

Ruins & Adventures

Short Adventure Locations

Aldair's Arboretum



An isolated forest dwelling holds mystery, magic, and new dangers.

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Ruins & Adventures

Aldair's Arboretum



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How to Use This Series

The *Ruins & Adventures* series is intended to be dropped into an existing campaign as encounters and events that occur during their travels. While each one is self contained, they contain advice on how to further expand upon the events.

What Actually Happened Here

As with most elves Aldair had always been enamoured by nature and while he could appreciate the beauty of a rare flower or a centuries-old tree, he found himself drawn to its more unusual aspects, magically imbued and carnivorous plants.

Aldair studied everything he could find but when the dusty tomes no longer satisfied his curiosity he began to take long sojourns into the wilderness that surrounded his clan's home in the hope of seeing these curiosities first hand. Before long he found exactly what he was looking for and rather than destroying them he took samples and cuttings, intending to study their growth and behaviour.

Before long Aldair's collection had grown so large that it began to draw concern from the clan elders and rather than give up on his passion he elected to move to an isolated location so as not to endanger anyone else in his pursuit of knowledge. Deciding it best to not place the dangerous samples out in the open Aldair used a *rod of woodshaping* to sculpt a new home and arboretum high up in the trees allowing him to continue his research in peace.

Unfortunately the move would eventually prove fatal.

Aldair had begun to research different ways to promote the growth of his beneficial magical experiments by creating magically imbued fertilizers. He started with normal plants and fruit bushes outside of his home, then moved onto his own creations and seeing that they both appeared to be successful he wondered if it would have a similar effect on one of his more dangerous samples. Placing a small sprinkling with the slumbershroom he set out on another trek into the wilderness.

When Aldair returned home he discovered that the slumbershroom had grown considerably larger than he could have imagined and as he attempted to take samples it released its spores sending Aldair into a magical sleep before its enzymes began to attack his body, dissolving it over the course of a few hours as he slept.

Without Aldair's monitoring the plants overran the entire building. The puppeteer vines broke through the roof windows in search of food letting in the rain and small animals that the other plants took advantage of, allowing them to thrive.

Now months later, the adventurers find the ruined home...

Aldair's House and Arboretum

Aldair's home can be placed in any forest or woodland a few days travel from civilization.

As the PCs approach the area they will quickly notice that something unusual is taking place. A region about 100 feet surrounding the home is heavily overgrown with grasses standing nearly 4 feet tall and trees up to 50% taller than those surrounding them. Multicoloured wildflowers dot the area accompanied by a mixture of strawberry and blackberry bushes but each one stands at nearly 6 feet tall.

At the centre of the overgrowth a gentle 1 in 5 gradient wooden slope leads up 40 feet to an unusually shaped wooden construction supported by the three large trees. Vines and moss cover the smooth pale wood and the ornate elven decorations and a series of mostly broken stained glass windows.

