Fort save is passed. Animals fall under the mushroom's complete control after a single failed save, and even intelligent creatures may be enthralled after prolonged contact. Those in the area of effect (Judge's discretion depending on location) roll additional Fort saves at the end of each complete turn spent in the spore-affected area; three failed saves indicates that the target has fallen completely under the thrall of the ley mushroom, but even the initial ingestion of spores has an effect. After the first failed save affected humanoids appear absent minded and sluggish, and are haunted by a desire to lead others to the mushrooms peacefully. This obsession deepens if a second save is failed, increasing to a feverish need to bring others to the mushroom. A third failed save brings the creature under complete control by the fungus. Suitable alchemical air may bring them back, and the affliction can be temporarily cured with the laying of hands (requiring two dice to stave off the infection).

Creatures charmed by the ley mushroom either stay in the mushroom's vicinity as guards, or lay down next to the main growth, falling comatose and then expiring to provide it sustenance. Creatures perishing in this fashion will eventually be completely infested with the mycelium of the fungus, and in time become extensions of its survival. Fresh victims become fungal zombies within a couple of days (see below), and as their flesh is completely mulched and decimated degenerate into fungal skeletons (see below).

Should affected creatures be removed from the mushroom's vicinity (either through persuasion or force) they are wracked with pain upon exiting the mushroom's sphere of influence and must succeed in a further DC 14 Fort save or suffer 1d3 point of STR damage each round; this effect persists until a save is successful and the infection has been purged from the infected host.

The ley mushroom is in complete control of the victims it has charmed, and can communicate through them. Its primary objective is survival, and it will ideally attempt to parlay with creatures threatening it in order to guarantee its continued existence. It has access to the knowledge of all beings in its thrall (including spells), and will it will use this information with a low, fungal cunning.

Actually destroying a ley mushroom is a two step process. First, the main fungal growth must be slain, which ends its control over infected creatures and prevents further spores being launched in the area. Then its mycelium must be dug out, and the tuber-like central growths put to flame. Each ley mushroom colony is controlled by 3d5 such growths: these brain-shaped tubers host its alien intelligence. If all of the root growths are not destroyed a new ley mushroom will sprout in the location in two weeks time, retaining all of the previous intelligence it has sponged from previous victims.

The final stages of the ley mushroom's life cycle are unknown, as infestations are usually dealt with swiftly by the custodians of the magically charged locales it grows in. Travelers from the deep wilderness sometimes return with reports of many brained para-humanoid demigods, whose personalities and knowledge sometimes corresponds with that of suspected victims of the ley mushroom, but any connection there is mere conjecture at this point.

Alchemical uses of the ley mushroom: The ley mushroom and its minions can be harvested for many uses. The following are just few examples, additional ideas are left to the Judge's discretion.

Main growth of the ley mushroom: This can be cut out from the surrounding root system and used to make magical items. Its nature as the center through which all of the devoured arcane energy and life force is funneled makes the flesh of the mushroom magically quite potent. Due to the sinister nature of this growth most items created with this mana-filled material will have chaotic tendencies.

Mycelium brain-tubers of the ley mushroom: Fresh or well-preserved growths can be used in potions related to mental effects. The tubers can also be dried to be spent as additional reagents in spellcasting; each growth increases a spellcheck result by +2, but adds an extra mercurial effect to the casting.

Fungal zombie flesh and spores: Moldering components gathered from fungal zombies can be used as part of necromantic magic and alchemy.

Fungal skeleton mycelium: The mycelium-tendons of fungal skeletons can be harvested and used as components in magic involving growth and plantlife.

Fungal zombie: Init: -2; Atk: bite +3 melee (1d4) or weapon +0; AC: 9; HD: 3d6; MV: 20' (~6 m); Act: 1d20; SP: part un-dead, weakness to fire and cold,

explode when slain, fungal link (see below); SV: Fort +4 Ref -4 Will +2; AL: C.

Wreathed in white mycelium, fungal zombies are wretched, rotting carcasses controlled by their fungal master.

Fungal zombies are not entirely un-dead, and thus can only be turned by neutral clerics. They do not eat, drink, or breathe. As un-dead, they are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects. Fungal zombies have a weakness to fire and cold effects because of their fungal origins.

Slain fungal zombies explode, spewing ley mushroom spores in 15' radius (see description above for details). If the main ley mushroom growth is destroyed the zombies will perish.

Fungal skeleton: Init: +1; Atk: claw +1 melee (1d3) or weapon +1; AC: 10; HD: 2d6; MV: 30' (-10 m); Act: 1d20; SP: part un-dead, half damage from piercing and bashing weapons, weakness to fire and cold, mycelium-for-brains, fungal link (see below); SV: Fort +0 Ref +0 Will +0; AL: C.

Bare bone and knotted mycelium, the eyes of fungal skeletons glow with an eerie bioluminescence.

Fungal skeletons take half damage from piercing and bashing weapons (such as clubs spears, arrows, and pitchforks). They are are not entirely un-dead, and thus can be turned by only neutral clerics. They do not eat, drink, or breathe, and are immune to critical hits, disease, and poison. As un-dead, they are immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *paralysis* spells, as well as other mental effects and they have a weakness to fire and cold effects because of their fungal origins.

Fungal skeletons have a tuber-like mess of mycelium filling their brainpan. This growth communicates with the ley mushroom telepathically. If the head is severed or burned (for example with a *Mighty deed* or a critical) the skeleton becomes inert immediately.

If the main ley mushroom growth is destroyed the skeletons controlled by it will perish.

Marsh Gnomes

by AMP

Description: Colonies of marsh gnomes can be found hiding deep in the reclusive swamps and wetlands of the world. These fey-touched offshoots of the dwarven familial tree bear little resemblance to their undermountain cousins, but most scholars agree that some connection must be assumed. Marsh gnomes range from 1' to 2' in height (~30-60 cm), often sport short, fuzzy beards and shroud themselves in attire which resembles their environment.



Despite their short stature, marsh gnomes are quite capable of defending their tribal lands: they are masters of guerilla warfare in the harsh swamp environment, and command strange fungal magics unique to their culture. Few civilized men have reason to make the effort to find them, but those that manage to befriend the diminutive masters of mushroom lore may reap surprising benefits from their efforts. Despite their seemingly primitive trappings, marsh gnomes have succeeded in bending mushrooms to their will, and live quite affluent and comfortable lives due to this symbiosis. Their living spaces are lit by the power of bioluminescent lichen, their homes are warmed with the heat from

controlled and cultivated decomposition, and their magics command shroomen, fungoids and other strange creatures of the fungal kingdom with ease.

