

# HORRIFIC HERBARIUM

**B**ards oft sing about the trials of adventurers as they face off against man and beast alike. Bloodthirsty creatures of this world and others fill their songs, but what of the spaces in between? Much of an adventurer's time is spent outdoors, travelling from one place to another, and those that dare venture off the beaten path often find themselves threatened by those overlooked enemies: plants. This tome aims to educate the prudent adventurer on some of the more sinister plants they may encounter on their travels. Though these foes may not be sentient, they still pose a risk, and thou would be a fool to disregard them.

## SEEDS OF CHAOS

As adventurers move through campaigns, they are more than likely going to be encountering more than a few wilderness areas. This supplement will help DMs populate these areas in between cities, ruins, and dungeons with plant life that will make players think twice about traipsing through them. These plants pose an especially potent risk for survival campaigns, where characters are constantly interacting with the natural world.

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### VENGWEED

Woe to the traveller that tramples a vengeweeder plant. Vengeweeder depends on animals to deposit its seeds across the landscape, but its method of deposition is more sinister than other animal-dispersed plants. Close examination of a vengeweeder stem will reveal long, solid spines hidden under the upper layer of herbaceous material. When trampled, vengeweeder bursts these spines through the stem, depositing its seeds through their tips into whatever has trampled it.

**Identification:** A tall plant that can stand 8 feet tall at its maximum. It bears several whorled, spade-shaped leaves up the stem and is topped with a simple 7-petaled red flower.

**Mechanics:** A creature that breaks a vengeweeder plant must make a DC 15 dexterity saving throw, taking 2d6 piercing damage on a fail or half on a success. A creature that fails its save will have the vengeweeder seeds deposited into its body. Considered a disease, vengeweeder parasitism causes fatigue and sharp pain. A creature under the effects of vengeweeder parasitism will have both its speed and hit point maximum halved until the disease is cured or after 14 days, when the seeds drop out naturally as seedlings.

Inspecting a vengeweeder wound that is infected with seeds will show small green sprouts coming from it after 7 days. Nonmagically curing the disease requires a successful DC17 Medicine check.

### LIGHTWOOD

Most trees have some sort of adaptation to make the ground around them less hospitable for competing species. The lightwood tree is one such an organism. Though the pale white light cast to the forest floor by the underside of its leaves may appear to be a haven to travelers – especially those lost in a dark forest – it is really anything but. The light cast by the undersides of the leaves has a burning effect on organic material, preventing anything from growing beneath it and harming anything that wanders into the spotlight.

**Identification:** A relatively short tree with smooth, white bark and incredibly large leaves (10-25 feet in diameter, depending on the age of the tree) that cast pale light below them. Lightwoods always grow in the middle of clearings (often ones they have created themselves) or in large groves, accompanied by other lightwoods.

**Mechanics:** A creature in the light of a lightwood tree must succeed on a DC 15 constitution saving throw or take 3d10 acid damage, as the magical light dissolves their flesh.

### NOXIOUS ELM

The Noxious Elm is harmless to casual enjoyers of nature. Outdoorsmen and unlucky adventurers, however, become acquainted with this tree under ill circumstances. When burned, the wood of the Noxious Elm emits smoke that is toxic to living creatures. Inhaling and coming into contact with the gas will cause the eyes to well up, blurring vision. The gas itself causes no pain but will sap the strength and leave the creature feeling noticeably weaker.

**Identification:** Bearing the deeply toothed leaves characteristic of elms, the noxious elm can be safely identified by its bark pattern, which bears wider grooves that are nearly ovoid in shape. Keen observers of the noxious elm will notice a distinct lack of activity in the tree: no bugs live under its bark, no woodpeckers dig into it, no bats hang from its upper branches. This is because the elm's sap is toxic to small creatures in large amounts, though its effects are much more potent when exposed to extreme heat.

**Mechanics:** Creatures within 15 feet of a burning noxious elm log or tree take 2d10 points of poison damage each turn and are blinded until they leave the radius. Creatures in this radius also must succeed on a DC13 constitution saving throw or have their strength score reduced by 5 for 1d6 hours.

## BANE BERRY

Brightly coloured and easily noticed against a green backdrop, the white or red berries of the baneberry plant (also called Doll's Eye) appear to be large, sweet morsels. Eating a single baneberry causes intense confusion and visual hallucinations, as well as physical pain. Eating enough baneberries spells certain and painful death by shutting down the creature's liver.

**Identification:** A small, low-lying plant, baneberry is distinguished by its large upright berries that can be either white or red, depending on location.

**Mechanics:** A creature that ingests the baneberry must succeed on a DC 18 constitution saving throw or take 3d10 poison damage and come under the effect of the Confusion spell (though the effect is considered a nonmagical poison and not a spell effect). A success on this saving throw halves the damage and does not confuse the creature. Ingesting 6 or more baneberries will kill a creature within an hour with no saving throw.

## POISON PARSNIP

This plant is known to take over fields and is particularly dangerous to careless adventurers. Contact with the oils in the stem of this plant cause severe burns that are activated in the sun.