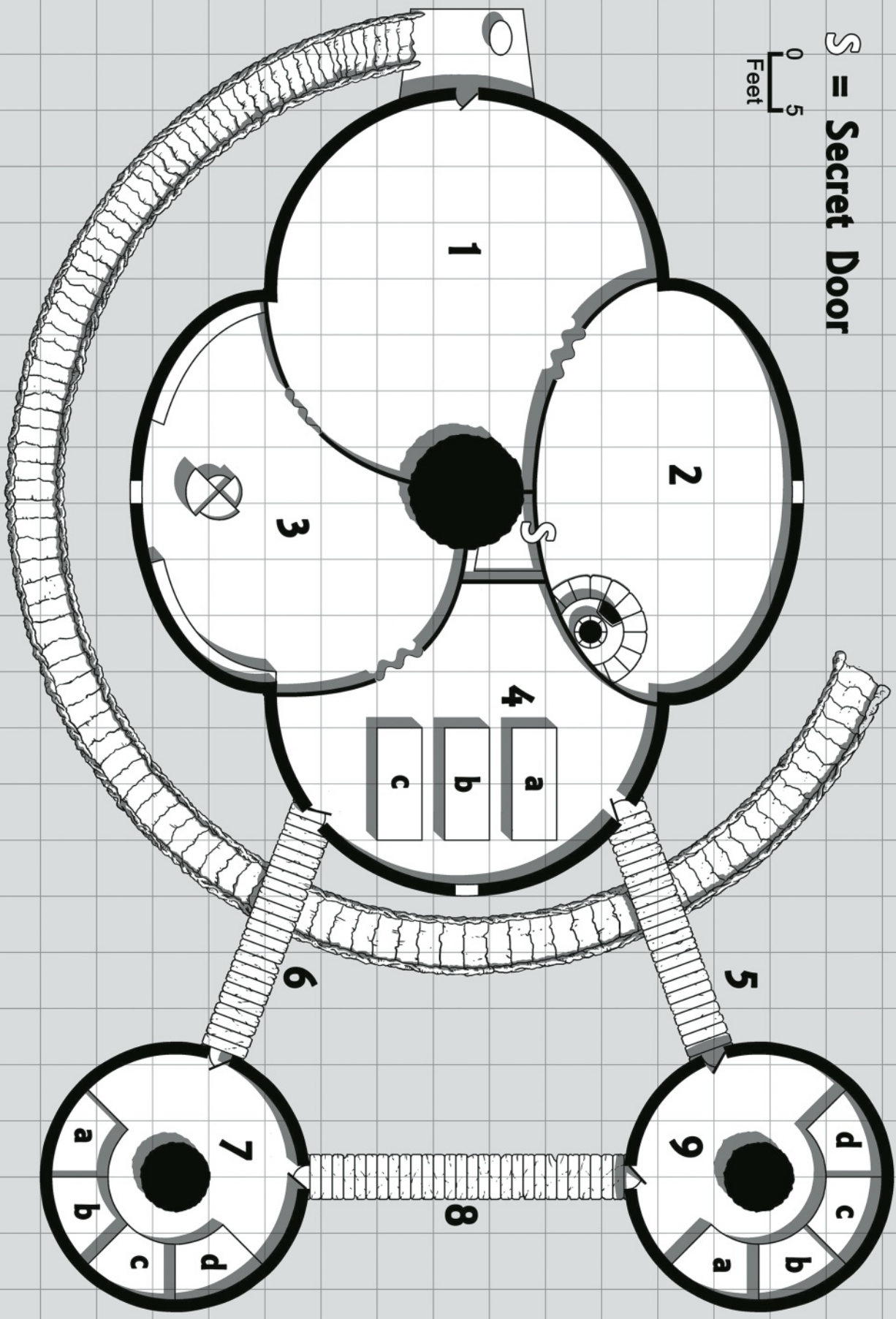
1) Entryway: The slope leads up to a wooden platform that juts out from the main building. A large wooden trough stands in the north east corner used to collect rain water but it has become dark and stagnant with a film of slime across the top.

The door to the houses interior is decorated with an intricate pattern of oak leaves and roses, but the paint has long since faded.

Once Inside it is easy to see that the place has

S = Secret Door

0 5
Feet



been uninhabited for some time. Rotting leaves are scattered across the floor and patches of moss have formed on the walls and ceiling. Branches and vines have grown through the once impressive stained glass windows leaving broken glass among the leaves.

A long bow and two quivers containing 17 arrows hang from two hooks on the south wall. Another hook holds a leather bag containing 2 empty vials with a greenish-brown residue (used *oil of defoliation* vials, see new magic items on page 6) and three large sacks. The third hook along is empty.

Tattered green and yellow patterned curtains are drawn across arched exits to the north and south east and a small chest stands to the left of the north exit. Inside are two pairs of used boots, a hooded cloak, a fur lined cloak and a worn leather rucksack.

2) Living Space: A moss covered ornately sculpted wooden bed stands in the north west part of the room, carved with a rose latticework headboard. Lying on the rotted sheets is a rusted long sword and scabbard. Both are of elvish design but are too rusted to be of use.

Two rusted chests stand against the west wall. The first contains a few weeks worth of clothing while the second contains four wooden blankets and a small pouch containing 25gp.

