

FOREST SEEDS

FORESTCRAWLS

A forestcrawl is a simple method for exploring a large forested area, typically made up of branching trails connecting scattered points of interest. While a forestcrawl has some of the same properties as a traditional dungeon delve, it swaps stone walls and ceilings for the dense, non-linear design of a heavily wooded area. Instead of rooms, points of interest are defined as clearings or major changes in the forested landscape. However unlike exploring a dungeon, characters can take shortcuts, go “off-trail,” or climb trees to get a better look around (with a cost, of course).

EXPLORING THE WOOD

- ♦ Follow the *Dungeon* exploration procedures found in the Player’s Guide, but rather than rolling for Dungeon Events, use the Wilderness Events table instead.
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- If the party attempts to step off the trail and cut through the forest, the Warden should make any associated costs
- ♦ clear: added travel time, effort, special tools that may be required, and any obvious dangers. Going off-trail also automatically triggers a roll on the Wilderness Events table.
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- ♦ Points in a forestcrawl are close to each other. When traveling on clearly marked trails, a small forest (10–15 POIs) can be explored in a single Watch.
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- ♦ Rely on the fiction and common sense to determine how much daylight is available, whether a suitable area is available for rest, and what the costs or dangers the forest may contain in the darkness.

CREATING A FOREST

Follow this procedure for any forested terrain in a region. If a conflict or interesting pattern emerges, be open to restating or modifying any earlier results!

MATERIALS REQUIRED

- ♦ A sheet of paper and a notebook. Letter/A4 is fine.
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- ♦ Pencils and erasers. Colored pencils or crayons are good, too.
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- ♦ At least one d6 and one d20, but 6d6 and 2d20 would be ideal.

Going forward, we will refer to the sheet of paper as the **map**. As with any other rule, if you don’t like a table result, roll again or tweak as desired!

OVERVIEW

- 1 Describe the forest.
- 2 Describe the spirit of the forest.
- 3 Create the forest's POIs.
- 4 Create the forest's trails.
- 5 Create forest encounters.
- 6 Name the forest.

FOREST DESCRIPTION

Roll on **forest-description**, writing the results in your notebook. This table both indicates how outsiders perceive the forest as well as any unique natural features it may have. If the forested terrain was generated using the methods described in the Setting Seeds chapter, consider how the associated Landmark affects it as well.

Landmarks help travelers navigate through the dense foliage, acting as geographic reference points: unusually tall trees, watchtowers, and so on. Most forest landmarks are visible only by climbing a tree, though a few are large enough to stand out from the green. Some landmarks are *heard* rather than seen.

THE SPIRIT OF THE FOREST

In some ways, the Wood is a single entity, its brain alive within every tree and plant, connected via a network of thorn and branch. The animals and plants are its limbs, directing its wants, desires, fears, and needs. The creatures that live within its boundaries are its blood, answering its call by delivering much needed defenses and rebuffing interlopers. The Wood will always protect itself and its children. Roll on **forest-traits** and **forest-agenda**, writing the results in your notebook. This describes the general attitude of the creatures found in the forest as well as what the forest *wants* as a whole.

CREATE THE MAP

CREATE POIS

- ♦ Roll **8–12 d6** dice on the dungeon map, ignoring any dice that fall off the page. These are the Points of Interest (POI) in the forest.
- ♦ Write the face-up results on the page using the **forest–die–drop** table. For example, the number **4** would indicate a **Shelter**, which you would denote with the letter “S”.
- ♦ Select two opposite points, preferably close to the page border. These are the forest’s entrance and exit.
- ♦ Starting with the entrance and ending at the exit, number each POI on the map.
- ♦ Roll on the relevant tables for each point, writing the results in your notebook.
- ♦ Filter the table results through the table results you generated earlier in this process.

TRAILS

TRAIL TYPES

- ♦ **Standard** trails are obvious or well-trod routes between two points. *Represented by a thick line.*
- ♦ **Hidden** trails do not appear on any known maps. Their discovery always requires some kind of cost. *Represented by a dashed line.*
- ♦ **Conditional** trails may be blocked, or requires specialized tools (boats, climbing gear, etc.) to cross. Others may even be impossible to navigate without a map or guide. *Represented by a crossed line.*

DRAW TRAILS

Starting with the entrance, draw 1-4 paths between each point.

- ♦ Create loops, branching paths, dead-ends, and shortcuts between points.
- ♦ Some paths are Conditional, represented by a crossed line.
- ♦ Some paths are Hidden, represented by a dashed line.
- ♦ If possible, create intersections (crossed lines) with no points in between.

Create trails by drawing over paths that connect 3-4 points in an obvious, consistent, or interesting manner.