**Identification:** Poison parsnip is a fast-growing weed that blooms in the mid-summer. It typically reaches heights of about 6 feet. It has roughly maple-shaped leaves with rounded teeth, and blooms with a crown of yellow flowers.

**Mechanics:** A creature that encounters poison parsnip has a 50% chance of contacting the oil. The next time that creature steps into direct sunlight, if it has not washed off the oil, it will take 2d6 fire damage.

## GIANT HOGWEED

A plant that resembles a seven-plus foot tall poison parsnip plant, it is best avoided, as almost any contact will deposit the burning oil onto the skin. Contact with giant hogweed can easily be a deadly affliction.

**Identification:** Bearing the same body structure, leaf, and flower shape as poison parsnip, giant hogweed grows to be much thicker and taller, easily reaching between seven and ten feet tall.

**Mechanics:** Any creature that encounters giant hogweed will take 5d10 fire damage the next time they step into the sun, if they haven't washed the oil off. Washing the oil off takes one entire waterskin's worth of water and a DC12 medicine check to be done successfully.

## LIGHTEATER HAWTHORN

A large bush that is common in clearings and spots of open canopy, lighteater hawthorns are an incredibly light-demanding species, to the point that they have magically adapted to attract light to their leaves. They have also evolved to absorb a much wider spectrum of light, allowing them to draw energy from light sources other than the sun.

**Identification:** Identifying a lighteater hawthorn is incredibly simple: while actually viewing a living plant is nearly impossible, the presence of sudden patches of impenetrable darkness is an obvious giveaway for the presence of one. Inspecting it through means other than sight will reveal it to be a bush typically around 5 feet tall, with thin spade-shaped leaves and gnarled branches characterized by 3-5 inch spines topped with sharp thorns.

**Mechanics:** A lighteater hawthorn absorbs all light in the area it exists, as well as 5 feet outward from the plant's body, engulfing it in magical darkness. No light, not even magical light, can penetrate this darkness.

A twig or branch cut from this plant will retain this effect for 1d4 hours after being separated from the bush, after which it will shrivel and die. Walking through or into a lighteater hawthorn will cause 1d4 piercing damage per 5 feet moved as the large spines pierce the creature's skin.

## TENT-PITCHER PLANT

An incredible feat of evolution, this carnivorous plant has evolved to resemble a basic campsite, luring adventurers into its body and dissolving their bodies for sustenance.

**Identification:** Identifying the tent-pitcher plant can be difficult. A tent-pitcher plant's flower resembles a one-person tent. The leaves emerge from the ground around the flower, often appearing randomly placed, as if the tent was pitched on top of them. The interior of the 'tent' contains a fleshy body resembling a bedroll. In some locales, this fleshy body resembles a chest or backpack. Regardless of the form it takes, this fleshy body (known as the "lobe") contains a sticky substance meant to restrain a curious creature. Once a creature becomes stuck to this substance, small trigger hairs on the lobe signal to the tent to collapse a release a caustic substance, dissolving the body of the creature in a number of hours and releasing its nutrients to feed the plant.

Distinguishing a tent-pitcher from a regular tent can be difficult, however some basic guidelines can make it easier for adventurers. Firstly, the tent-like flower of a tent-pitcher almost always grows in bright colours, often yellow or red. Secondly, within the tent, there is always a single lobe – often a tent-pitcher will appear sparsely furnished. That lobe also has visible trigger hairs that can be spotted with close examination. Ultimately, entering any mysterious tent deep in the woods is not advisable, but ones bearing the above features should be especially avoided.

**Mechanics:** Once a creature touches the lobe of a tent-pitcher, they will become restrained by the plant. A creature can spend an action to attempt to break free of the plant, needing to succeed on a DC20 strength check to do so. 6 seconds after becoming restrained, the tent will collapse on them and begin excreting a caustic substance. Creatures trapped by the tent-pitcher will take 5d10 acid damage at the beginning of each of their turns until they die or are freed from the plant. The body of the plant has an AC of 13 and 52 hit points. Destroying the body of the plant will free the creature inside. Any creature trapped inside the plant will take damage equal to half of the damage from every attack targeting the plant. Once a tent-pitcher has successfully killed a creature, it will remain collapsed for 2d6 hours until it is finished digesting, then it will return to its regular upright position.

## PHOSPHORREL

A small plant that typically grows on open rock faces, phosphorrel is a predator's best friend. This plant contains a phosphorescent oil in its stem and leaves that glows in the dark. This oil spreads very thin and can stick to a creature's body for a number of hours, leaving a trail to them that will not show itself until after the sun sets. If ingested, this oil's glow will seep into the skin, making a creature that eats phosphorrel temporarily glow in the dark.

**Identification:** Phosphorrel grows to only a few inches in height and is found on open rock faces. Plants have 3 leaves and small blue flowers. Phosphorrel glows a vibrant blue in the dark. Phosphorrel can also be identified by taste, as its leaves have a strong lemon-like flavour.

**Mechanics:** A creature that treads on a phosphorrel patch will leave a trail of glowing oil for 1d8 hours. This oil can only be washed off with soap or a fat-based cleaner. A creature that eats phosphorrel will glow in the dark for 1d8 hours after eating it.