Next to the chests flies buzz around a carved wooden bowl standing on top of a wooden bucket. It contains nothing more than algae covered stagnant water and fly larvae.

A simple wooden table and two stools stand in the north east corner of the room in front of a clay fireplace. A heavily used whetstone rests on the table.

A successful search of the south wall reveals a secret door. Pushing the door inwards it easily slides to the right. Inside are several shelves containing the following items:

- Aldair's spellbook containing the following spells: 1st Level- *magic missile, protection from evil, shield*; 2nd Level- *invisibility, web*;

A Hidden Threat

Several puppeteer vines are currently growing across the outside of the arboretum and by using the broken windows are able to attack any targets in rooms 1-4. The GM should use the vines whenever the PCs have dropped their guard.

Puppeteer vine: HD: 4 (20hp) see page 8.

3rd Level- haste, hold person

- Three vials of a greenish-brown liquid (some *oil of defoliation*, see page 6).
- A 3' long oak rod with leaf decorations (a *rod of woodshaping*, see page 7).
- An unlabeled light blue potion (a *potion of healing*).

3) Library: Leaves and plant debris cover the floor of this room as well as forming a sizable pile in the north east corner.

Two bookshelves stand against the south wall containing a total of 72 books. Each volume is either a treatise or reference book concerning flora, flora, fungi and trees etc with small handwritten notes scribbled into the margins. While each one has some degree of water damage from rain passing through the broken windows above, if sold to the right buyer the entire collection is worth 350gp.

A sculpture near the center of the room of the room is made up of incrementally larger planters. Each of the four sections holds a different color of mushroom, with the fungi growing over the edge of the lowest planter and started to spread around the sculptures base.

A curved writing desk is built around the tree trunk in the northwest corner of the room with some of Aldair's research papers spread across it. The pages are heavily water damaged with most of the writing reduce to smudges of black ink but if the PCs take time to sort through them they can find the following pieces of information written in elvish. The first reads "...it would appear that the berries have...poison..." A second page reads "...needles are a dark crimson and..." A third page reads "...slowly

dissolves the flesh of its prey..." While a forth entry reads "...crushed into boiling water seems to have the desired effect..."

4) First Arboretum: This room contains Aldair's benign experiments. The entire room is heavily overgrown with bushes and vines that are set into three large planters. Most of them are dead or wilting but a few of the plants have survived because of rain passing through the broken windows in the ceiling above.

The first planter (*a*) contains 3 foot tall bushes with dark green leafed and purple berries growing on them. Only 2d6 of these berries are still ripe enough to be of interest (see *life berries* on page 6).

The second (*b*) planter contains twisted vines with oval orange fruit growing on them. Only 2d6 of these fruits are still useful (see *renewal fruit* on page 7).

The third planter (*c*) contains five 2 foot tall bushes with prickly green leaves and teardrop shaped green berries. There are only 2d6 berries still left on the bushes (see *vigor berries* on page 7).

5) Northern Bridge: The guard rails of this rope bridge have rotted at the eastern end and hang limply against the main building. The supporting ropes holding the walkway have also been damaged and any character making their way across will make it collapse. A successful Save vs. Breath allows the character to grab on the hanging slats and will need to climb back up to the doorway. A failed Saving Throw means the character falls the 40 feet to the ground taking 4d6 points of damage. Should anyone make it to the door of the third arboretum (Area 9) they find that it is jammed by roots and vines growing over the inside and requires a successful Strength check to open.

6) Southern Bridge: Even though the bridge creaks and swings it is safe to use under normal circumstances.

7) Second Arboretum: This is the first of Aldair's arboreta that contain some of his more dangerous samples. Since his death the plants

have grown to full size and have been feeding on small birds and other wildlife to sustain themselves.

Moss and dried leaves cover the floor of this room. A closer search of the room, successful on a 1-in-6, discovers shards of broken window glass, the bones of small mammals and long black thorns mixed in among the debris.

Four large planters (*a, b, c & d*) take up a majority of the south eastern part of the room.