- ♦ Hidden paths and short, isolated routes are not usually a part of a trail.
- ♦ Use colored pencils or crayons to help distinguish different trails.

- ♦ Roll on **forest-trail-types** (Type / Marker) for each trail, recording the results in your notebook.

If some of the results seem incongruous, that's OK! Turn these juxtapositions into questions like "Why *is* there an old logging road leading to the bandit's hideout?" That said, don't be afraid to choose a more appropriate result if you're having a hard time making it work!

MONSTER

Monsters are any dangerous creatures one might encounter in the forest. This does not mean they will attack intruders by default! Monsters are not "waiting around" for characters to stumble upon them, but have their own wants and goals. Some monsters can talk, reason, and even beg for mercy. *People can be monsters, too.*

Roll on **forest-poi-monster** (Monster / Activity).

RUINS

Forests are wild places, but that does not mean people haven't tried to tame them. The remnants of these attempts still show up from time to time, hinting at the folly of those who would stand against the Wood.

Roll on **forest-poi-ruins** (Ruin / Feature).

SHELTER

Despite its wild and unpredictable nature, there have always been those brave, skilled, or foolhardy enough to try and build a life in the Wood. And some do succeed, leaving their mark via smoldering campfire or gray tower, offering a welcome respite to weary travelers.

Roll on **forest-poi-shelter** (Shelter / Feature).

HAZARD

The Wood is a dangerous place and not to be trifled with. The forest and its inhabitants do what they must to survive, and even sated, are still preparing for their next meal. The trees, the plants, and the earth itself will leave deadly traps and dangers to root out those unworthy to pass beneath the boughs.

Roll on `forest-poi-hazard` (Hazard / Feature).

All of the tables referenced above (Description, Traits, Forest Agenda, Die Drop, Trail Types, POI: Monster/Ruins/Shelter/Hazard, Encounters) are published as structured data – see [forest-seeds-tables.json](#) in the Cairn tables index.

EXAMPLE FOREST

THE FOREST

Description: Diseased, Frozen

A thick forest infected with disease and rot. Parts of it are frozen solid.

DENIZENS

Traits: Stable, Territorial

Wish to return to the stability they once knew, but are threatened by ancient forest boundaries.

Forest Agenda: Purification, Infestation

The spirit of the forest wants nothing more than to purify itself of the disease that has taken hold. An infestation of Giant Spiders (9) has spun webs throughout, killing far too many creatures and undermining the ecosystem.

FOREST THEME

For decades, the order and stability of the forest was maintained through an agreement between the forest witch **Anglwyst** and **Sweeney**, the Wood's champion. The witch would use her magic to keep the trees and animals healthy, while the champion would ensure that hunters never kill any creature deemed essential to the Wood (indicated by a shock of white in their fur). Their pact was permanent and immalleable, and the forest was divided, barring both the witch and the champion from crossing its boundary.

After the old witch died, one of her spells grew wild, then dangerous. Now a magical disease has begun to infect the trees and creatures, threatening to consume the entire forest. Hunters call it the *Withering*, because it drains the life of everything it touches.

Note: the source publishes an illustrative map image alongside this example; as an image asset it is not reproduced here.

TRAILS

OLD LOGGING ROAD, TREE CARVINGS

The path between **1** and **5** is blocked by a broad cliff face, requiring climbing gear to ascend. Carvings from the original loggers of this forest still mar the surface of some trees.

TREELINE HEIGHTS, STONE PILES

The monks at **7** left piles of stone alongside the path for each of their fallen members.

FORAGING PATH, DISTANT SINGING

Anglwyst survived largely on the plentiful fruit found on this trail. Her magic was so powerful that echoes of her presence still mark the path: those who travel it can still hear her faint, chipper singing.

DRY RIVERBED, FRESH SPIDERWEBS

A river once ran through the West end of the forest, but it dried up after a drought. Giant spiders travel the path as they make their way to **8**, spinning their web along the trail.

HUNTER'S TRACK, DAMAGED FLORA

Sweeney allows outsiders to hunt their quarry on this trail and no other, so long as they never kill any creature with white in their fur.

POIS

1 - DISEASED CAMPSITE [ENTRANCE]

Ruin: *Petrified Campsite, Overrun With Unusual Flora*

At the forest edge is a dead **campfire** with piles of dark gray **bedding** laid out close by. Plants, flowers, and other **flora** grow thickly over the campsite. A **trail** to the **North** leads into the forest.

- ♦ **Campfire:** The remaining wood is stained a deep gray, is very cold to the touch, and is as hard as iron.

Bedding: Splinters of gray wood are stuck in the cloth.

