

# WORMSKIN

*Premiere Issue!*

Welcome to Dolmenwood

*A shortcut to* Mushrooms

Moss Dwarfs & Grimalkin

**ROOT-THINGS**  
new monster type



No. 1  
Autumn 2015

**DFR**



# WORM SKIN



NORMAN & GORGONMILK



*with original illustrations by*

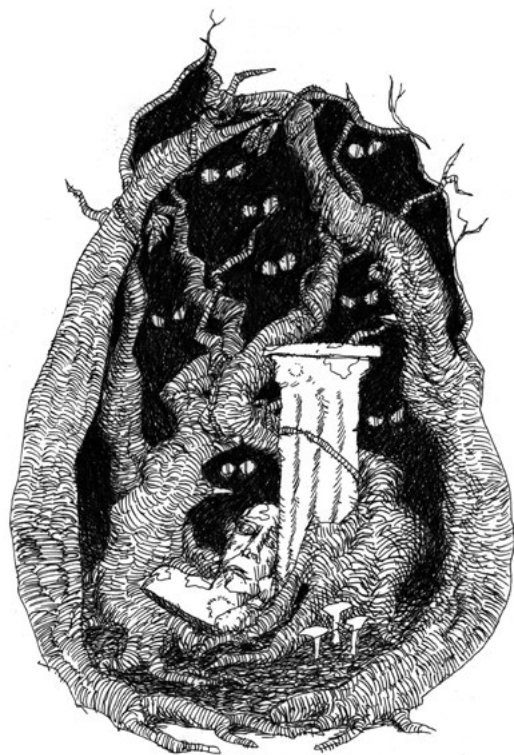


Matthew ADAMS *and* Andrew WALTER



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# Wormskin—Issue One

Dolmenwood is an isolated, woodland setting for tabletop fantasy games that, if the referee so chooses, can be dropped into an existing campaign world without much fuss. (Locate Dolmenwood in some out-of-the-way, temperate, and well-watered area within reasonable distance of a small kingdom or principality.) The place is inspired by the works of Lord Dunsany and William Morris and to no small degree by Susanna Clarke's tales of magic and fairies (*Jonathan Strange & Mr Norrell*, *The Ladies of Grace Adieu*).

WORMSKIN serves as a means of exploring this mythical Wood, revealing the contents of the many hexes of its map and detailing procedures for generating adventures within its brambled bounds. Various aspects of the setting will be treated as well, including new classes, spells, magic, monsters, and sundry ephemera.

Material in WORMSKIN is designed for use with B/X, *Labyrinth Lord*, and other old-school adventure games.

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Matthew is the offspring of a myconid mother and a halfling father. The temptation to eat himself is growing stronger every day.

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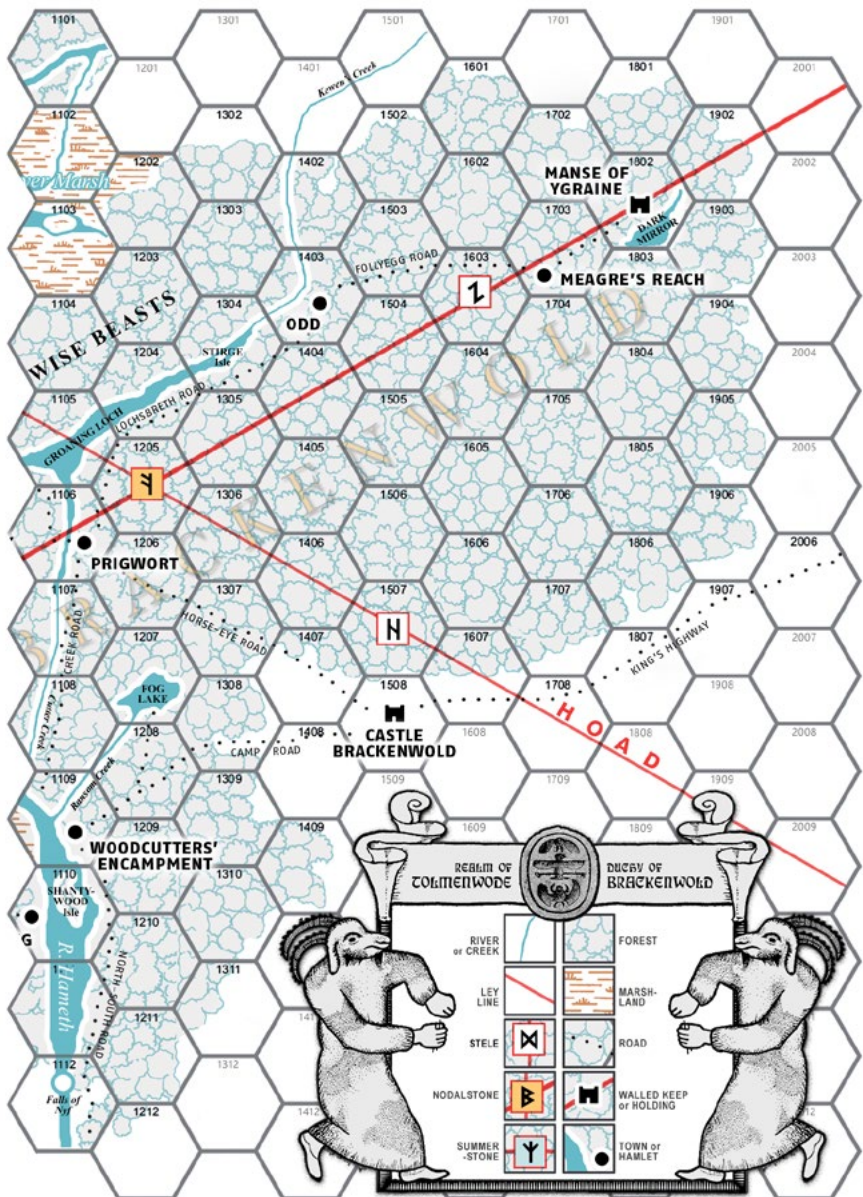
Andrew's moss dwarf illustration was straight up generated with tables. That's artistic commitment.

# Western Dolmenwood





# Eastern Dolmenwood



*Also available as a high-resolution download*

# The Moss Dwarf, *a Race-Class*

Ability Score Requirements: Minimum CON 9

Prime Requisite: WIS

Hit Dice: 1d6

Maximum Level: 8

Moss dwarfs<sup>1</sup> are an obscure, stunted race of demi-humans with an affinity for the dank plants and moulds of the deep woods. They stand at around four feet high and are of stocky, pudgy build. Their skin is brown and wrinkled, with a texture like soft bark and often patched with mould, lichen, fungus, or creeping plants. Their hair and beards are green, of many shades, and plant-like, akin to moss, willow, watercress, or ferns. Their beady eyes and stubby tongues are sheer black. These commonalities aside, moss dwarfs vary widely in physical form and appearance; individuals have unique physical traits which distinguish them from others—the next section contains a set of tables providing examples of such features.