Marsh gnome scout: Init: +3; Atk: weapon +2 (d4+1) melee/ranged; AC: 12; HD: 1d8; MV: 20' (-6 m); Act: 1d20 or 2d16 (dual wield); SP: set trap, hide, call shroomen (see below); SV: Fort +2 Ref +4 Will +0; AL: varies.

Set trap: There is a 50% chance that marsh gnome scouts have set traps in any area they are encountered in. There's one trap in the area for every two scouts present; traps either cause 2d6 damage unless a DC 10 Ref save is passed OR entangle target (-1d on action rolls, movement speed halved), specific trap type left to the Judge's discretion. Scouts will attempt to herd targets towards traps.

Hide: Marsh gnome scouts are skilled in hiding in swampy terrain. Any scout may use their action die roll a DC 10 check to hide from sight.

Call shroomen: 20% of marsh gnome scouting parties carry a special whistle which can be used to call shroomen (DCC rulebook pg. 426) to their aid. When used the whistle will summon 1d4 shroomen from the undergrowth, the shroomen appear in the next round of combat and aid the marsh gnomes as they can. The item is usable once per day.

Marsh gnome warrior: Init: +2; Atk: weapon +4 (d6+1) melee; AC: 16; HD: 1d10; MV: 20' (-6 m); Act: 1d20 or 2d16 (dual wield); SP: fungzerking (see below); SV: Fort +4 Ref +1 Will +2; AL: varies.

Fungzerking: When facing insurmountable odds, marsh gnome warriors are known to ingest a fungal concoction which causes them to fly into a berzerk rage. They gain +5 hit points, become immune to mental effects and pain, and gain a +2 to all attack and damage rolls for 1 turn. After the effect fades they drop down unconscious, and may perish to their wounds as the temporary hit points fade.

Marsh gnome mouldsinger: Init: +0; Atk: weapon +0 (d3) melee/ranged or fungal bolt +5 (special, see below); AC: 12; HD: 1d6; MV: 20' (-6 m); Act: 1d20; SP: summon aid 1/day, fungal bolt 3/day (see below); SV: Fort +1 Ref +3 Will +3; AL: varies.

Summon aid: Using the secret songs of the marsh, the mouldsinger can enlist the aid of fungal creatures. They summon 2d4 shroomen (DCC rulebook pg. 426) from the undergrowth, which appear the following turn and aid the marsh gnomes as they can. Alternately, should the Judge so desire, they may summon any of the fungal monsters listed in this document.

Fungal bolt: Invoking the sporelicious powers bestowed upon them by the strange fungi they ingest daily, the mouldsinger screams a fungal bolt into being. The target must roll a DC 12 Will save: failure indicates that they suffer 1d4+2 points of damage, and success simply means that they are dazed for a round (-4 to all actions, move at half speed).

Mycellebra

by AMP

Description: Mycellebra is a unique fungal condition, which targets the brains of its victims. Also known as the messiah mushroom, the fungus infects the cerebrum via inhaled spores, and grows its mycelium along the neural pathways of its host.

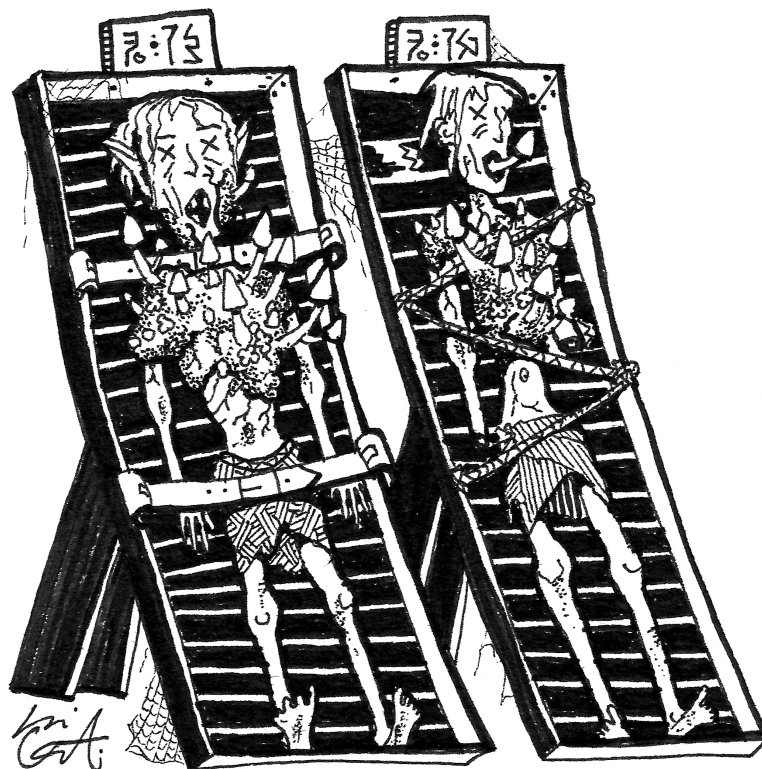
Initial infection is experienced as mild flu-like symptoms as the spores irritate mucous membranes, but with time the effect becomes drastically more pronounced. The mycelium excites the victims brain, increasing their social ability and awareness (effectively raising the victims Personality score to 18). It also causes deific visions, euphoria and an unremitting desire to share this joy with others. Victims often interpret these delusions as divine visitation, or even a deep understanding and oneness

with a god. Unfortunately they are often very successful in their proselytization, as the fungus also mutates their body to exude powerful pheromones (creatures of the same species must succeed in a DC 12 Will save to resist infatuation with victim).

The final propagation stage of the mushroom is triggered when the host has gathered a large enough following to their herd. The number of potential victims usually ranges up from a half dozen followers, with the most tragic cases encompassing whole villages or city blocks. The infected host gathers their followers for an apparent religious event - often an orgy or a great laying of hands, as proximity to new hosts is critical to the fungus. At the height of this event the mushroom blooms, growing multicoloured toadstools out through the host's ears, eyes, nose and mouth. The growths then release spores, which infect the host's unwary followers and allow the fungus to continue its lifecycle anew.

If a victim is deprived of the company of their peers they become anxious, erratic and aggressive as the compulsive imperative of the fungus cannot be fulfilled. Due to the limitations of the mycellebra's lifecycle this is a sure way to kill the fungus, although when it dies the host is reduced to a mindless, drooling wreck (reduce host's maximum Intelligence and Personality scores to 3 if the fungus dies without propagating). This process can take up to a month of time.

After the mycellebra has bloomed the initial host usually perishes immediately, but some researchers claim to have witnessed such host's continuing in a strange state of fungal unlife. Travelers from far-off lands claim to have visited teeming cities of such hosts, where the fungus-ridden bodies of past messiahs propagate strange rituals to unknowable gods.