- ♦ Icy cold to the touch. The space beneath the cloth is partly blue and red, but gray circles grow out of the wood flecks.

Flora: Rare and unique species not common to these parts.

- ♦ Skilled pruning and a few minutes of careful work produces a **Healing Salve** (restore 1d4 STR, 1 use).

Trail: Long grooves in the rough shape of a tree trunk are cut into the ground.

- ♦ Fine spiderwebs block the forest entry, as if no one had walked through in a long while.

2 - AMBER GRAVE

Hazard: *Sap Trap, Ghost Trapped In Crystal*

A rounded copse of vermillion **trees** surround a wide **puddle** of bubbling sap. A pointy green **object** is just visible in the center of the pool.

- ♦ **Trees:** The base of each tree bleeds golden sap that runs into the puddle below. They do not appear to be diseased.

Puddle: 12ft of sticky sap.

- ♦ Ankle-high and extremely sticky. Irritates the skin.

Object: Appears crystalline in nature.

- ♦ Very slippery. Difficult and time-consuming to extract without adequate tools (gloves, a pole, etc.).
- ♦ Trapped inside the crystal is the spirit of a familiar called **Gundersnatch**.
- ♦ If shattered, the shadow of a great bird will rise above the party, then disappear. Any characters with the *deprived* condition will have it resolved.

GUNDERSNATCH

Can communicate telepathically with anyone holding the crystal.

- ♦ Will plead for anyone to destroy the crystal. (A good whack with something hard will do it.)
- ♦ In exchange for his freedom, he will give the party a black feather, telling them that with it they can enter the Anglwyst's Chicken Hut at **4**.

3 - SWEENEY'S CABIN

Shelter: *Hermit's Cabin, Presents a Ready Meal*

Atop a small hill is a wooden **cabin**. Small **logs** are arranged in rows on the West side of the building, and a tall **rack** is installed on the East wall.

Cabin: There is a 3-in-6 chance that Sweeney is here. Otherwise, he is out hunting. A ring of white dust is sprinkled across the doorway.

- ♦
 - ♦ If the dust is disturbed, Sweeney will know and come investigate.

Logs: Arranged in rows of four by four.

- ♦
 - ♦ A stained outline of an animal (bear, rabbit, beaver, etc.) is drawn on each. A drop of white is painted on the rabbit. It looks new.

Rack: Various animal skins are stretched tightly across, drying.

- ♦
 - ♦ Stitched together, the skins are equal to two sets of protective clothing (1 Armor) and are highly resistant to environmental damage.

INSIDE THE CABIN

Very austere, with only a simple **cot** and small dining **table**.

Cot: Speckled with green moss and twigs. Smells faintly of rain.

- ♦
 - ♦ The floor beneath the cot is thick with green moss. If Sweeney places his hands on the moss, it falls away, revealing an underground tunnel to **4**. Only Sweeney can activate this passage.

Table: On the table is a fully prepared meal of roast duck and root vegetables, equal to a full meal for 2.

- ♦
 - ♦ A gift from Anglwyst. If eaten, the meal will reform in d12 hours.

SWEENEY

12 HP, 2 Armor, 13 STR, 15 DEX, 17 WIL, yew bow (d8)

- ♦ A cantankerous, mossy old man. If he is injured, the Wood will protect and even heal him. Each time he dies, he returns more green than before.

Would like to stop the *Withering*, but cannot enter **6** due to his pact with Anglwyst. As a test of their honor and skill, he will ask the party for help expelling the Giant Spiders at **9**.

- ♦ If the party successfully completes their first task, he will give the party a **Pendant of Karnon**, as well as the promise of further riches if they can undo the magic that is ravaging the forest at **6**.
- ♦ If the party is able to disrupt the *Withering*, he will open the secret path to **4**, telling them that they may enter the hut there.

PENDANT OF KARNON

- ♦ A wooden amulet of a bearded, horned man. When in the forest, add a Fatigue to borrow the senses of any nearby creature. *Petty*.

4 - ANGLWYST'S CHICKEN HUT

Shelter: *Hut with Legs, Hunting Is Forbidden*

A cylindrical, chimneyed **hut** covered in thick **foliage** sits at the edge of a small clearing. A wooden **sign** is pressed into the ground at the West entrance. A long spool of **chicken wire** is installed on the North side.

Hut: The front-facing windows are dark, and there is no light or smoke coming from inside.

- ♦ The door has no keyhole and will only open to friends of Anglwyst, Sweeney, or Gundersnatch.
- ♦ If the door is forced open or the hut is threatened, two legs will sprout from underneath and the hut will quickly retreat into the forest.