As a race, moss dwarfs have a lifespan of several centuries, individuals typically becoming wiser and more plant-like as they age. After death, their bodies are such that even the bones rot away to mould. Unless a moss dwarf's body is preserved by magical means, it will decay to a rich compost within a year, making many magicks of resurrection impossible.

The natural habitat of moss dwarfs is dark, dank forests, where they gather in small, isolated communities. By nature, moss dwarfs are curious and jovial, in a slow, earthy way, and welcome occasional visitors. They are, above all, burrowers, delving their homes into the damp earth of their forest abodes or inhabiting natural caves where they are found. Moss dwarfs are, in any case, no masters of stonework or construction.

Moss dwarf adventurers are rare. Those who leave the isolation of the deep woods are typically woodsmen, hardened to the ways of the wilderness. They may use any weapons and armour but suffer a -1 penalty to hit with metal weapons and a -1 AC penalty with metal armour (though they use metal tools in daily life, they find the material distasteful for armaments). Moss dwarfs construct special armour from wood and bark (see later).

---

<sup>1</sup> Although known as moss “dwarfs” it is, amongst sages who specialise in the classification of sentient races, a matter of debate as to whether there is any proper relation between moss dwarfs and true dwarfs. Some speculate that they have, in fact, a closer kinship with forest gnomes or that they are the stunted offspring of stump-dryads.





A moss dwarf with WIS 13 or higher gains a 5% bonus to experience points. The bonus increases to 10% for those with WIS 16 or higher.

### ***Moss Dwarf Advancement Table***

Level	XP	HD	AC0*	BA	Saving Throws**			
					P/D	P/P	W	S
1	0	1d6	19	13	8	10	9	12
2	2,187	2d6	19	12	8	10	9	12
3	4,375	3d6	18	11	7	9	8	11
4	8,751	4d6	17	10	6	8	7	10
5	17,501	5d6	16	9	6	8	7	10
6	35,001	6d6	15	8	5	7	6	9
7	70,001	7d6	14	7	4	6	5	8
8	140,001	8d6	14	7	4	6	5	8

\* Modified attack roll required to hit Armour Class 0.

\*\* Saving throws categories in order: Breath Attack, Poison/Death, Pertify/Paralysis, Wands, Spells.

## Class Abilities

**Fertile flesh:** As moss dwarfs age (or, in the case of adventurers, as they advance in level), they become riddled with symbiotic plants and fungi, picking up seeds and spores which germinate in the dwarf's fertile flesh. At each experience level (including 1st), the character acquires a random trait from the table below. Duplicates may either be re-rolled or taken to indicate an amplification of the trait.

### *Fertile Flesh Table*

1d20	Infestation
1	Outer parts of ears replaced by jelly fungus
2	Patches of lichen
3	Dainty flowers bloom in the beard in springtime
4	Yeast infections in moist places
5	Toadstools growing from joints
6	Covered in slimy green jelly
7	Miniature tree growing from one ear
8	Skin riddled with mycelia
9	Eyes fur over with yellow mould. (Does not impair vision, beyond lending it a garish hue)
10	Edible toe cheese
11	Growths of woody, bracket fungus beneath the armpits
12	Mossy feet
13	Climbing vines wrap around the limbs and torso
14	Radical fern growth around groin
15	Mossy biceps
16	Puffball growths around the buttocks and knees
17	Parsley chest hair
18	Blackberry brambles tangled in the hair
19	Edible mushrooms growing in hair
20	Single large, partially sentient mushroom growing from the crown of the head

**Languages:** In addition to their own muddy, squelchy language, moss dwarfs speak the common tongue. They are also familiar with the squeaking language of raccoons, squirrels, and mice, and often keep such animals as pets.

**Fungal immunity:** Moss dwarfs are unaffected by harmful fungal poisons or spores.

**Knacks:** Moss dwarfs practice carefully guarded, quasi-magical disciplines known as “knacks”. The abilities granted by the knacks are described in the following section, along with a table to randomly determine which knack an individual moss dwarf possesses. The player should roll on the table during character creation. (At the referee’s discretion, the player may be allowed to select a knack, instead of rolling randomly.)

**Plant speech:** At 3rd level, a moss dwarf is able to ask questions of plants and fungi. Each individual plant, mushroom, or colony of mould may be asked a single question each day and may respond with a single word.

**Fungal symbiosis:** A moss dwarf of 4th level or higher may attempt to enter into a symbiotic agreement with a monstrous or magical fungus. The fungus must be non-hostile and possess at most 3 Hit Dice less than the dwarf (a 4th level moss dwarf is, for example, limited to symbiosis with fungi of 1HD or less). The symbiotic agreement requires one turn to initiate and a successful save versus magic, which may be attempted only once per fungus. If the pact is agreed (the save is successful), spores of the fungus become integrated into the dwarf’s body, gradually blooming into fungal growths throughout the skin and organs, after 1d4 days. A dwarf in this state may activate any special attack forms of the mushroom, including magical abilities. The dwarf is immune to any harmful effects, but suffers 1d8 damage due to the effort expended. Note that it is not possible for the dwarf to initiate simultaneous symbiosis with multiple fungi and the only way to reverse or cancel a symbiosis is by use of magic which destroys fungus (the clerical *cure disease* suffices) or cancels mutation (the vivimantic *revert biology*, for example).

**Stronghold:** Upon reaching 8th level, a moss dwarf may construct a woodland stronghold as the foundation of a new moss dwarf community. The stronghold must either be delved into the earth or be constructed of plant or fungal matter. Once the stronghold is complete, moss dwarfs will be attracted from the surrounding area to come and live under the leadership of the PC.



# Knacks

Each moss dwarf adventurer practices one of the following knacks, determined at random during character creation. Knacks grant special abilities at 1st, 3rd, 5th, and 7th levels.

## *Table of Knacks*

1d8	Knack
1	Bird friend
2	Lock singer
3	Nose wise
4	Pocket lore
5	Root friend
6	Thread lore
7	Wood kenning
8	Yeast master

### **Bird Friend**

Over the course of a life spent in the depths of the forest, among the colonies of birds, the dwarf has learned to speak their secret languages and has earned their trust.

*1st level:* Converse with birds. Their responses are typically simplistic.

*3rd level:* Charm a bird companion of one Hit Die or less. If it fails a save versus magic, the bird will remain in the company of the dwarf until it is dismissed. Only one bird may be charmed in this way at a time.

*5th level:* Once per day, relay a message via the twitterings of forest birds. The message is carried to a specific person or location and approximately reproduces a spoken message of up to ten words.

*7th level:* Once per day, call down the defensive wrath of woodland birds—a flock of sparrows, starlings, thrushes, and blackbirds which attack as a swarm for 1d6 rounds. The swarm may be directed by the moss dwarf and has AC 7, HD 3+2, Att 1 × 1d6, Mv 120' / 30' (flying).