Mycellebra (infection): DC 15 Fort save to resist infection if spores are inhaled; after 1d7 days increase victim's Personality score to 18, victim starts suffering from a messiah complex and releasing pheromone spores to aid in gathering a herd (DC 12 Will save to resist infatuation, only effective on same species); victim attempts to gather a herd of potential victims for a propagation event (see above), if unsuccessful, within 1d5 weeks the fungus dies, reducing the victim's max. INT and PER to 3.

Mök

by Daniel J. Bishop

Description: Pronounced "mek", these small orange-brown shelf fungi are grow only on dead bodies, surviving long enough to consume flesh and bones before releasing their spores. Although they are sometimes found in the wild, most mök are now grown in captivity, nurtured in abattoir pits. Mök may be grown from any animal flesh, but sentient corpses produce superior mök, and human bodies produce the best.

A body about the size of an average human can grow 5 grams of ground and dried mök. Average mök is worth 1 gp per gram. Sentient-grown mök is worth 2 gp per gram. Mök grown from humans is worth 5 gp per gram.

Mök is an acquired taste, valuable only because of its rarity and the cost of producing it. Only the very wealthy can afford to consume it regularly, especially in its highest form.

An Orchard of Man-Shrooms

by AMP

"Twere the strangest thing I'd ever seen afore that day, or since!

We'd traveled for at least a week in the old dwarven mine-passages below the Needletop Mountains. Them's riddled with old prospectin' shafts an' abandoned veins. I'd learnt to know well my companions: a troupe of dwarfish miners and mountain men. Friendly enough, at least if you were the one picking up the tab. The expedition's goal was to find an underground passage through the mountains, so as to avoid the tolls set by the guild-merchants in Silvertown Pass.

On the ninth of travel the passage opened up into a cave. 'Twas not the queer glow of the lichen upon the rocks, nor the quiet whisp'rin sounds upon that scairt us. No! 'Twere the pale forms of men, stood amongst the rocks, as if frozen in place as they were going about their daily business.

We passed through the chamber, all quiet-like. The forms did not move to stop us, nor did they appear to notice us at all. One of my pers'nal bodyguards, a thick, brazen lad, tipped one over, despite the protestations of our underworld guides. The pale form struck the ground hard, and broke its head upon the rocks. It's insides appeared to be a mushy, porous substance, oozing with green fluids. Our dwarf guides took of fense to this, and only calmed once I vowed to dock the boy's pay.

We camped a few chambers yonder, and set guard as per the usual fashion. We'd had no incidents so far, apart fer the knocking so often heard in caves deep underground - kobolds, claimed the dwarfs, and spoke of it no further. But next morn brought a grisly misery upon our group: the brazen lad was found dead, with his head smashed. No guards were alerted in the night, and I knew the dwarfs to be a stout and honest folk, not prone to sleep when it is their turn to stand watch. Stranger still, the boy were surrounded by the pale mushroom-men from before, all still and motionless, but bearing the faces and postures of deep hatred and aggression. Not only that, but more of them seemed to fill the passage we'd traversed the previous day.

My guides hurried the rest of the expedition along quick-like, forbidding us to e'en touch the young man's remains. He'd been claimed by the many dangers of the mountain, and could not be saved."

- As told by Willem Gamut, merchant-caravaneer

Description: The man-shrooms are an odd occurrence, most often found in secluded and closed-off caves below great mountains. Most assume them to be simple arcano-natural facsimiles: as above, so below, even under the mountains men must grow. Man-shrooms appear as pale white mushroom growths resembling humans to the smallest detail. They consist of a fleshy, mushroom-like material, which oozes green goo when violated. In most man-shroom orchards both sexes are present, but to this day no child-shaped man-shrooms have ever been found.

Despite their stationary appearance man-shrooms would appear to move and act, albeit very slowly. Those who've investigated them say that there seems to be a weird logic to their positioning within an orchard: some appear to be engaged in unfathomable tasks, while others seem to be conversing with each other, or even showing affection to one another.

Other notable details are the bioluminescent lichens found in man-shroom orchards, and the odd whispering present in these caves.

For Judges: Man-shrooms are the extensions of a strange fungal sentience dwelling deep in the ground. The sentience imitates human shapes as the current dominant species, but understands little about mammalian affairs. It operates on a completely different time-scale from the fleeting existence of men, and thus its instruments appear to move very slowly if at all to the quickened eyes of humanoids.

Man-shroom orchards are safe for travel as long as the creatures are not disturbed. If a man-shroom is

injured or troubled, the fungus takes vengeance upon the offending individual, often in a slow but brutal manner. The man-shrooms track their target en masse and exact a reciprocal injury upon them, after which they recede back into their previous abodes. Of course, any further crimes committed while avoiding said justice continue the cycle, possibly including new targets into the vendetta.

Destroying a man-shroom is an easy task (no rolls required), and is often accomplished even accidentally. Avoiding the relentless hounding of a fungal sentience capable of incomprehensible patience is a different matter entirely, and targets often perish due to exhaustion before the slow-moving mushrooms find them.

The bioluminescent lichen found in man-shroom orchards is actually a way for the fungal intelligence to observe and control its instruments. The whispering is a part of its communication: a language so slow and complex that no mortal has ever learned to understand, let alone speak it. Should someone be able to slow down their own timescale to match that of the unnamed fungal sentience rapport might however be made, and secrets of the deep earth learned from one who surely knows them intimately.

A Pot-bellied Grove

by Markus Marjomaa

"Take some more tea," the March Hare said to Alice, very earnestly.

"I've had nothing yet," Alice replied in an offended tone, "so I can't take more."

"You mean you can't take less," said the Hatter: "it's very easy to take more than nothing."

"Nobody asked your opinion," said Alice."

- Lewis Carroll, "Alice in Wonderland"

Description: Sometimes, by happenstance, an adventurer may perchance happen upon a pot-bellied grove of mushrooms, standing tall among the firs and the pines of the Deep Woods.

When a character intentionally ingests the raw flesh or unwarily inhales the spores upon the wind, they must make (if indeed wishing to resist) a DC 16 Will save. Failure in this save results in a trip lasting 1d5 hours, accompanied by the most wondrous special effects detailed below.

Grand Teapot Mushroom effects: Roll 1d7 modified by Luck and consult the list below:

(0 or less) Poisoned!: Make a DC 19 Fort save or die. Your cadaver is instantly consumed and turns into a giant mushroom. Party members can quest for your soul in the afterworld and if successful, you may return to life in a random new body.

(1) Visions of Mushroom Hell: An infernal, sanity-shaking trip decreases your INT by 1d3, but increases your PER by the same amount. Some find drooling affable.

(2) Mycellic dreamscapes: You understand the deep interconnectedness of all things. Actually, this may just be a misinterpreted echo of the mycelial network, but your personality has changed anyway. Alignment may shift one step from the current, your sexual preference may change or whatever you and the Judge decide as appropriate.