Foliage: Both the roof and the windows are covered in thick leafy vines.

- ♦ None of the vines touch the ground, as they would be torn were the hut to stand.

Sign: Covered in vines. In red letters it says: "No Hunting Here. Harsh penalties."

- ♦ The witch cast a spell of protection over this place. If an animal is killed here by anyone capable of speech, their killer immediately turns to stone (no save).
- ♦ Nothing dangerous will follow the party into this part of the wood.

Wire: Encircles a small, shriveled garden. A vine-covered stone statue of a young hunter stands in the middle.

- ♦ The shocked-looking hunter (a victim of the clearing's spell) holds a limp rabbit upside-down, a knife held to its throat.

INSIDE THE HUT

Lavishly decorated. A tall wooden **barrel** is set near the North fireplace, a long broom sticking out. A large **stove** is installed on the East wall. A **string** of herbs and root vegetables hang from the ceiling.

Barrel: Joined by thick mortar. Free of dust and empty save for the broom.

- ♦ The barrel can fit up to one person and is capable of flight. Use the broom to "paddle" the air.

Stove: Warm, and large enough to sleep on. A red scarf is tied around one of the iron handles.

- ♦ The scarf given to Anglwyst by Sweeney that is otherwise mundane. Sweeney would love to have it back.

String: Goods of rare and extinct quality. Worth 500gp to the right buyer.

- ♦ A mandrake root hangs from the string. If fed water daily, it will indicate a lie when it hears one. Screams loudly if cut.

5 - TREE AT THE CROSSROADS

Monster: *Grizzly, Guarding*

A long **tree** lays across a small glade at the intersection of two **trails**. A sharp **cliff** to the South offers a steep climb to the bottom.

Tree: Enormous and at least partially hollowed out. Bear prints mark the East entrance.

- ♦ ♦ A Grizzly Bear and her three cubs make this tree their den. They hibernate in the winter, but any other time they are awake. The mother will attack anyone entering the tree (skip the reaction roll).

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- ♦ **Trails:** Broken leaves and tree rubbings on the trail are clear evidence of the bear's habitation.

Cliff: Metal hoops are pounded into the cliff face.

- ♦ ♦ Installed when the forest was still being logged, but still solid. Perfect for ropes.

GRIZZLY BEAR

6 HP, 15 STR, 13 DEX, 5 WIL, claws (d8+d8)

- ♦ Reddish-brown bears commonly found in mountains, woodlands, and prairies.
- ♦ Prefer to eat fish and meat, and will attack the rare unfortunate who crosses their path.
- ♦ **Critical Damage:** Bite the targeting for an additional d6 STR damage. The target bleeds out very quickly.

6 - GRAY SANCTUARY

Hazard: *Frozen Troll, A Spell Gone Wrong*

A gray forest **sanctuary** stands at the intersection of four trails. In its center, two enormous **statues** appear to be wrestling.

Sanctuary: All nearby plant life is lifeless and dull, as if all color has been bled away.

- ♦ The air shimmers with magic, emanating most strongly above the two statues.
- ♦ ♦ The *Withering* effect is evident even before entering the clearing, as the *Withering* has begun to spread in all directions.
- ♦ Plant matter brought into the clearing will soon begin to petrify, even without direct contact.

Statues: Two wood trolls are fighting over a shiny object held high in the air by the larger of the two.

- ♦ ♦ The object is a **Yore Glass**, a mirror Relic whose magic has disrupted the delicate spell that once made this place a verdant haven for forest life.
- ♦ ♦ The Witch's spell can only be disrupted by removing the mirror from the area or by destroying it completely. It is tightly held by the statue but can be removed by the application of grease, or by breaking the troll's arm.
- ♦ If the spell is broken, the magical effect will end, and the trolls will slowly awaken. They will immediately try to reclaim the mirror.

YORE GLASS

- ◆ Once per day, the holder can replay 5 minutes of their life from the third-person. Long-term use can be addictive.
 - ◆ Suffer *deprivation* if not used regularly.
-
- ◆ **Recharge:** Catch another's reflection in the glass without them knowing.

WOOD TROLL

10 HP, 15 STR, 12 DEX, 7 WIL, bite (d8), club (d10)

- ◆ Large humanoids with elongated arms made of bark or root. They live in forests, sharing a deep connection with the vegetation around them.
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- ◆ If killed, they will slowly regenerate unless their corpse is taken out of the forest or burned with fire.
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- ◆ **Critical Damage:** Moss and twigs begin growing out of the target's wounds.