## Lock Singer

The dwarf practices mysterious songs which can charm locks. The following effects are possible:

**1st level:** Simple, mundane locks may be coaxed to open with a 2 in 6 chance of success per turn of singing.

**3rd level:** A brief, whispered cant persuades a lock to reveal the location of its key (or the closest key, if multiple exist). The information is conveyed via a quiet whining which only the dwarf can comprehend.

**5th level:** Locks within 30' instantly snap shut after a mere round of song.

**7th level:** Cause a lock of any complexity to open. Even magically sealed locks are cooperative, although in this case there is a 1 in 6 chance of the magic backfiring and sealing the dwarf's mouth shut for 1d4 days.

## Nose Wise

The dwarf's nose is sensitised to certain subtle aromas which escape the notice of everyday folk. A round of sniffing reveals:

**1st level:** The presence of cheese, fermented foods, or fungi within 1 mile.

**3rd level:** The identity of plants and fungi which are examined.

**5th level:** The true love or heart's desire of a humanoid within 30'.

**7th level:** The scent of subterfuge. Has a 1 in 6 chance of revealing wrong information.

## Pocket Lore

The dwarf understands the secret whisperings of pockets and, at higher levels, the means of gaining their confidence. All of these abilities are usable upon a target within 10' and take effect with a round's concentration. Magic-users or those guarded by warding dweomers (*protection from evil*, for example) are allowed a saving throw versus spells to stymie these effects.

**1st level:** Know the number of items in the target's pockets.

**3rd level:** Know the contents of the target's pockets.

**5th level:** Cause a chosen item to leap out of the target's pocket.

**7th level:** Exchange a random item in the target's pocket with an item on the dwarf's own person. Has a 1 in 6 chance of malfunctioning, sending the dwarf's item away but receiving nothing in return.

## Root Friend

Dwelling in subterranean burrows, the dwarf has developed a keen affinity with the roots of forest plants. Each of the following abilities may be used once per day, according to experience level:

**1st level:** Coax a root vegetable to reveal its secrets. One question may be posed about the root's surroundings; it will answer truthfully with 1d6 words.

**3rd level:** Summon edible roots to the surface. Food enough for 1d4 people is produced.

**5th level:** Gain harbour in the roots of a tree or other large plant. The moss dwarf is taken underground, into the plant's root system, where he may lie unnoticed for up to an hour.

**7th level:** Summon a root thing (see monsters) from the earth. The creature arrives at the dwarf's location in 1d6 rounds and will obey commands for up 1d6 turns before fleeing into the undergrowth.

## Thread Lore

The practice of a mysterious form of whistling grants the dwarf sympathetic control over threads and strings. The following melodies may be used on threads within 20'. It takes one minute to whistle each to completion.

**1st level:** Tie or untie a string or lace.

**3rd level:** Command loose threads or strings to move under the dwarf's direction (up to 1' per round).

**5th level:** Cause a woven or knitted garment to unravel.

**7th level:** Cause ropes to loosen or tighten.



## Wood Kenning

The dwarf's fingers are sensitised to the subtle vibrations of trees and wood. By spending one minute touching the trunk of a tree or a wooden item, the dwarf may learn the following:

*1st level:* The age of the wood.

*3rd level:* Any emotions which the wood has absorbed from sentient beings. (Wood is highly sensitive to such energies.)

5th level: The name of the last person to touch the wood or (in the case of crafted wooden items) the creator.

*7th level:* The true name of the tree (or the tree from which a wooden item was crafted). Once per day, the dwarf may invoke the true name of one tree to gain a glimpse of its surroundings. Invoking the true name of a deceased tree provokes a curious vision of the vegetable afterlife.

## Yeast Master

The dwarf is a special friend of the yeasts and fungal spores which lurk unseen in great quantities in the deep woods. To the yeast master, who can hear their songs, these beings are a constant companion.

*1st level:* Cause sweet liquids to ferment by touch at a rate of one pint per turn. The liquid is transformed to a frothy, alcoholic brew, delicious to moss dwarfs. There is a 2 in 6 chance of it being palatable to other species.

*3rd level:* The dwarf may commune with the yeasts in alcoholic beverages. Sipping from a drink which has been partly consumed by someone else reveals the person's name to the dwarf.

*5th level:* By allowing potent yeasts to ferment in his belly, the dwarf is able to emit a heady belch once per day. It may be targeted at an individual within 5' who must save versus breath weapons or faint for 1d6 rounds.

*7th level:* Summoning and agglomerating the microorganisms which are omnipresent in moist environments, the dwarf is able to conjure a yeasty feast for 1d6 people. The food is composed of chunks of fleshy, compacted yeast, frothing sheets of slime, and bubbles of alcoholic brew. Such a feast may only be produced once per day.

## Moss Dwarf Armour

As previously noted, moss dwarfs do not favour metal items. The following forms of armour are commonly produced and used by moss dwarfs but are unusual among other races. They can be bought for the listed price in larger moss dwarf communities or possibly from travelling moss dwarfs. Otherwise, they must be specially ordered.

### *Moss Dwarf Specialist Armour*

Type	Cost	Weight	AC	Notes
Birch bark	15 gp	5 lb	8	Supple and very lightweight.
Cork	10 gp	10 lb	8	Unwieldy and very hot but unexpectedly comfortable. Cork armour may be made from strips of cork bark, when available, or from old wine bottle corks, laced together.
Hog leather	20 gp	20 lb	7	Multiple layers of thick, blubbery hog leather.
Oak bark	50 gp	15 lb	7	Thick, crusty plates of the oldest oak bark.
Pinecone	30 gp	20 lb	7	Pinecone scales intricately threaded onto a quilted cloth backing.
Ring mail	500 gp	30 lb	6	Moss dwarf ring mail is a rare item constructed from hundreds of inter-linked rings—the normal kind of rings which are designed for wear on the finger. Curiously, this is the only type of metal armour which moss dwarfs can wear comfortably.





# Moss Dwarf NPCs

The tables on these pages may be used to give extra flavour and detail to NPC moss dwarfs as required. They may also be used for PCs, if the player wishes to add some random spice to their character. (Though, in this case, the standard procedure for equipping a character should be favoured over the weapons and possessions tables presented here.)