(3) A change in perspective: It's not the mushrooms that are huge, it's you who are tiny! Strangely, you find yourself regaining consciousness amidst normal-sized fungi and that you have shrunk to a height of a mere inch. Your gear has followed suit. Has this affected the rest of the party in some way, is this condition permanent, are there really no giant mushrooms in existence but your shrinkage occurred before you came under their influence?

These and other such questions naturally ought to be answered by the player(s) and the Judge.

(4) Posterior aggrandizement: No other apparent effect, save somehow your bum just permanently grew 1d100% bigger.

(5) The Master Mushroom: You have the shaking revelation that the mushrooms are all controlled by one gargantuan lorchel-like Bosshroom, residing somewhere deep underground. You suspect it may harbour ulterior motives, and so must be (roll 1d3): (1) destroyed; (2) left alone; (3) worshipped;

(6) The Fungspiracy!: You become convinced that the giant fungi secretly plan to first deforest and then multiply themselves to cover the entire world. This conspiracy should be (roll 1d3): (1) stopped; (2) ignored; (3) aided. Anyway, the trip is rather nice and you heal 1 HD if injured.

(7) Caterpillar's Communal: The mushroom causing your trip is riddled with worms and you enter into a visionary discourse with them. The helminths recognise you as a spiritual and moral peer, granting you the spell *Worm Charm* (as *Snake Charm*, DCC rulebook pg. 280)), which may be cast as per the cleric rules once per day. Obviously, small ordinary worms will probably be of little practical help, so hopefully you run into larger ones... You are now also officially entitled to use the epithet "Worm-friend".

(8 or more) Fungal meditations: You promptly experience being spirited away far underground into a Shroomaroom i.e. fungal meditation chamber, where you learn much about yourself. A random attribute increases by one.



The Rhizomorph

by Jen Brinkman

Description: When the harvest moon rises in Autumn, honey mushrooms bloom everywhere in the shrouded forest—even on the trees. Their flat caps, light-colored with a dark “target” in the center, are easy prey for dull creatures.

But the fungi are not the trap. They’re the bait.

The real threat is the rhizomorph, the threadlike network of roots just below the topsoil.

A rhizomorph patch may be encountered as a flat 20’ entity covering a forest floor. It may also be spread along 20’ of a wooded path, submerged beneath the tree bark, connecting the honey mushrooms from one oak to another. (The latter is especially dangerous for creatures who think hiding under a tree is beneficial.)

Resembling a mass of tangled shoestrings, the rhizomorph connects the mushrooms via a mesh-like conduit, creating a single, spreading organism throughout the undergrowth. The branched, tubular filaments are dormant for three seasons, absorbing nutrients and moisture for 9 to 10 months before awakening to extend the bullseye mushrooms, which

lure woodland creatures of all types to their doom. The thin, cordlike branches hold a target in place while the mushrooms spout a suffocating toxin. Once expired, the flesh of the creature is unharmed and untainted—a boon to any beings seeking food in colder months. Consumption of the dead creature’s organs, however, is irreversibly fatal.

Educated farmers and forest-dwellers recognize the bloom of the caps as a time of bounty. Since a summer without rain results in fewer lures, some sacrifice their own water rations to feed the soil housing the rhizomorph, in insurance for their fall bounty.

It is possible to eradicate patches of rhizomorph, but this is only advised if it has grown into an inconvenience... and should only be attempted during its dormant period.

Rhizomorph (20’ patch): Init: +4; Atk: entangle +6 melee (1 point plus immobilized), poison fog (special), or spontaneous bloom +2 ranged (special); AC: 16; HD: 8d10; HP: 56; MV 0’ or 5’ underground; Act: 1d20; SP: vulnerable to fire and sonic attacks (+1d damage); entangle, poison fog, spontaneous bloom, dormant (see below); SV: Fort +3, Ref -1, Will +2; AL: N.

Entangle: Rhizomorphs may attack as a swarm (one attack roll against all targets standing within a 20’ patch of cordlike filaments) as an action. Any targets entangled take 1 point of damage and must make a DC 15 Ref save or be immobilized for 2d3 rounds.

Poison fog: Once a target is entangled, the attached mushrooms emit a cloud of spores onto the target (additional attack, 1d16). If the target is an air-breathing creature (whether lungs or gills), they must succeed in a DC 18 Fort save or endure 1d8 points of damage as their airways are seared closed. If they succeed in this Fort save for 3 consecutive rounds on their initiative, they may make an immediate DC 12 Strength or Agility check to break free of the

entanglement. The fog is only emitted onto ensnared targets.

Spontaneous bloom: A single spore is fired toward a potential target. If the attack is successful, a honey mushroom immediately blooms upon the surface of the target, with spider-silk-thin filaments rapidly spreading over the target. If humanoid-sized, the target becomes completely encased in the new growth

of rhizomorph within 5 rounds, thereby suffocating the target, unless the mushroom and/or fibers are exposed to fire or attacked by others (15 hp; add 2 to the target's AC to avoid damaging the creature becoming cocooned).

Vulnerabilities: When exposed to fire or a sonic attack—both terrorizing instances within a forest system—the root system shrivels with surprising alacrity. The rhizomorph suffers +1d of damage from fire or sonic effects.

Rootarelle

by Jarkko Salow

Description: The rootarelle is closely related to the brancherelle, an orange slime mold which preys on small game. However, the rootarelle is much more dangerous: it does not care for small prizes such as birds and bats, but rather goes after big game!

Rootarelle nestles under and on the roots of big trees, slowly pushing the tree upward. The tree is then used as a trap to crush and catch larger game such as moose, deer and unwary humanoids. The rootarelle is not picky and the range of prey includes any creature of sufficient size.

The mycelium of the rootarelle acts as a kind of nervous system, finely attuned to sensing changes in pressure on the ground above it. The mushroom uses these vibrations to pinpoint the location of its prey,

and tips the tree on its hapless victims, crushing them to a pulp. The violent uprooting of the tree also releases spore colonies from under the roots creating a spore cloud which then propagates the species. As the carcass of the prey rots under the trunk it provides the rootarelle valuable nutrients, which are absorbed through the mycelium and ultimately used to expand the mushroom's hunting grounds. Elder members of the species are known to cover many miles of woodland floor, and experienced hunters speak of whole forests infected by the fungus.

The rootarelle is mainly found in older forests as it prefers large, aged trees to set its traps. It can be recognised by the unnatural malformation it causes on the stem of the tree. The bloated and bulbous growth usually covers the roots of the tree.