Planters *a, b & c* contain a dark wooded bush covered with long crimson thorns (a **crimson needler**, see page 7), but only those in planter *a* and *b* are alive, their roots growing into the other planters and along the floor of the room. Any creature that gets within 20 feet of these planters will cause the crimson needler to fire off a volley of thorns in their direction, this includes during the search noted above. The GM should roll to see if the PCs are surprised before this attack and are able to act.

Planter *d* holds a huge vine (the **puppeteer vine** mentioned above) that has grown up the trunk in the rooms' center and then out through the broken windows above. Several small vines branch off of this main vine and hang down across the room.

If the PCs dig through the planters once the crimson needlers are defeated all they find are masses of small mammal and bird bones.

8) East Bridge: Even though it shows some sign of wear, the bridge is safe to use. The door to the third arboretum (area 9) is jammed by roots and vines growing over the inside of it and requires a successful Strength check in order to force it open.

9) Third Arboretum: The entire area is overgrown by roots and vines and four large planters take up a majority of the north east section of the room. Gaining access to this room requires a successful Strength check.

Once inside the PCs are greeted by a sickly sweet smell tinged with decay. Roots and other plant matter cover the room with four planter

(*a, b, c* and *d*) taking up a majority of the north east area.

Planters *a, b* & *c* contain **honey-sap lashers** (see page 7) but the one in planter *a* is only half the size and is now dead with drooping vines and an abundance of hardened sap on its trunk.

Planter *d* contains a 1 foot tall light blue fungus with numerous translucent fibers that spread across the floor (a **slumbershroom**, see page 9).

Something appearing to be green cloth is lying next to planter *c*, easily visible from either door. PCs wishing to investigate will get near enough to the plants in planter *b, c* & *d* for them to be attacked. Once the threats have been dealt with they discover the bones of an elf male (Aldair) lying inside planter *c*, his body broken down by a combination of the honey-sap lasher and slumbershroom. The green cloth is a set of simple clothing, also heavily damaged by the enzymes. Aldair's body wears a suit of pitted leather armor on which is pinned a small brooch shaped like an oak leaf (a *leaf brooch*, see below) A damaged belt with an ornate buckle in the shape of two silver oak leaves (a +1 *buckle of protection*, see below) also rest among the bones.

Mixed in with the other planters are a series of small animal and bird bones.

Continuing the Adventure

- **Green Fingers:** The PCs may wish to try and replicate Aldair's research, especially pertaining to the fruit and berries in area 4. After spending some time reading through the books from the library (area 3) any magic-user or elf character can use the magical item creations rules to do so. The GM should add a few interesting ingredients that need to be gathered, such as wyvern dung or elemental water etc.

- **Friends & Neighbors:** Even though Aldair had isolated himself from his clan it didn't mean that he'd lost all his friends there. A group of elves decide to pay Aldair a visit and either find the PCs in his home or track them leaving soon afterwards. Some of them are convinced they may be responsible for their friend's death and

the PCs will have to explain just how they managed to get a hold of Aldair's distinctive brooch and belt buckle.

New Magic Items

Buckle of Protection

This buckle appears as nothing more than an ornate belt buckle usually made of silver or gold worth 1d6 x 100GP.

- When it is attached to a belt and worn round the waist confers a bonus to the wearers AC and Saving Throws.
- The buckle can be found in either +1 or +2 enchantments and functions alongside other bonuses granted by magical armor, cloaks, rings, and shields.
- If worn with another magical buckle, neither of them functions.

Leaf Brooch

This silver and green enamel brooch is usually shaped as an oak leaf but may be found in other forms.

- The brooch protects the wearer from suffering damage during falls greater than 10 feet by slowing their decent to that of a falling leaf. A total of 60 feet can be fallen without taking any damage at all and then only taking 1 point of damage for each additional 10 feet after that.
- The brooch has 3d10 charges when found and each activation of the brooch uses 1 charge.

Life Berries

One of Aldair's horticultural creations, *life berries* are purple fruit that grow on 3 foot tall bushes with dark green leaves.

- A *life berry* can be crushed on the lips of a creature that has "died" due to a failed Save vs. Poison allowing them a second Save as long as it is administered within 1 round of being poisoned.
- *Life berries* last a week before losing their potency.