## Trinkets

1. Whisky bottle under hat
2. Wonky spectacles
3. Shrunken hand of an ancestor
4. Shovel and sack of coal
5. Birthday cake decorated with mushrooms
6. Locket with quaint portrait
7. Pouch of wings
8. Jar of forest ants
9. Subterranean map
10. Gourd flute

## Facial Feature

1. Orb-like eyes weeping ochre pus
2. Toadstool in centre of forehead
3. Miniature tree growing from ear
4. Ears grown larger than the hands
5. Long, floppy nose
6. Long, pointy nose
7. Mouth foaming with yeast
8. Darting tongue
9. Nostrils ooze purple slime
10. Eyes like pools of deep space

## Coins

1. 1d6 cp in pocket
2. 3d6 cp in an old sack
3. 1 sp behind ear
4. 1d3 sp hidden in hair or beard
5. 1d6 sp in boot
6. 1d6 +2 sp in individual pockets
7. 1d6 +4 sp in a hog-leather wallet
8. 1d6 × 100 cp mounded in a leather satchel
9. 2d6 sp in a velvet pouch
10. 3d6 sp stuck behind belt

## Vittles

1. Swine-cheese
2. Mushrooms (roll on the fungus table if you like)
3. Yeasty pork (raw)
4. Squirrel legs
5. Sack of yeast
6. Fermented pig-semen
7. Stringy boar sausage
8. Frothy ale
9. Nuts & berries
10. Strange brew

### **Manner of Speech**

1. Mumbling
2. Squelchy
3. Squeaking
4. Grumbling
5. Annoying
6. Meandering
7. Phlegmy
8. Filthy
9. Obtuse
10. Baritone

### **Dress**

1. Naturist
2. Loincloth
3. Grubby rags
4. Scratchy wool
5. Pelts
6. Pig suede
7. Cosy knitwear
8. Brushed felt
9. Dapper tweed
10. Armoured \*

\* Roll 1d6: 1. birch bark, 2. cork, 3. hog leather, 4. oak bark, 5. pinecone, 6. ring mail.

### **Weapons**

1. Knife (1d4)
2. Sickle (1d4)
3. Sling (1d6)
4. Axe (1d6)
5. Pitchfork (1d6)
6. Cudgel (1d6)
7. Staff (1d6)
8. Spear (1d6)
9. Short bow (1d6)
10. Short sword (1d6)

### **Beard\***

1. Frothing with yeast
2. Ivy down to toes
3. Luxuriant moss
4. Cascading ferns
5. Pussy willow
6. Tasty watercress
7. Beansprouts
8. Wispy catkins
9. Twigs
10. Fungal mycelia

\* Always a touchy topic, the presence of beards on female moss dwarfs is left to the referee's preference.

### **Odour**

1. Cheese
2. Mushrooms
3. Mould
4. Mud
5. Dung
6. Stagnant water
7. Sawdust
8. Yeast
9. Beer
10. Resin

### **Pets**

1. Mice in hair/beard
2. Pocket full of centipedes
3. Curious squirrel
4. Pilfering racoon
5. Slugs in pants
6. Worms up sleeve
7. Wise snail on head
8. Sentient toadstool
9. Piglet on a leash
10. Burping toad

# Fungi of Dolmenwood

The dank glades of Dolmenwood are riddled with moulds, mushrooms, toadstools, and lichen of all sorts. This article presents a series of tables detailing the most common fungi in Dolmenwood, as well as guidelines for handling PC attempts to identify, buy, or sell them.

The main table of fungal species can be used in two ways:

- As a single-roll d30 table, with each row describing a well-known species. This is the usual (and quickest) method of using the table. When other text refers to a fungal species by name, the qualities of that species should be read horizontally along the appropriate row of the table.
- As a multiple-roll fungus generator to create unique, new species. In this case, the first column (“common name”) should be ignored. Instead, roll once in each of the other columns to determine the qualities of the new fungus.

Fungi are described in terms of “portions”—the quantity required to achieve the described effect (psychedelic, poisonous, or nutritive). The exact size of a portion may vary by species. Fungi are usually discovered while foraging (1d4 portions of a single species). The referee may also consider placing specific fungi in adventure locales or in the possession of monsters or NPCs.

## Identifying fungi

When adventurers encounter fungi in the wild, the referee is advised to maintain an air of mystery, merely answering the players’ questions as to the outward appearance and qualities of the specimens. Certain characters may, due to their background, have a chance of being able to identify species of fungus (see below), but otherwise the only recourse is thorough examination and trial and error. The players themselves may eventually learn to identify the fungi of Dolmenwood by their description.

Individuals with some knowledge of woodland flora have a chance at being able to identify fungi by examining them, as follows. (The chances given are cumulative, so, for example, a ranger who was born and raised in Dolmenwood would have a 2 in 6 chance of successfully identifying fungi.)

Chance of identification:

- *Native of Dolmenwood*: 1 in 6
- *Woodsman, hunter, ranger*: 1 in 6
- *Friar, vivimancer, or assassin*: 2 in 6
- *Halfling, moss dwarf, fairy, or demi-fey*: 2 in 6
- *Herbalist, apothecary, witch, druid, botanist*: 4 in 6

A successful roll indicates that the character knows the common name of the mushroom as well as any special effects it may have if consumed (these should be described broadly by the referee, in non-mechanical terms). Failed rolls indicate that the character is unsure of the specimen's identity. Upon failure, there is also a 1 in 6 chance of a misidentification occurring; for this reason, the referee should make all identification rolls on the player's behalf.

The chance of a correct identification is reduced by 1 in 6 if the specimen is dried (i.e. not fresh) and by 2 in 6 if only a secondhand, verbal description is available.

## Consuming Fungi

Any special effects of a fungus (psychoactive, poison, etc) kick in one turn after consumption. Careful characters may wish to consume small samples of unknown fungi in order to gauge their edibility. The referee may roll 1d6 and check the following table to adjudicate this procedure:

- **1-2**: No effect. Roll again if the character tries a larger sample.
- **3-4**: Hint of full effect. These hints are usually harmless and last for 1d4 turns. This will require some improvisation on the part of the referee, describing the first hints of the effects of consuming a full portion. For example, consuming a small sample of purple nightcap (whose full effect is death by asphyxiation) may cause a shortness of breath.
- **5**: Reduced effect. The normal effect occurs, but with a +4 bonus to all saving throws and a one-quarter duration.
- **6**: Full effect. Bad luck; some fungi are just more potent than others.

# Buying Fungi

Instead of foraging in the woods themselves, PCs may sometimes wish to purchase fungi of particular species. The following charts, separated by type of fungus, describe the possibilities. (Note that not all fungi are sold.)

## Tasty Edible Fungi

Edible mushrooms are commonly available within the wood and surrounding areas. They may be found at market stalls, served up in pies and sauces at inns, or for sale from the foraging pouches of woodsmen and wanderers.

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Amethyst orb (2sp)      | 6. Monkskull (1sp)                             |
| 2. Hell horns (5sp)        | 7. Moonchook (1gp)                             |
| 3. Leprechaun's hair (5cp) | 8. Skank-drops (5cp)                           |
| 4. Marshguts (3sp)         | 9. Windcap (5cp)                               |
| 5. Meat and bread (4cp)    | 10. Woodsman's fancy (8cp—mildly intoxicating) |

## Fun Psychedelic and Magical Fungi

These mushrooms are avoided by the everyday folk of Dolmenwood, whose woodland foragings are focused on the quest for a tasty bite to eat, rather than a chance at cosmic revelation. They are, however, sometimes gathered, dried, and sold by specialist providers such as herbalists, apothecaries, and witches. There is a 2 in 6 chance of such a person having specimens of 1d4 of these fungal species for sale.