The rootarelle is relatively well known by experienced hunters, and anyone who frequents forests because of their occupation should at least have heard of them. Professional woodsmen fear them and not just because of their devious hunting strategy: the rootarelle can spoil a hunting ground, killing game and making the forest too dangerous to enter. Usually the only answer is to burn down the infected region. Adventurers who are not accustomed to traveling in forests better be careful or they might find themselves standing in the middle of what can only be called a mushroom minefield!

Rootarelle (trap): DC 10 check to spot growth, DC 12 forestry check to recognize trap; triggered when a human-sized (or larger) creature passes within 1d4x10' (1d4x~3m), area radius depends on tree size; when triggered, tree is violently uprooted and falls on target; DC 16 Ref save to avoid, failure causes 2d6/3d6/4d6 points of damage (depending on tree size) and pins the target, release requires a DC 10/15/20 STR check (depending on tree size).

Songfleece

by AMP

Description: Songfleece is a species of fungus which uses soundwaves to propagate itself and grows to expand aggressively if the right sonic frequencies are applied to it. Silence kills the growth, at which point it hardens to a toughness equaling that of steel. Also known as bardic mould, the mould is an important survival tool for species living in environments which allow limited access to hardened materials. Troglodytes, lizardmen and marsh gnomes are all known to use songfleece to produce items of surprising craftsmanship and hardness.

The process of mouldsong is as follows. First, an approximate effigy of the desired item is created from whatever soft materials are available. The effigy is then painted with a nutrient liquid, and set into a patch of bard mould. The mouldsinger then begins the process of coaxing the fungus to grow on the item. This can take the form of soft murmuring, wild ululation or even guttural growls: it seems that different species of bardic mould exist, and respond to varying frequencies of sound. When the mould has completely covered the form of the desired item it is taken away to be treated with silence. When deprived of any type of sound the mould eventually dies and hardens around the effigy, forming the desired item. The silent treatment is often the most difficult part of the process, as the marshy, wet environments required by the mould are often full of natural sounds and complete silence is hard to achieve.

Objects generated in such a fashion are quite tough and serviceable, although very light when compared to those created via more traditional crafts. The texture of such objects ranges from muted greys to light pastel shades, and the surface of the dead bard mould is rough to the touch. Skilled mouldsingers can produce strange masterpieces of craftsmanship,

although engaging their services often requires traveling to the unpleasant and primitive locales these virtuosos call home.

In addition to this conventional use of songfleece there is a more visceral way to employ the services of the fungus. Sometimes, when faced with great tragedy, members of tribes which employ songfleece may willingly allow the fungus to cover their own bodies. This is usually done as part of a berserk ritual: the fungus forms a symbiotic bond with its carrier, numbing pain and granting a regenerative effect. Individuals thus covered must keep causing sound at all times, lest the fungus consume them. War parties are formed around such doomed heroes, and their tribesmen follow them until their fate has been avenged.

Songfleece (material): Halve armor check penalty, reduce speed penalty by 5', only usable for solid armor types (shields, banded mail or heavier) OR weapons relying on weight (clubs, axes etc.) have damage reduced by -1d; item is very light; item value x10.

Songfleece (infection): must be covered in nutrient liquid and be introduced to a patch of live songfleece, in these conditions infection is automatic; as long as causing sound, the host regenerates 1 HD of damage each round and is immune to pain effects; if host spends a round in silence the mould begins to go into hibernation and the host may expire, complete silence kills the fungus and the host.

Sporehound

by AMP

Description: Sporehounds are lithe, canine beasts which have evolved to prey upon the spores of fungi of all types. Their mouths have grown baleens instead of teeth, and are used to filter the spores and

other small particles from the air. In addition to this the scent-organs of sporehounds are overgrown, giving their snouts a malformed, tuberous appearance. The forelimbs of these dog-like creatures sport long, sharp claws, equally suitable for self-defense and digging out hidden fungal treasures. Sporehounds are entirely immune to all toxins and ill-effects from fungal sources, which makes their blood a desirable alchemical component for the creation of antitoxins.

Sporehounds are found in locations where fungus proliferates. They jealously guard their hunting grounds from invaders. It could be said that they live in a symbiotic relationship with their source of sustenance, as a pack of sporehounds is more than capable of protecting an area where food is abundant, thus allowing the fungus they consume to expand unhindered. The people inhabiting these areas often domesticate sporehounds for use as watchdogs, as the fiercely territorial canines are quite tamable.

Sporehound: Init: +4; Atk: claws +3 (2d4+2) melee; AC: 13; HD: 2d8; MV: 40' (-12 m); Act: 1d20; SP: predator senses, immunity to fungal effects (see below); SV: Fort +3 Ref +3 Will +0; AL: varies.

Predator senses: Infravision 60', can track things by smell.

Immunity to fungal effects: Sporehounds are entirely immune to all fungal effects, including poisons, spores and such.

Trodun

by Daniel J. Bishop

Description: The trodun are a race of pyramid-shaped puffball-like fungal creatures, which move by sliding along on gentle puffs of air. Although they have no apparent sensory organs, they seem to be aware of everything within 500 feet of them, and

their behavior indicates that they can understand any language spoken within that range. It may be that their strange senses perform the translation for them. Within this range, they are aware of hidden, invisible, and even non-corporeal beings and objects.

A trodun can shoot a stream of spores at any target within 100'. In addition to damage, the target must succeed in a DC 13 Fort save or roll 1d7: (1) target is poisoned (1d5 damage, plus DC 13 Fort save or take 1d4 points of temporary Stamina damage); (2) target is blinded for 1d3 rounds; (3) for the next 1d3 rounds, target is at -1d to all Action Dice; (4) target must succeed in a DC 10 Will save to take any action for the next 1d5 rounds; (5) target is poisoned (1d3 temporary Agility damage and DC 12 Will save or take 1d5 temporary Personality damage); (6) target must succeed in a DC 5 Strength check or be knocked prone; or (7) target discovers spores heal 1d3 damage.

If a trodun is reduced to 0 HP, it explodes, causing 1d7 damage to all targets within 10'. Affected targets must succeed in a DC 20 Fort save or be affected by spores (as above).

Finally, what motivates the trodun is unknown, and perhaps unknowable, as even telepathic communication reveals nothing. When trodun are encountered, roll 1d5: (1) Helpful, will comply with requests unless attacked; (2) Curious, will follow PCs until outdistanced, rerolling reaction each turn; (3-4) Neutral, will take no actions unless attacked; or (5) Hostile, immediately attacks.