Oil of Defoliation

This greenish-brown viscous liquid is found in glass vials containing 3 applications.

- Each application can be applied to one melee weapon or a dozen arrows or bolts and grants a magical bonus of +3 vs. plants for a 1 turn duration.

Renewal Fruit

Another of Aldair's creations, a *renewal fruit* is an orange oval fruit that grows on twisted green vines. Once broken open the flesh inside is foul smelling and unpleasant and seemingly unpalatable.

- A character attempting to eat a *renewal fruit* must make a successful Save vs. Poison or suffer from sickness and vomiting that lasts 1d6 minutes.
- Characters that make the Save regenerate at a rate of 1hp per minute for the next hour, provided they have at least 1 hit point. The effect does not regrow lost body parts.
- *Renewal fruit* last two weeks before losing their potency.

Rod of Woodshaping

This 3' long oak rod is usually decorated with leaf shaped carvings and is usually found with 2d10 charges.

- By expending a charge the wielder can permanently reshape a 5' x 5' x 5' cube of unliving wood that the rod is touching.
- Any attempt to reform the wooden hafts of a held weapon first requires a successful To Hit roll followed by a failed Save vs. Spells from the weapons wielder modified by any magic "plus" it may have. Unattended weapons automatically fail their save.

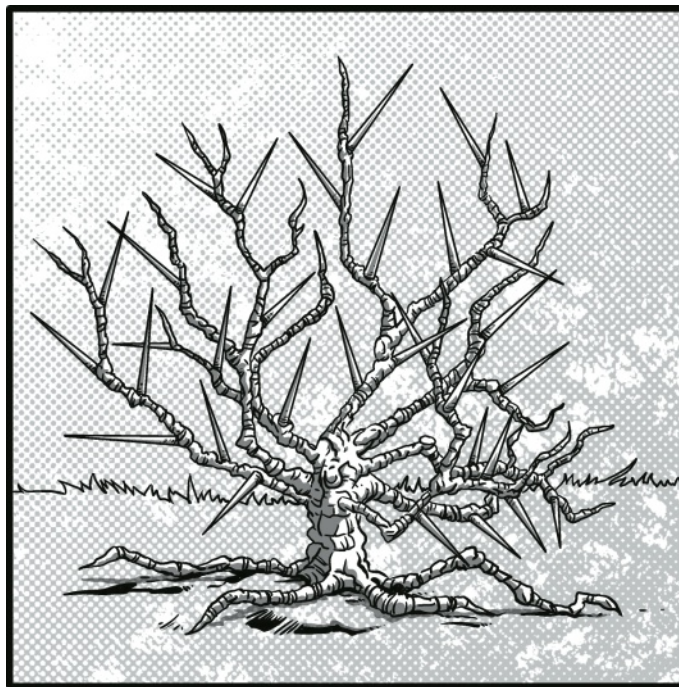
Vigor Berries

These small green teardrop shaped berries are the last of Aldair's experiments. In order to work a berry needs to be crushed and stirred into boiling water.

- Anyone drinking the concoction gains 2d6 additional hit points for 24 hours. Any damage received during that time is taken from these additional hit points.
- Only a single mixture can be in effect at any one time. Any creature drinking two or more concoctions within a 24 hour period must make a Save vs. Poison. Success means there is no effect; failure reduces the creatures Con score to 3 for 24 hours. A creatures hit points should be adjusted by the new score, rendering them unconscious for the duration if their hit point are reduced to 0. All Constitution and hit points lost due to drinking the brew a regained after the 24 hour duration has expired.
- *Vigor berries* last a week before losing their

potency.

New Monsters



Crimson Needler

AC: 8; **HD:** 2 (8hp); **ATT:** 1 x Thorn spray (1d4); **AC0:** 18; **MV:** 15' (5'); **SV:** D12, W13, P14, B15, S16 (F1); **ML:** 12; **AL:** C; **XP:** 20; **NA:** 0 (2d10) **TT:** U

- **Thorn spray:** The crimson needler is able to fire of a spray of thorns up to 20 feet away inflicting 1d4 points of damage.