- |  |                           |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Cuckoo puke (8gp)   | 6. Space shrooms (50gp)   |
| 2. Devil's grease (5gp)  | 7. Witch's purple (7gp)   |
| 3. Goat giblets (7gp)  | 8. Woodsman's fancy (8cp) |
| 4. Jack-in-the-green (150gp)   |                           |
| 5. Red deceiver (8gp—basically poisonous, but some consume it for its aphrodisiac qualities) |                           |





## Bad Psychedelic and Poisonous Fungi

The bane of the careless forager, these fungi are shunned by all who are able to identify them. It may occasionally be possible to locate them for sale on the black market from such unscrupulous characters as alchemists, witches, poisoners, necromancers, and other assorted charlatans and rogues. Selling or buying these fungi is regarded as highly suspicious and must be carried out in secrecy.

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Angel's lament (30gp) | 7. Puck's ear (20gp)        |
| 2. Bloodcap (5gp)        | 8. Purple nightcap (90gp)   |
| 3. Cream horn (50gp)     | 9. Red deceiver (8gp)       |
| 4. Flighty prince (15gp) | 10. Rotting mazegill (80gp) |
| 5. Mottlecup (10gp)      | 11. Skyshank (15gp)         |
| 6. Polkadot pig (2gp)    |                             |

## Selling Fungi

If PCs wish to sell fungi that they have gathered in the wild, the first step is to locate a suitable buyer. Merchants—such as those described previously—who commonly sell fungi are the most likely candidates. The referee should make a reaction roll to determine the price offered:

- **2:** Utter refusal (if the proffered fungi are poisonous, the NPC may inform the authorities)
- **3-5:** Indifferent, will pay 33% of full value
- **6-8:** Interested, will pay 50% of full value
- **9-11:** Enthused, will pay 66% of full value
- **12:** Delighted, will pay 80% of full value

A PC who runs an established business of the appropriate type should be able to sell fungi for the full listed price.

## *Fungi of Dolmenwood*

d30	Name	Form	Colouration	Odour	Flavour
1	<i>Amethyst orb</i>	Sphere with moist orifices	Transparent violet	Horse shit	Like chicken
2	<i>Angel's lament</i>	Hollow chimneys	Shining, golden	Wet wool	Wasabi sinus attack
3	<i>Bloodcap</i>	Small pointed cap	Amber	Bad blue cheese	Oily
4	<i>Cream horn</i>	Phallic	Pungent green	Prune	Creamy
5	<i>Cuckoo puke</i>	Fuzzy mould	Drab grey	Fish	Astringent and sour
6	<i>Devil's grease</i>	Slime in the cracks	Black with ultraviolet aura	Off sausage	Goose grease
7	<i>Flighty prince</i>	Toadstool	Pure white	Urine	Citrus note
8	<i>Goat giblets</i>	Blob of slime	Cream yellow	Goat	Apple sauce
9	<i>Hell horns</i>	Antlers	Ominously black with red striations	Vomit	Like lettuce
10	<i>Jack-in-the-green</i>	Fairy ring	Ethereal, shadow like	Fried garlic	None whatsoever

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**Effect if consumed (value per portion)**

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Nourishing; hearty. (2sp)

Moderate poison. Addles the mind. Lose 1d6 points of INT, WIS, and CHA for 2d12 hours. A successful save reduces the loss by half. If any score goes below 1, death results. (30gp)

Mild poison. Blood pressure and heart rate increase for 24 hours. A save versus poison is required in stimulating situations (combat, for example). Failure indicates fainting for 1d6 rounds. (5gp)

Moderate poison. Attacks the nervous and immune systems, causing a loss of 2d6 CON (may result in death), half on a successful save. The lost constitution recovers at a rate of one point per day. (50gp)

Psychoactive. All things appear anthropomorphised for 2d4 hours. Save versus poison to avoid getting utterly lost in imagined telepathic communion with inanimate objects. (8gp)

Strong psychedelic. The character becomes intensely aware of his own animalistic nature and must save versus magic or be overwhelmed by a primordial beast spirit. The effects last for 1d6 hours, after which a save versus poison is required in order to avoid prolonged vomiting and semi-consciousness for two hours. Whether the saves are successful or not, the character's CON is reduced by 1d4 points for a week (this shit really messes you up). (5gp)

Mild poison. Causes giddiness and nausea (-2 to hit) for 1d6 hours. Save for half duration. (15gp)

Nourishing and psychoactive. For 1d4 hours, the character perceives himself to have doubled in size and strength and must save versus poison to avoid being overwhelmed by the lust to abuse this newfound might. (7gp)

Highly nourishing—feeds double. (5sp)

Magical quality. Select a random magic-user spell of level 1-3. (A Dolmenwood enchantments table will be presented in a future issue of *Wormskin*.) (150gp)

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<b>d30</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Colouration</b>	<b>Odour</b>	<b>Flavour</b>
11	<i>Leprechaun's hair</i>	Wispy filaments	Mud brown, oozing lime green gel	Beer	Porridge
12	<i>Marshguts</i>	Coiled tubes	Glowing yellow	Sweat	Fizzy
13	<i>Meat and bread</i>	Spherical sac	Deep blue with cyan stripes	Raw meat	Stale bread
14	<i>Monkskull</i>	Brain like	Tan	Pine	Bloody
15	<i>Moonchook</i>	Latticework	Moon-like, with pocked craters	Chicken soup	Raw onion
16	<i>Mottlecap</i>	Wide cap	Tortoiseshell	Cat piss	Semen
17	<i>Old duke</i>	Droopy flanges	Flesh	Dog feces	Syrupy sweet
18	<i>Polkadot pig</i>	Spherical	Spotted pink and yellow	Carrion	Bitter as fuck
19	<i>Puck's ear</i>	Ear shaped	Glistening black	Vinegar	Fruity
20	<i>Purple night-cap</i>	Long stems, tiny button caps	Deep purple	Milk	Yeasty

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**Effect if consumed (value per portion)**

Nourishing; bland and mealy. (5cp)

Nourishing; extremely moreish\*. (3sp)

Nourishing but causes the breath to take on a rancid stench which attracts flies (lasts for 1d3 days). (4cp)

Nourishing; acquired taste. (1sp)

Nourishing; gourmet. (1gp)

Mild poison / psychedelic. Brings on a pounding headache for 24 hours. Unless a save versus poison is made, the throbbing pains prevent sleep. During this period, the character's mind is opened to psychic influence, causing a -2 penalty to saves against enchantments or psionics and the perception of unnerving whisperings from afar. (10gp)

Nourishing; barely palatable. (Worthless)

Mild psychedelic. Creeping paranoia plus the sensation of insects crawling over the scalp. (2gp)

Moderate poison. Causes a listless trance lasting 1d4 hours. If a save versus poison fails, the character is assailed by 1d3 malicious, semi-imaginary fey. (20gp)

Deadly poison. Save or die of asphyxiation. On a successful save, the character falls into a coma for 1d4 days. During the coma, there is a 50% chance of a bodily appendage dying. (90gp)

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\* *moreish*: so tasty that one wants to eat more.