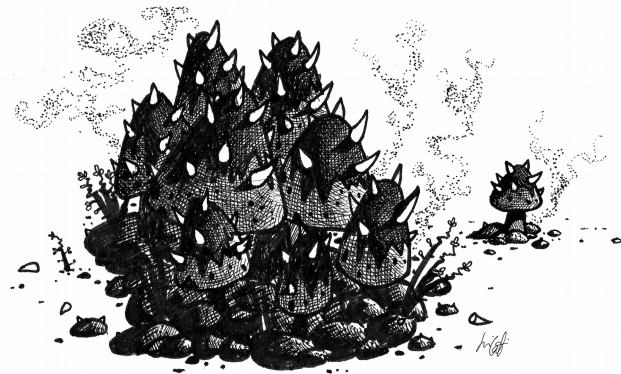
What trodun value or consume is unknown.

Trodun: Init: +0; Atk: spore stream +2 ranged (1d3 plus spores); AC: 10; HD: 1d8; MV 20'; Act: 1d20; SP: spores, strange senses, death throes (explode), unknowable motives (see above); SV: Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +3; AL: N.

Whipcord Queen

by Ville Rakkila

Description: Whipcord queens (also known as bloodstools) are carnivorous fungi found in damp caves and the shores of underground lakes and rivers. An adult whipcord queen consists of a pale main body from which a network of underground mycelium spreads some 100' (~30 meters) in all directions. At the fringes of this web, stiff spikes and hooks protrude from the earth, ready to whip around anyone stepping on them. Attempts to wrench free signal the main body to rush in and swallow the prey into its acidic maw.



Whipcord queen: Init: +1; Atk: whipcord web +8 trap (1d3, Fort sv DC 20 or cannot move) or swallow +6 melee (1d12 plus acidic maw, see below); AC: 14; HD: 8d8; MV: 20' or swallow rush (see below); Act: 1d20; SP: acidic maw (Fort save DC20 or 2d8 damage, fragile items are dissolved), swallow rush (the main body's MV is 60' when rushing towards a bound prey); SV: Fort +8 Ref -8, Will +0; AL N

Yonder Mush-Rooms of the Marsh Gnomes

by AMP

Description: This is a mini-adventure, focusing on open world exploration and utilizing the previously

described fungi and creatures. It culminates in an exploration of a village of marsh gnomes.

The adventure relies on the Judge's ability to chain events together and create a fitting narrative for the group. The content should be fitting for use for levels 0-5, although some of the encounters listed may be quite lethal for characters of lower levels. Alternately, the adventure may be ran in reverse, as an escape funnel starting from the mush-rooms at the middle of the marsh gnome village.

Getting the players involved: At the center of Miremarsh Swamp sits a marsh gnome village. These gnomes are known to be masters of the fungal arts, and every so often foolhardy traders brave the dangers of the swamp in order to do business with the diminutive folk of the Swamp. It takes roughly a week of wet foot-slogging to traverse the marshlands and no roads lead to the village.

There are many possible motivations for player characters to want to visit the marsh gnome village. Perhaps they are commissioned to fetch a suit of songfleece plate mail for a local lord, or maybe they must brave the perils of the marsh to acquire a fungus-based medicine for their village. Marsh gnomes are also famous for their arcane skill with fungal magic, which should motivate any wizards among their number. Or perhaps a rich merchant has vanished on the way to the marsh gnome village, and the cut-throat group simply follows on their trail, eager to re-appropriate the burghers lost coffers.

Ultimately, the motivation for the trip is left up to the Judge, who surely must be uniquely capable of discerning the desires of their players.

Area 1 – Miremarsh Swamp

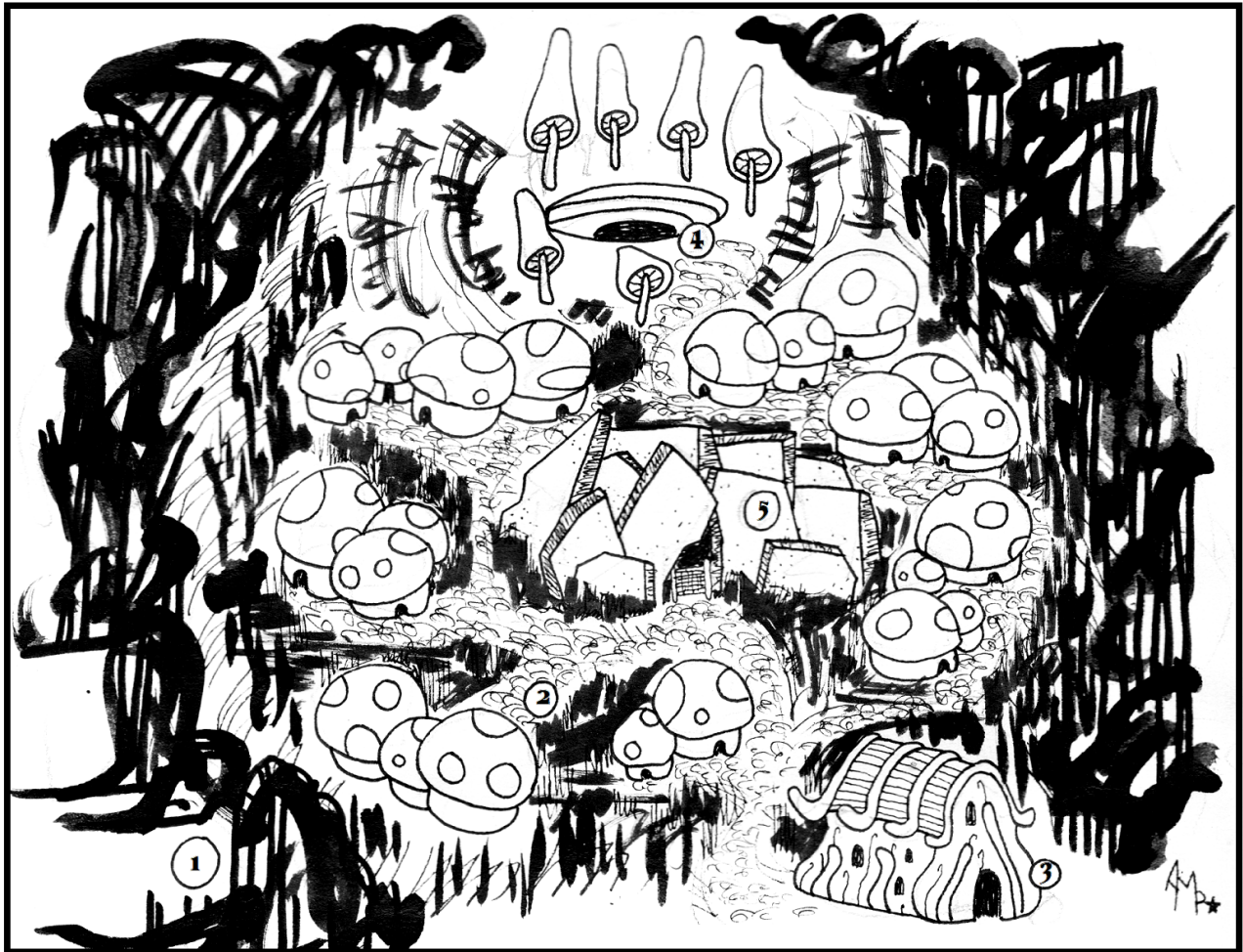
The first series of challenges along the journey are the environmental hazards in the swamp. It takes roughly a week of travel to reach the marsh gnome

village, and during this week even the best woodsmen are sure to encounter something dangerous and strange. Depending on time constraints and desired difficulty the Judge should roll 3-7 times on Table B and apply the results as encounters on the trail. The author suggests doing this in advance instead of during play, in order to expedite the process.