These spindly bushes average around 3' in height and are covered in long, dark crimson thorns that the bush derives its name from. Using tiny fibres over its body the needler is able to detect any motion within 20 feet of itself. When attacking, the needler fires a spray of thorns towards this movement, slowly advancing towards it by moving its roots in a snake-like motion. Once it finds its prey it squeezes it with the roots, slowly absorbing its nutrients. The thorns re-grow over the course of a week, while expended thorns turn black in color after a day or so.

Honey-sap Lasher

AC: 7; **HD:** 3*(13hp); **ATT:** 5 x vine lash (1d4); **AC0:** 17; **MV:** 0' (0'); **SV:** D12, W13, P14, B15, S16 (F1); **ML:** 12; **AL:** N; **XP:** 50; **NA:** 0 (1d6) **TT:** U

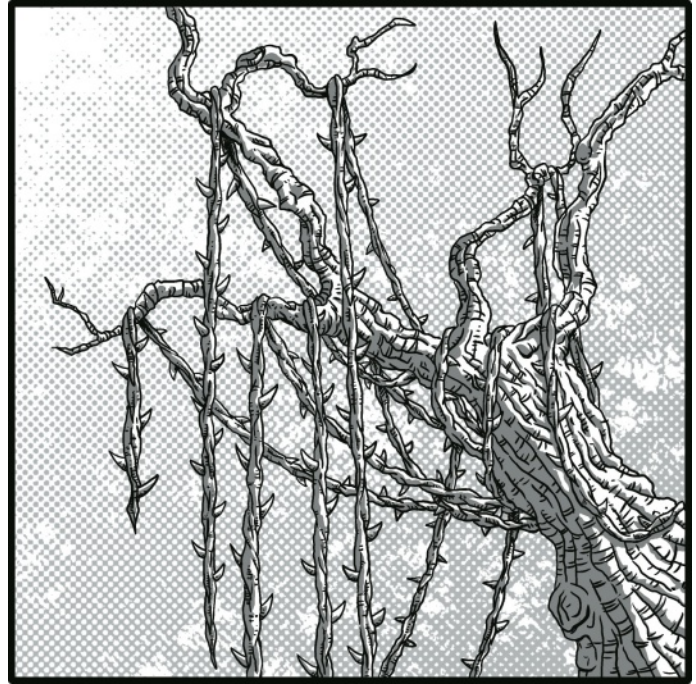
- **Sticky Sap:** The lashers sap is a thick syrup-



like liquid that it can leak through its bark to utilize in both an offensive and defensive manner, the grab and disarm.

- **Grab:** On its first attack the lasher will leak sap through a tendril so it can “grab” onto its prey unless a successful Save vs. Paralysis is made. A stuck target can only free itself by using its action to make a successful Strength check.
- **Disarm:** After the first successful melee attack against the lasher it releases a small amount of sap from its trunk. Each subsequent successful melee attack has a cumulative 10% chance of sticking to the weapon used, disarming that character. The weapon can be retrieved with a successful Strength check.

The honey-sap lasher appears to be nothing more than a 5 ft tall thorn bush with five long tendrils that seem to sway in the breeze. The lashers preferred method of feeding is to lower one of its tendrils to the ground where it secretes a sweet smelling sap from its bark in order to attract small creatures. When an animal attempts to feed on the sticky sap it finds itself stuck to the tendril where the lashers rains down blows from its other vines. Once the creature is dead it pulls it towards its trunk so that it may feed on the nutrients as the corpse decomposes. The sap of the lasher dried solid in around six hours before being discarded.