7 - FLOODED ABBEY

Ruins: *Flooded Monastery, Hidden Cache*

Three flooded **buildings** sprout from the center of a small pond, their **conical** roofs peaking out from beneath the waters. On the North side, a dry riverbed runs directly into the pond. The Eastern path is lined with dozens of piled **stones**.

Buildings: Archaic, with subtly beautiful religious iconography. Obviously an abbey.

- ◆
 - ◆ Flooded after the dam at **8** was destroyed.
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Roofs: The tallest of the three buildings has a glass window high above the water.

- ◆
 - ◆ The window is rusted shut but can be pried or broken open to enter the abbey's Chapter House.
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Stones: Piled along the Southern side of the Eastern path. Names are engraved on most.

- ◆
 - ◆ The monks left piles of stone alongside the path for each of their fallen members.

CHAPTER HOUSE

Tapestries line the walls of this circular room, its wooden **floor** all but rotted away from water damage. A collapsed bannister on the Southwest side is all that remains of the flooded **stairwell** down into the rest of the building.

Tapestries: Moldy and unsalvageable.

- ♦ ♦ Originally depicted the abbey in its former glory and the monks who lived here.

Floor: One of the wooden boards is less withered than the others. It smells faintly of something floral.

- ♦ ♦ Below the board is a hidden Spellbook, *Yearning Path*.

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- ♦ **Stairwell:** Completely underwater. The rooms below contain only floating corpses and ruined books.

YEARNING PATH

- ♦ Shows the shortest path to the object of a heart's *true* desire. Smells of lavender. Adds an extra Fatigue if read more than once per day. The process is cumulative.

8 - BLACK MASS

Hazard: *Giant Spider Nest, Injured Creature*

A black **boar** limps noisily near a large **mass** of black thread and trees. Fat, desiccated **carcasses** hang in spun silk from the treetops. A dry **riverbed** to the South is filled with piles of wood.

Boar: Half-wrapped in thick black silk, it mews plaintively.

- ♦ ♦ Poisoned by the spider bite in its hind quarters. If the party comes to its aid, the Wood will remember.

Mass: Threads of thick black silk hold together a 10ft pile of wood.

- ♦ ♦ The nest is home to 3 **Black Silk Spiders**. They will attack anyone that that interacts with their food or gets too close to their nest.
- ♦ ♦ 200gp of black silk can be carefully gathered from the nest. It makes a fine rope (about 60ft) that is also incredibly strong and is sought after for its hydrophobic qualities.

Carcasses: Mostly animal corpses. A human shape is visible through the black webbing.

- ♦ ♦ The human was a hunter who ignored Sweeney's warnings and hunted North of the *Hunter's Track*. On the corpse are Rations (2 uses left), 33gp, and a hip-knife (d6).

Riverbed: Large piles of wood are thrown about. Bits of black silk can be seen tied around the longer pieces.

- ♦ ♦ A former beaver dam that kept the water to a trickle. The spiders brought the dam down to build their nest. The subsequent flooding destroyed the monastery at **7**, but the river only dried up after a drought earlier this year.

BOAR

4 HP, 12 STR, 5 DEX, 6 WIL, tusks (d6+d6)

BLACK SILK SPIDER

4 HP, 4 STR, 13 DEX, 5 WIL, bite (d8)

- ♦ ♦ **Critical Damage:** Poison paralyzes the victim and deals an additional d4 DEX damage. The victim is then dragged to the spider's nest to be eaten.

9 - FISHING HUT [EXIT]

Shelter: *Fishing Hut, Occupied by Army Deserters*

A ramshackle **hut** built beside a small **lake** to the North. **Smoke** streams from a cooking rack on the West side, and loud **voices** echo through the South-facing window.

- ♦ **Hut:** Built from simple logs tied together with rope, which appears fresh. Fishing wire can be seen leading out of the North side and into the lake.

Lake: Placid, but filled with bugs. A path on the West side leads away from the forest.

- ♦ ♦ The lake hasn't been fished for some time and has become overpopulated. Fishing is easy pickings.

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- ♦ **Smoke:** Spills from a wooden cooking rack adjacent to a pile of fried fish (4 x Rations, 3 uses each).

Voices: Laughing and muffled speech. At least two voices can be heard from inside.

There are three ex-soldiers squatting in this hut. They are pacifists who were forcibly conscripted into military

- ♦ service. They are seeking refuge in the abbey at **7** but haven't made it that far yet. They are jovial and kind-
 - ♦ hearted but absolute cowards.
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- ♦ They know little about the forest, other than that there used to be a river running South from the lake that ended somewhere near an abbey.

ENCOUNTERS

The full "Forest Encounters" 1d6 table used for wandering encounters is published as structured data – see **forest-**encounters in [forest-seeds-tables.json](#).