Encounters are not described in extensive detail, and it is up to the Judge to seed locations with suitable treasure (if any). References are given for content found outside of this document, references to this document are in *course*.

Table B – Marsh Encounters	
D16	Encounter
1	A war party of 2d4 troglodytes (DCC rulebook pg. 429); two troglodytes are infected by <i>songfleece</i> . The group is headed towards the marsh gnome village for vengeance.
2	The corpse of a marsh gnome chieftain, clad in <i>songfleece plate mail</i> and grasping a broken tribal blade. The corpse is surrounded by dead troglodytes.
3	A faerie ring of <i>bloomball mushrooms</i> . A sentient brood of spiders (as insect swarm, DCC rulebook pg. 419) lurks nearby, and the veil to the Elfland is thin here.
4	A partially submerged cavern guarded by 2d4 <i>fungus zombies</i> and 1d6 <i>fungus skeletons</i> ; the cavern is the site of a <i>ley mushroom infestation</i> .
5	An abandoned cavern, <i>formerly the site of a ley mushroom infestation</i> . It is obvious that something large has ripped itself free from the central mushroom growth.
6	<i>Marsh gnome scouting party</i> , 2d8 in number. The gnomes are content to trail the adventurers unless they appear to be

Table B – Marsh Encounters	
	hostile or dangerous to the village at the heart of the swamp
7	A fungal cult, consisting of 2d6 peasants (DCC rulebook pg. 434) and a messianic madman (as berserker, DCC rulebook pg. 433) infected with <i>mycellebra</i> . The cult is preparing for “Ascension” among some ruins and invites the party to join.
8	The remains of a previous merchant caravan; the carcasses are covered in <i>mök</i> .
9	A craggy elevation among the mires, with a deep pit in the middle. The area is full of silent <i>man-shrooms</i> .
10	<i>A grove of tall, pot-bellied mushrooms</i> . The air smells sweetly of hidden knowledge and danger.
11	An area covered in bright, enticing honey mushrooms. Characters of suitable occupations may recognize the <i>rhizomorph</i> growing here.
12	A tall tree has fallen here, pinning an elk carcass under it. The carcass has long since turned into a skeleton. Perceptive travelers note strange deformities on the trees nearby; suitable occupations may recognize the <i>rootarelle</i> infestation in the area.
13	A pack of 2d6 <i>sporehounds</i> , defending their territory.
14	A group of 1d7 trodun, quietly floating through the marshlands.
15	A shallow cavern, serving as the home of a <i>whipcord queen</i> .
16	An area with useful fungi! Judges are encouraged to come up with their own, or use the examples described in <i>Marigold’s Wagon of Wondrous Herbs</i> (available here on KitN).



Map 1: Marsh Gnome Village

Area 2 – Marsh Gnome Village

Set at the center of Miremarsh Swamp, built around a craggy mound, sits the village of the marsh gnomes. The diminutive folk live in strange fungal huts which seem to have simply sprouted from the ground. The marsh gnomes are secretive, but the current chieftain has allowed trade with outsiders so the characters are tolerated, if not welcomed. There are roughly a 100 marsh gnomes at the village, with more living in the nearby woodlands.

Due to the small stature of their hosts the characters are unlikely to be able to gain access to marsh gnome homes: anyone but halflings are simply too big to fit. Outsiders are housed in a specially built tavern on the south side of the village. There are three main locations of interest for adventurers in the village

itself: the merchant tavern, the mushroom huts within the mound at the center of the village, and the sacrificial pond on the north side of the clearing.

Depending on the group's motivations the stay in the village may be brief and easy or perilous and difficult. Characters simply wishing to trade with the gnomes are unlikely to have to leave the merchant tavern, but those searching for missing friends, fungal secrets or arcane lore may have to brave the restricted sections of the village. Judge's wishing to seed discord and conflict should heavily hint towards the jealous secrecy with which the marsh gnomes guard the mushroom gardens within the central mound, as that is where the direst revelations lie.

Area 3 – Merchant Tavern

The merchant tavern is a strange combination of marsh gnome fungal architecture and more conventional building methods. It is as if a tavern was described to the gnomes and they simply did their best to accommodate the needs of their visitors. All of the usual rooms and amenities are available, but the building materials and structures are obviously fungal in nature. The building seems to be alive on its own right, and may unnerve unaccustomed travelers.

All commerce with outsiders is done in the merchant tavern, orchestrated by a glib and wily marsh gnome called Sponge-Eye. He is an experienced haggler, and has adopted outsider customs. Knowledgeable fungophiles may suspect him to be the carrier of a controlled infection of *mycellebra*, such is the force of his charisma.

Below is a list of potential items available for purchase or barter from Sponge-Eye's stores.

- *Songfleece weapons and armor*: These will be made to fit, as the gear made for marsh gnome use is much too small for other races.
- *Herbs and fungus*: Magical, mundane or simply delicious; Judges should use the mushrooms described in this document and the lists previously published on KitN (available [here](#)).
- *Mök*: The decadent delicacy comes in many forms, and is usually what outsiders desire from the marsh gnome tradesman.
- *Trained sporehounds*: The animals are quite rare and desired due to their keen fungal senses and ferocious loyalty.
- *Fungal magic items*: At Judge's discretion Sponge-Eye may offer many wondrous items, weapons and armor, all created through the power of FUNGUS. These

should all be designed with hefty downsides or limitations.

Area 4 – Sacrificial Pond

At every midday and every midnight most of the marsh gnomes gather at the sacrificial pond at the north side of the village. Their wild, melodious ululations echo all around the area in an eerie chorus of worship, but no outsiders are allowed nearby during this time.