<b>d30</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Form</b>	<b>Colouration</b>	<b>Odour</b>	<b>Flavour</b>
21	<i>Red deceiver</i>	Tall with elegant fronds	Cherry red	Orange and cloves	Smoked ham
22	<i>Rotting mazingill</i>	Densely packed ball of fibres	Purple or orange, depending on the angle	Rotten pars-nips	Lime sorbet
23	<i>Skank-drops</i>	Mass of gloopy orbs	Crimson with droplets of white juice	Leaf mould	Metallic
24	<i>Skyshank</i>	Thick stem, chunky cap	Sky blue	Like a dank cellar	Leek ice cream
25	<i>Sludgenuts</i>	Chestnuts	Cheery brown with yellow under-side	Wet dog	Earth
26	<i>Space shrooms</i>	Cute buttons	Iridescent green	Smoked haddock	Salt and pepper
27	<i>Windcap</i>	Oyster cluster	Tan with maroon patches	Burnt plastic	Anti-flavour, numbs tongue
28	<i>Witch's purple</i>	Big woody bracket	Glossy chestnut	Fine wine	Aniseed
29	<i>Woodsmen's fancy</i>	Hairy spheres	Striped black and yellow	Strong solvent (destroys brain cells)	Lavender
30	<i>Wormcup</i>	Hollow shell	Vibrant red, dotted white	Mud	Rotten

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**Effect if consumed (value per portion)**

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Mild poison. Causes painful light-sensitivity for 1d6 hours. Save versus poison or suffer -2 to attacks and saving throws except when in gloom. Simultaneously inspires a rabid libido. (8gp)

Deadly poison. 3d6 CON damage. Save versus poison for half. Lost CON returns at a rate of 1 point per day of rest. While all lost CON is not recovered, the character suffers -2 to hit due to weakness. (80gp)

Edible but without nutritive effect. (5cp)

Nourishing but mildly poisonous, causing shivering and spasms for 3d6 hours. This reduces DEX by 2d4 points (to a minimum of 3), or half that on a successful save. (15gp)

Nourishing but repulsively slimy (CON check to keep it down). (Worthless)

Intensely psychoactive, causing a deep trance lasting 2d4 hours, during which cosmic visions are experienced. A failed save versus poison indicates that the character awakes weakened, as per the after-effects of raise dead, for 24 hours. There is a 50% chance of experiencing a clairvoyant vision of events in a distant location or other plane. (50gp)

Nourishing but produces awful flatulence. (5cp)

Mild psychedelia, makes all things appear purple hued and eyes seem to quadruple in size. The character's skin takes on a violet hue for 1d4 days. (7gp)

Nourishing. Brings on a mild drunkenness and triggers the unbridled growth of hair from the nostrils and cheeks. (8cp)

Nourishing but 50% chance of being riddled with parasite eggs which hatch in the digestive system. (Worthless)

# The Grimalkin, a *Race-Class*

Ability Score Requirements: Minimum DEX 9

Prime Requisite: DEX

Hit Dice: 1d6

Maximum Level: 10

The grimalkin<sup>1</sup> are a race of ageless cat-folk—related spiritually to the Cheshire Cat of Lewis Carroll’s Alice novels, Puss-in-Boots, and the Cait Sith of Scottish folklore. They are fey creatures, sensitive to magic and the errant pathways that lead back to the Otherworld—a dim forest-realm that is Dolmenwood’s crooked reflection. All grimalkin are born there and will, one day, retire there to die if they should not find death elsewhere first.

The appearance and form of a grimalkin is subject to change over time. Though the grimalkin is ageless, a repeating cycle of life phases knot the thread of its existence:

- A cunning humanoid form known as *estray*.
- A stupid cat form known as *chester*.
- A primal fey form known as *wilder* [*WIL-dur*].

The three phases of grimalkin existence and the powers and weaknesses associated with each are described in detail in the following sections. All PC grimalkin begin play in *estray*.

Most grimalkin take to a life of wandering and adventure. They tend to be mercurial and sneaky, self-indulgent and loose with their money. When in *estray*, they may wield any small weapon handily and wear any type of armor without penalty.

A grimalkin with DEX 13 or higher gains a 5% bonus to experience points. The bonus increases to 10% for those with DEX 16 or higher.

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<sup>1</sup> A note on the etymology of grimalkin: A combination of “grey” + “Malkin” (an archaic nick-name for Matilda), late 16th C., meaning a grey female cat. In Dolmenwood, the genesis of the word is somewhat different than our world’s: “Grimal” + “kin”—i.e. kin of Grimal, the shadow-essence of all feline-kind—a cryptic ur-being sometimes encountered in the wilderness of the Otherworld.

## Grimalkin Advancement Table

Level	XP	HD	AC0*	BA	Saving Throws**			
					P/D	P/P	W	S
1	0	1d6	19	13	8	11	9	11
2	3,125	2d6	19	12	8	11	9	11
3	6,251	3d6	19	11	7	10	8	11
4	12,501	4d6	18	10	7	10	7	10
5	25,001	5d6	18	9	6	9	7	10
6	50,001	6d6	17	8	6	9	6	9
7	100,001	7d6	17	7	5	8	5	9
8	200,001	8d6	17	6	4	8	5	8
9	300,001	9d6	16	5	4	7	4	8
10	400,001	10d6	16	4	3	6	4	7

\* Modified attack roll required to hit Armour Class 0.

\*\* Saving throws categories in order: Breath Attack, Poison/Death, Pertify/Paralysis, Wands, Spells.



# Estray

A grimalkin in the phase called estray wears clothing, speaks the common tongue and walks upright. It is, by all appearances, a humanoid cat, beautiful or ugly, with fur covering its little body (they are four feet at the very tallest). Sometimes friendly with mortals, sometimes tricksome and perilous, the grimalkin in estray is generally tolerated in most towns and villages, provided it behaves itself. While in this phase the grimalkin may cast spells of up to 4th level (see spell list later). The forepaws of a grimalkin-estray are hand-like and delicate, allowing it to utilize weapons and pick locks if necessary.