## DOG-STRANGLING VINE

A fiercely invasive plant, dog-strangling vine reproduces rampantly and easily chokes out ecosystems. Its long, thick vines can cause creatures to become tangled and trapped.

**Identification:** Dog-strangling vine is a series of long vines that produce long seed pods, similar in shape to jalapeno peppers. The vines often mat areas, growing overtop of other plants and blocking the light from them.

**Mechanics:** A Medium or smaller creature that walks through dog-strangling vine must succeed on a DC10 strength or dexterity saving throw or become grappled by the plant until they can break free. Breaking free requires a successful DC10 strength or dexterity check. Each failed escape increases this DC by 1, as struggling against the plant often tangles creatures in it more.

## NATURE'S NOOSE

A hanging vine, nature's noose lives up to its name. This parasitic plant seeds itself into the bodies of large trees, draining their fluids and nutrients to sustain itself. It hangs from their branches in long, looped vines that give it its name. The unfortunate creatures that walk into these loops will find themselves rapidly pulled upward as the vine produces spines that pierce the skin and drain nutrients.

**Identification:** Nature's noose forms vines that hang low from the upper branches of trees. Because this species still requires light, it can often be seen hanging from the highest branches on the tree it has parasitized. Nature's noose is most easily distinguished from other plants because of the distinctive loops it forms at the bottom of its vines, which are visually similar to a hangman's noose.

**Mechanics:** A creature that touches nature's noose will trigger its carnivorous response. The vine will loop around whatever body part touched it. Spines burst forth from within the vine to improve grip and pierce the skin as the upper part of the vine begins to retract. The creature takes 3d4 piercing damage and is pulled 1d4x10 feet into the air by the vine. Breaking free from the vine requires a successful DC13 strength or dexterity check. Failing this check will cause the creature to take 3d4 points of piercing damage as the spines penetrate deeper into their struggling body.

## PORCELAIN COTTONWOOD

The porcelain cottonwood is an example of irresponsible magic use. Often dubbed "The Owlbear of the Plant World", this tree was created by a wizard who loved the look of a cottonwood tree near his tower, but hated the endless shower of seed pods created by it. The wizard used a variant on the Flesh to Stone spell to turn the tree's seed pods (usually light, fluffy puffballs) into porcelain, so that they would fall directly beneath the tree and not crowd his view.

A wizard who seldom leaves his tower needs not worry about the consequences of porcelain raining down beneath a tree, but those unlucky few who have found themselves near one curse his name to this day.

**Identification:** A rare case in the plant world, a porcelain cottonwood can be distinguished from similar trees by the noise it makes. The constant sound of shattering porcelain falling from its branches means most hear this tree before they see it.

**Mechanics:** Every 6 seconds, creatures within 25 feet of this tree must succeed on a DC 14 dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 points of piercing damage from the falling porcelain. The ground within 25 feet of a porcelain cottonwood is difficult terrain.

## BUTTERWOOD

The butterwood, a member of the hickory family, is a tall tree species characterized by its slick sap that it creates in excess. A natural defense against herbivores, this sap also poses a threat to adventurers.

**Identification:** The butterwood is characterized by deeply grooved bark and its classic 5-leaflet leaf structure. The butterwood's most distinctive trait is the slight sheen it is covered in, caused by the thick layer of sap that covers its body. Unlike other trees, the sap of the butterwood is incredibly slippery, preventing small animals and birds from climbing it to eat the leaves and seeds.

**Mechanics:** The area in a 20 foot radius around a butterwood tree is coated in slippery sap. A creature that attempts to move while in this area must first succeed on a DC15 dexterity saving throw or fall prone. A creature that attempts to climb the tree will need to succeed on a DC21 Athletics or Acrobatics check to do so. A creature that touches the tree will have their hand coated in the slippery sap, and will be unable to hold or grip anything with that hand for 1d4 hours. A creature that spends 1 minute coating their body in butterwood sap becomes immune to the grappled condition for 1d4 hours.

## SUICIDE PINE

Little is known about the suicide pine, as studying living individuals is incredibly difficult. A tree that seems to have achieved some degree of sentience, a suicide pine is sure to fall over when in the presence of a humanoid. Thus, these trees are only found in deep forest regions, far from any humanoid settlements.

**Identification:** Identifying a suicide pine can be as easy as looking up. If the tree you believe to be a suicide pine falls on your head, it is mostly likely of that species. Suicide pines bear bunched needles in groups of seven, and like others in their family, remain green all year round. Their peculiar behaviour is the easiest way to identify them.

**Mechanics:** When a creature comes within 60 feet of a suicide pine, the tree will fall in a random direction. Roll a d8. Each number represents a cardinal direction (1=North, 2=Northeast, and so forth). The tree falls in that direction. Creatures in the path of a falling suicide pine must make a DC18 dexterity saving throw, taking 20d6 points of bludgeoning damage on a fail or half that on a success. Creatures that fail this saving throw will also be pinned under the tree, and are considered restrained until rescued. They can attempt a DC25 strength check to lift the tree off of themselves.