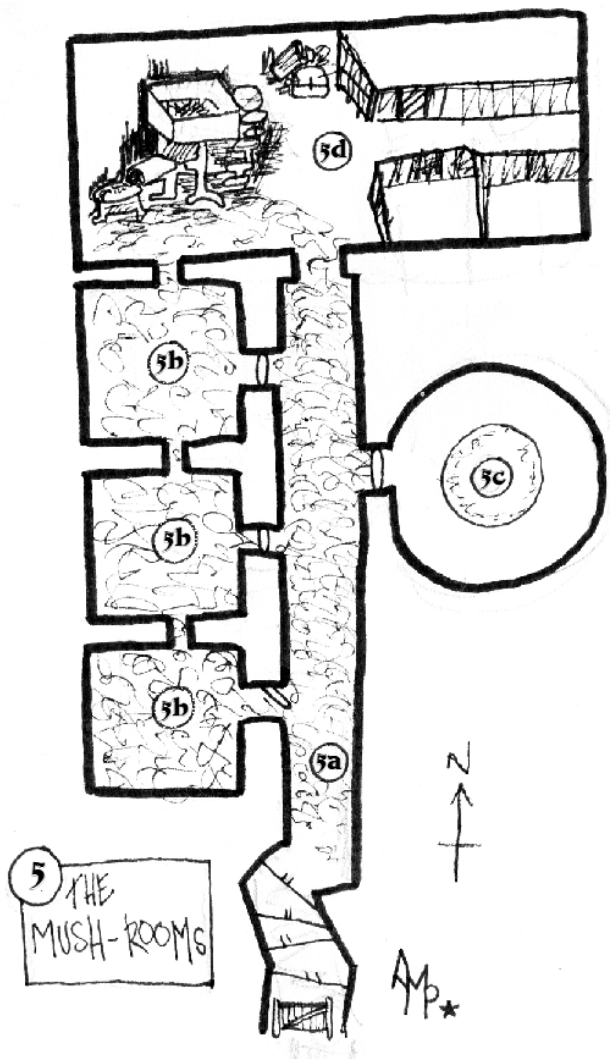
The pond is surrounded by tall, purple capped mushrooms, which constantly weep bioluminescent spores into the air. Tough, earthen steps lead down to the still, deep water.

Underwater awaits a many brained para-humanoid demigod. The rituals of the marsh gnomes imprison this alien power, siphoning its magic for their own ends. Releasing the creature would surely spell doom to the tribe of marsh gnomes, but possibly to the world at large as well. Details of such an event are left to the Judge's discretion, but suitably powerful magically inclined characters may certainly be drawn to the call of the fungal patron.

Area 5 – The Mush-Rooms

The mound at the center of the village is craggy pile of odd, spongy rock. Dwarves and occupations versed in construction are easily convinced that the structure is not entirely natural, but rather the remains of a tall building, now fallen into ruin.

The marsh gnomes guard the only entrance underground jealously, and the gates are constantly busy with workers going in and out of the complex. The only times when outsiders might gain entry are when the village gathers to the sacrificial pond: only a skeleton crew of marsh gnome warriors guard the area at these times. There are always at least 2d3 marsh gnome warriors guarding the entrance gate leading to area 5a.



Map 2: The Mush-Rooms

All of the areas within the mush-rooms are lit by floating bloomball lanterns unless otherwise noted.

5a – Hallway

After the initial craggy steps down into the musty gloom the hallway opens up into a symmetrical passage. The walls and the ceiling are built from a strange, spongy rock, and no seams are visible anywhere.

The passage is roughly 100' (~30 m) long, 10' (~3 m) and 10' high. The ground is covered in mulch, but the floor below the debris is the same odd stone material as the rest of the construction. At this point it should

be apparent to anyone that the marsh gnomes are likely not responsible for the construction.

There are three metal doors on the west wall, one larger metal door on the east wall, and a high open passageway at the northern end. The metal doors are heavy, and there's no apparent way to open them, but the first door on the western wall appears to have rusted open.

The doors are riveted and rusted, and appear ancient. Opening one of the closed apertures requires either a difficult Strength check (DC 20), or singing the correct note into a mesh-covered circular disk found on each doors (DC 18 skill check for suitable occupations).

During active hours the passageway is full of busy marsh gnomes and remaining unnoticed is nigh impossible. When the village is focused on ritual prayer the hallway is empty.

5b – Mush-Rooms

The room reeks of spores, mulch and degrading biomass. The floor is soft, as the layer of mulch seems to be much deeper here.

The mush-rooms are 30'x30' (~10 m x 10 m), each of them are symmetrical. This is where the marsh gnomes grow their fare: the floor is covered in mulch and is used in the cultivation of all sorts of fungi, and the walls have shelving full of the same. The rooms are connected with each other and area 5d by small passages built for use by marsh gnomes (human sized characters must squeeze through).

Any fungus purchasable from Sponge-Eye can be found here. The northernmost room is used solely for the cultivation of mök, and as such is quite gruesome: the mulch on the ground is obviously mixed with ground flesh and bone, and there are a number of humanoid corpses set along the shelves,

used as growth-beds for the higher grades of the disgusting delicacy.

These rooms are patrolled by 2d4 sporehounds at all times. During busy hours marsh gnomes move from room to room, delicately caring for the mysterious growths among the mulch.

5c - Room of Song

The round, domed chamber is large enough to have hosted the negotiations of the noble and the bold in some vaunted past. Now the central dais of the room is covered in strange, pinkish fluff. Even the most silent sounds seem to reverberate in the air here.

This room is dedicated for the secret rituals to create songfleece items. The room's unique acoustics make it perfect for the purpose of the ritual, and the great patch of songfleece has gained a sort of strange sentience on its own. Should someone touch the fungus while loud sounds are present they must roll a DC 12 Ref save or become infected by songfleece.

There is always at least one mouldsinger present here, and the room is very busy during active hours.

5d - The Hall of the Mush-Machine

This large hangar is dominated by a massive, rusted machine. Obviously cobbled together from the remnants of something else, the machine resembles a hellish meat grinder. Stairs of fungal manufacture lead up to the great funnel atop the grinder, and a mushy glop of flesh and mulch drips into a great vat on the floor. On the eastern side of the hall are great pens and cages, holding ragged humanoid forms and starving animals.

The marsh gnomes have used their fungal cunning to build a the great meat grinder, for use in assistance of their mushroom farms to the south. It is quite monstrous in appearance, and player characters are likely to be wary but intrigued by the contraption.

The machine is inert, although its visceral purpose makes it rather horrible.

A mouldering pile of equipment lays forgotten along the north wall of the space; Judges should feel free to decide the details of this loot stash as suits their purpose with this adventure.

The cages on the eastern side of the room hold a number of humanoid and animal captives. Their destiny is to become fungus feed, unless someone intervenes. This is a perfect location to discover lost merchants or imperiled nobles, or a natural starting point for a marshy funnel adventure.

The room is also home to the leaders of the sporehound pack (double the stats described above, apart for attack damage): the alpha and the breeding female, along with 1d4 sporehounds and 2d4 sporehound pups.