## Class Abilities in Estray

**Spell casting:** Grimalkin possess the instinctive magical ability to cast spells of beguilement and transmutation. The number of spells known depends on the character’s level, as shown in the table below. Each may be cast once per day. These spells are instinctive—they are not recorded in a spell book and require no preparation or memorization of any kind.

**Pick locks:** Their dexterous hands and affinity for puzzles and complicated devices lends estray-grimalkin some ability with lock picks. The chance of success is indicated in the table below.

Estray Abilities Table

Level	Spells Known				Pick locks
	1st level	2nd level	3rd level	4th level	
1	1	–	–	–	15%
2	2	–	–	–	20%
3	2	1	–	–	25%
4	3	1	–	–	30%
5	3	2	1	–	35%
6	3	2	2	–	40%
7	4	2	2	–	45%
8	4	3	2	1	50%
9	4	3	3	1	55%
10	4	4	3	1	60%



## Transformations

**To *chester*:** Though grimalkin in estray, wily and proud, tend to take on some characteristics of mortal folk, their feline nature is never fully suppressed. The instinct to hunt and consume garbage-fed rodents is especially prominent. While rats abound in the forest, even more may be found living in the towns of men. This makes visits to civilization potentially disastrous for the grimalkin. The temptation to gorge itself on velvet-furred and chewy-tailed rats is sometimes too much for the creature to resist: every rat within reach requires a save vs spells to resist the compunction to catch and devour the pest immediately. Each time the grimalkin in estray consumes a rodent, there is a 10% chance that it will spontaneously *chester*.

**To *wilder*:** A grimalkin-in-estray who is near death from wounds or illness may opt to revert to its wilder phase out of desperation. The transformation requires one round.

## Chester

A grimalkin in *chester* was previously in estray and got this way by eating too many mundane rats. In *chester*, a grimalkin resembles a normal cat in all respects—though it is perhaps unusually fat and stupid in comparison to the average mouser (INT reduced to 3). Being in *chester* is especially embarrassing to the grimalkin and something it will naturally seek to avoid. It cannot cast spells in this phase and, self-evidently, no longer has the wit or physiology to wield weapons or pick locks.

### Class Abilities in Chester

None to speak of.

## Transformations

**To *estray*:** A chestered grimalkin must abstain from consuming rats for two weeks in order to return to a state of estray. Spells of alteration may be cast upon it to initiate the grimalkin's transition back to estray-form.

# Wilder

A grimalkin in wilder has returned to its primal fey form and is difficult to see clearly in the mortal world as more than a gleaming pair of deranged, predatory eyes beyond the throw of the lantern's light. Those who can see in darkness or perceive the invisible will discern a bulky, feline form, three feet high at the shoulder, with an abnormally large head, a leering mouth, and fur standing on end, as if electrified.

Sunlight is perilous to grimalkin in wilder (see below) and they are not especially fond of lesser lights either and will seek to extinguish them, if opportunity allows. Being in this phase suppresses a grimalkin's memories and it will not be able to distinguish friend from foe. While the wilder-grimalkin is cunning and clever, it does not have the sense to wield tools or weapons. It can, however, make a claw/claw/bite attack routine for 1d4/1d4/1d4 damage.

## Class Abilities and Weaknesses in Wilder

***Veiled in darkness:*** The wilder-grimalkin is only semi-visible, incurring a -2 penalty to attacks against it.

***Primal strength:*** In wilder, the grimalkin's Hit Dice increase by 2. Upon transitioning into this state, the grimalkin gains 2d6 hit points. (These additional hit points will be lost upon reversion to estray.)

***Fey passage:*** A wilder-grimalkin is able to move in and out of the Otherworld at will and will sometimes drag its prey (deer, goat-man, pilgrim, or other medium-sized bit of flesh) back to its fey-side lair.

***Creature of shadows:*** In wilder, the grimalkin will shun all exposure to sunlight. Contact with even a sliver of the sun's rays will transform the creature to knotty hardwood, instantly and permanently (though a save vs petrification is allowed).

## Transformations

***To estray:*** It is an exceedingly difficult task to coax a grimalkin back from its atavistic wilder-shape, but not impossible. A potion containing virginal blood infused with moonlight and crushed toadstone is sometimes (65%) effective.

## General Class Abilities and Weaknesses

The following traits are common to grimalkin in all life phases.

**Subtle sight:** All grimalkin have a 2-in-6 chance of noticing invisible creatures and hidden passages to the Otherworld.

**Susceptibility to cold iron<sup>1</sup>:** Like all things native to the Otherworld—such as Elf-lords, fairies, trolls, and leshii—a grimalkin is especially allergic to cold iron and will take double damage from weapons and objects crafted from the metal. When taking damage from iron weapons and objects, the grimalkin must save vs spells or find itself smouldering at the point of contact. The effect is uncomfortable, sometimes painful, but does not cause additional damage of itself.

**Silver sickness:** Likewise, things of silver disgust the grimalkin on a base, physical level. Silver weapons provide no additional damage against grimalkin, though silver-contact will make it ill should it fail a CON check. Continuous sneezing, coughing of hairballs, weeping of slimy tears—all these symptoms will persist for 1d3 days.

**Kitty tipple:** Fermented catnip juice (sometimes called nippers or kitty tipple) is a common vice among cat-folk. Consumption grants a +1 bonus to all melee attack rolls and DEX-related throws, but the grimalkin must save vs spells or find itself in the cups. Drunken grimalkin automatically fail all CHA rolls due to constant bragging and self-aggrandizement.

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<sup>1</sup> These days, weapons are not commonly made of iron, steel being favoured for its strength. Iron weapons must normally be crafted to special order, incurring a 2d6 day delay and a 25% increase in cost.



## Estray Spell List

A grimalkin's spells are selected from the lists below at random (either once when a new spell is gained or at dawn each day, as the referee wishes). The grimalkin spell list is drawn largely from the druid, magic-user, and illusionist spells detailed in the *Labyrinth Lord Advanced Edition Companion*. They also use a smattering of unique spells, upon occasion—these are described below.

### 1st Level

1. Auditory illusion
2. Comprehend languages
3. Darkness globe
4. Detect invisibility
5. Enlarge
6. Hypnotism

### 2nd Level

1. Blur
2. Charm person
3. Disappearance
4. Fear
5. Invisibility
6. Warp wood

### 3rd Level

1. Blink
2. Dispel phantasm
3. Furball
4. Gust of wind
5. Haste
6. Suggestion

### 4th Level

1. Dimension door
2. Mouse hex
3. Musk of the most ancient
4. Polymorph self

## Grimalkin Spells

### Disappearance

Level: 2nd

Duration: One hour

Range: Self

With this spell, a grimalkin may cause parts of its physical form to disappear from existence. The process of disappearing one or more body parts takes one minute. Disappeared parts may be reappeared at will, which also takes one minute. It is not possible for a grimalkin to disappear entirely through use of this spell—at least one body part must remain, for example: a paw, an ear, or a grin.