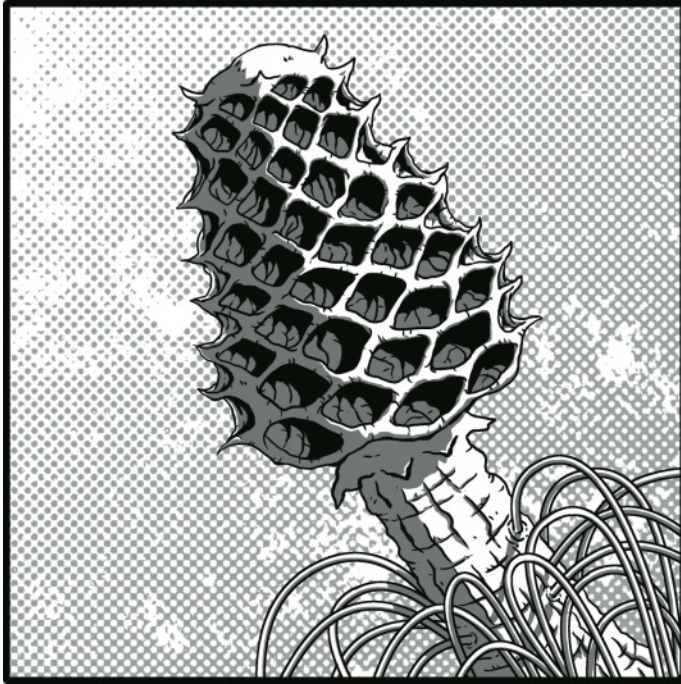


Puppeteer Vine

AC: 8; **HD:** 1 (5hp) per 5' sq.; **ATT:** 1 x hook vines (1d4 + special) per 5' sq.; **AC0:** 19 (-1 per 5' sq.); **MV:** 15' (5'); **SV:** D12, W13, P14, B15, S16 (F1); **ML:** 12; **AL:** N; **XP:** 10 per 5' sq.; **NA:** 0 (2d6) **TT:** U

- **False Appearance:** Puppeteer vines surprise opponents on a 1-3.
- **Vine Hooks:** A successful attack inflicts 1d4 points of damage and hooks into the victim. Their Movement Rate is reduced to 0' and on subsequent rounds the puppeteer vine can automatically inflict 1d4 point of damage and lift the victim 3' into the air. A successful Strength check made by the victim allows them to break free, possibly falling to the ground.

Puppeteer vines are carnivorous plants that hide in the branches of trees waiting for their prey to wander below them. When a creature is within range the vine unfolds a series of large thorns that run its entire length, before dropping upon its victim. The thorns dig into the creature's flesh which is then hauled into the air before being crushed by the tightening vines. Humanoid victims are normally hoisted into the air by their arms and torso, giving the appearance of a puppet hanging on its strings and the plant its macabre name.



Slumbershroom

AC: 9; **HD:** 1/2*(1hp); **ATT:** 1 x Sleep spore (special); **ACO:** 19; **MV:** 0' (0'); **SV:** D14, W15, P16, B17, S18 (NH); **ML:** 12; **AL:** N; **XP:** 6; **NA:** 3d6 (4d6) **TT:** U

- **Sleep spore:** When any creature approaches within 5' of a slumbershroom it fires a cloud of spores in a 5' x 5' x 5' cube in their direction. Unless a successful Save Vs Paralysis is made any creature within the area falls asleep for 1d6 hours. The slumbershroom can release three spore clouds per day.

- **Acidic enzyme:** One round after the slumbershroom has fired a spore cloud it releases a puddle of acidic enzyme that dissolves organic matter with 5' of it so it may absorb a creatures nutrients (other slumbershrooms are immune to this enzyme). The acid is slow acting, causing 1 point of damage per round and is rendered inert by water or after eight hours has passed.

Standing at less than 1' tall, these light blue fungi are covered with regular shaped openings over its upper body with thin translucent fibres at its base that cover up to 5' around it. Normally found in woodland the slumbershroom uses its sleep spore spray to send its prey to sleep and then releases an acidic enzyme to break down their bodies before absorbing them with its fibres. Although it usually feeds on small animals, the slumbershroom is capable of feasting on humanoids or larger creatures.

Stat Block Abbreviations

AC= Armor Class, **HD**= Hit Dice (hp= Hit Points), **ATT**= attack type and damage, **ACO**= number needed to hit an opponent with an Armor Class of 0, **MV**= Movement Rate, **SV**= Saving Throw by class and level, **ML**= Morale, **XP**= Experience Points, **NA**= Number Appearing, **TT**= Treasure Type.

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