Despite the lack of various body parts (and they are truly physically non-existent, not merely invisible), the grimalkin continues to function as normal, as if its body were unaltered. Feats such as walking without legs, hearing without ears, and speaking without a mouth are all possible. Aside from walking and climbing as if the full body were present, disappeared body parts do not interact with physical objects. It is thus, on the one hand, possible for a partially disappeared grimalkin to slip through small spaces which would not allow its full body to pass but, on the other hand, impossible for it to manipulate objects if its paws are disappeared.

If the grimalkin disappears a substantial proportion of its physical form, it may, at the referee's discretion, gain a bonus to Armour Class, due to presenting a reduced target. Magical weapons may target the grimalkin's full (hypothetical) form and thus bypass any AC bonus.

### **Furball**

Level: 3rd

Duration: 1 to 5 rounds

Range: 60'

After casting this spell, the grimalkin enters into a coughing fit, yowling, retching, and choking in an exaggerated and disconcerting manner. The coughing fit lasts for one round following the casting of the spell, but may be maintained for up to five rounds, if the grimalkin wishes. While coughing, the grimalkin can perform no other actions. As the retching proceeds, the grimalkin's belly and throat bulge and swell to enormous proportions, only to vomit forth a violent stream of congealed fur, spittle, and rat bones. All creatures within a 90° cone, 60' long are bombarded by the noisome fur balls and suffer 2d6 damage per round which the grimalkin spent retching. A save versus breath weapons is allowed for half damage.





## Mouse Hex

Level: 4th

Duration: 2d4 rounds

Range: 30'

A single target within range must save versus spells or be instantaneously transformed into a small, grey mouse, leaving its clothing and equipment behind. Targets with more Hit Dice than the grimalkin has levels are unaffected. While the enchantment lasts, the polymorphed target has AC 8, half of its previous hit point total (the lost hit points are restored when the spell ends), and can scurry at a rate of 60' (20').

## Musk of the Most Ancient

Level: 4th

Duration: Up to 1 turn

Range: 10' per level

After a brief incantation of bestial yowls the grimalkin begins to exude an occult stench in all directions. Any air-breathing creatures within the musk's range must save vs paralysis or find themselves trembling with fear (as the spell) and unable to ambulate for 1d6 rounds. Each round spent in range of the stench elicits a new save vs paralysis with an adjustment of -1 each time (cumulative to -5). Wind can potentially carry the musk beyond its range (referee's determination) but will also make it dissipate faster. Under best possible conditions, the musk will not dissipate for 1 turn. Other grimalkin may be affected by the musk if the catkin exuding it has greater experience.



# Monsters of the Wood

Along with the expected list of statistics (Armour Class, Hit Dice, and so on), monsters in Dolmenwood are presented with some additional pieces of information:

- **Number Appearing:** Monsters may be encountered alone or in groups and abroad or in their lair. Occasionally, a monster's lair may be discovered unguarded. To determine the exact conditions, an eight-sided die is rolled and the result looked up under encounters for the monster in question. For example, a monster's description may state: "Number Appearing: 1-3: abroad (2d4), 4-7: lair (2d10), 8: lair (empty)". Thus, a d8 roll resulting in a 1 to 3 means that 2d4 individuals are encountered abroad, a roll resulting in 4 to 7 means that the PCs have stumbled upon 2d10 monsters in their lair, and a roll of 8 means that the empty lair has been discovered.
- **Possessions:** Denotes the items or treasures typically carried by an individual about its business. These are the kind of things that a search of the monster's pockets, packs, etc will turn up.
- **Hoard:** For monsters with a lair, this indicates the treasures which are kept there. Valuables kept by intelligent monsters will most likely be well hidden.
- **Encounters / Lairs:** Some quick ideas for encounters with the monster (either abroad or in its lair) are given here, providing an inspirational seed for the referee to work from. The suggested encounters generally describe fairly specific situations and should each only be used once. (The judge may cross off or replace encounters once they have occurred.)
- **Traits:** One or more charts of distinguishing features of individuals are given, for added descriptive flavour and ease of distinguishing individuals when a group of monsters of the same kind is encountered.

# Root Thing

HD: 3

AC: 6

Attacks: 2 × 1d4 (claws)

Move: 12

Morale: 9

Number Appearing: Solitary, no lair

Alignment: N(E)

Intelligence: Bestial cunning

Size: M-L (4-10')

XP: 80

Possessions: None

Hoard: None

Sentient, humanoid root vegetables which emerge from the soil in autumn to hunt hapless humans and demi-humans. Eyeless and mouthless, root things hung by scent alone and drag their victims beneath the earth to be digested over the winter months, entwined in roots. The foliage of a buried root thing may be recognised by one versed in forest lore.

It is said that the flesh of root things is hearty and delicious but leads a man to murder. It is a component of various potions and witches' brews.

## Special Abilities

**Entangle:** If both claw attacks hit in the same round, the victim becomes entangled in the monster's rooty grasp. An entangled victim automatically suffers 1d4 damage per round and cannot attack. A saving throw versus paralysis is allowed, once per round, in order to escape.

**Bury / unearth:** Root things are able to bury and unearth themselves completely in the space of 1d4 rounds. A grappled victim who is dragged beneath the earth suffocates after a further 1d4 rounds.

## Encounters

1. Being set upon by a group of woodsmen, bludgeoning it with the shovels they have just used to unearth it.
2. About to bury itself in the earth with a screaming child in its grasp.
3. Sniffing around the camp-site of a reclining friar.
4. Hanging from a tree branch, trapped in a cage woven from thick, thorny bramblewood. The monster has been here for some time and has fallen into a semi-conscious state, wherein shoots and strange nodules have begun to grow from its head. The person who has trapped it so may be nearby.

### Traits: Root Type

1. Beetroot: bulbous, squat, deep maroon hue.
2. Carrot: bright orange, bifurcated limbs.
3. Burdock: 10' tall, spindly, bleeds a sticky, white sap.
4. Potato: a cluster of several nodules form the humanoid shape.
5. Turnip: rotund and massive (8' diameter).
6. Radish: cute button-body, cheery red hue, angry little bastards.

### Traits: General

1. Long, grasping fingers.
2. Eye-like whorls on body. Maybe they really are eyes.
3. Mass of floppy foliage.
4. Gaping, mouth-like orifice which moans and belches.
5. Hideously malformed, covered in grotesque nodules and limp, stunted arms.
6. Long, pointy nose.





Once upon a time,  
in hoary Dolmenwood...

**WORMSKIN** explores the mythic forest called Dolmenwood, a setting for use with BX campaigns or similar tabletop systems. Each issue will look at various elements of this eldritch realm situated on the leafy verges of Faerie, where austere Drones rub elbows with weird elf-lords and talking beasts, where witches wander skylad and armed with sinister magicks to bind the spirits of hapless adventurers. Be wary.