

GURPS®

Fourth Edition

MAGIC™

PLANT SPELLS™



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An e23 Sourcebook for GURPS®

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

Stock #37-0136

Version 1.0 – October 2010



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*But the job is to seek mystery, evoke
mystery, plant a garden in which strange
plants grow and mysteries bloom.*

– Ken Kesey

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INTRODUCTION

The earliest magical practices were rituals that connected humans with the greater natural world. Cunning folk discovered recipes using uncommon herbs, formulae that could be used to induce healing and prophetic visions. They developed their increasingly complex rituals into spells – codified packets of knowledge that could be collected, taught, and mastered.

In a fantasy world, plant-based spells are the tools of rangers, country witches, and woodland elves. They are the arsenal of “druids” – nature-worshipping priests who combine adventuring with their veneration of trees and green fields. In the horror genre, the spells are used by Gaia-attuned spiritualists, a variety of authentic druids, and glowering gardeners who tend to their unpleasant plots.

They say a German once wrote a book about a lemon skin; I could have written one about every grass in the meadows, every moss in the woods, every lichen covering the rocks. I do not want to leave even one blade of grass or atom of vegetation without a full and detailed description.

– Jean-Jacques Rousseau

This supplement adds 38 new spells to the Plant college, and adapts several more. Key information about plants of all kinds and options pertinent to mages are also included.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Scott Maykrantz lives and works in Greenwood, Indiana. He is the author of several **GURPS** books. Scott spends his free time playing the tambourine, contemplating the mysteries of the universe, and teaching blind people how to fish. He dedicates this book to the memory of Alec Holland.

About GURPS

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Errata. Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata pages for all **GURPS** releases, including this book, are available on our website – see above.

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the **GURPS Basic Set, Fourth Edition**. Page references that begin with B refer to that book, not this one.

BASIC CHARACTERISTICS

Plants are organisms with the potential for intelligence. All living plants have an IQ score that is stuck at 0 unless something supernatural occurs. Traits and spells that affect the mind are useless, including Mind Control, Mind Probe, Mind Reading, and Mindlink. Telepathy will connect, but there are no thoughts for the telepath to hear. See *GURPS Thaumatology* (p. 116) for a thorough description of IQ levels 1 through 5.

The range of basic characteristics among plants – HP, DR, weight, etc. – is as varied as the number of species. Use these guidelines for combat, attempts to damage trees, clearing underbrush, movement in a forest, and setting fires. As a starting point, select the generic plant in the table below that most closely resembles the actual vegetation.

HP: At 0 HP, a plant is clearly damaged but could recover if tended to with adequate soil, water, and sunlight. When it dies as the result of a failed HT roll at or below -HP, or at -5×HP regardless, it becomes an object, losing any IQ above 0 it may have had for whatever reason. Rejuvenate Plant instantly brings a plant with negative HP up to 1 HP.

HT: Default HT for all plants is 11. Plant *creatures* may have a different level.

DR: Plant DR is ablative to burning, corrosion, crushing, cutting, and huge piercing attacks to the same spot. DR is

semi-ablative to multiple impaling, piercing, and large piercing attacks to the same spot. See pp. B47 and B559.

SM: Trees of SM +1 or more have roots that cover a circle with a diameter equal to the SM in yards. The trunk sits at the center and takes up space above ground equal to one-sixth of the diameter (don't round).

Examples: Trees with SM +1 are 7' to 9' tall, with a root-base diameter of one yard and a trunk six inches thick. Trees with SM +5 are 31' to 45' tall, with a five-yard-diameter root base and a trunk 2.5 feet thick. Trees with SM +9 are 151' to 210' tall, with a nine-yard-diameter root base and a trunk 4.5 feet thick.

To measure the length of the branches, assume they mirror the roots. These measurements are minimums for trees with a typical silhouette. For stout species (such as palms), increase the root and trunk diameters by up to ×2.

Weight: Listed weight is above ground and "green" – the weight of a plant that contains its natural amount of water. To include the roots, add 20%.

Flam.: Short for "flammability." HPs of heat/fire damage required to ignite (p. B433).

Dep.: Its light, soil, and water requirement, expressed using the Dependency disadvantage: D = Daily, W = Weekly, M = Monthly, and S = Seasonally. See *Disadvantages* (p. 9).

Plant Physical Characteristics Table

Type	HP	DR	SM	Weight	Flam.	Dep.	Notes
Bamboo (6' length)	11	1	0	4 lbs.	10	W	[1]
Bush, average (5')	39	1	+0	115 lbs.	30	W	[2, 3, 4]
Bush, full grown (100')	780	8	+8	923,000 lbs.	30	M	[2, 3]
Coconut, single	10	4	-6	2 lbs.	30	S	[2, 5]
Flower bush	8-23	0	0	1-25 lbs.	30	D	[4]
Flower, single	1	0	-7	neg.	30	D	
Fruit/vegetable, hard	1-12	1	-2	5-60 lbs.	30	D	[5, 6]
Fruit/vegetable, soft	1	0	-6	8 oz.	30	D	[5]
Grass/grains, tall (1 hex)	6	0	0	1 lb.	10	W	[4, 7]
Ivy (1 hex)	6	0	0	10 lbs.	10	M	[4, 8]
Log (18" length)	17-22	3	-4	10-20 lbs.	10	–	[2, 5]
Moss (1 hex)	10	0	0	2 lbs.	–	S	[4, 9]
Palm tree (20' tall)	157	20	+3	7,200 lbs.	30	M	[2, 3]
Seaweed (1 hex)	33	0	0	70 lbs.	–	M	[4, 9]
Tree, dead (30' tall)	75	12	+4	2,000 lbs.	3	–	[2, 3]
Tree, living (20' tall)	145	18	+3	6,000 lbs.	30	M	[2, 3]
Tree, living (50' tall)	752	30	+5	820,000 lbs.	30	M	[2, 3]

Notes

[1] If removed from the rest of the plant with a successful Gardening roll, can be used as a staff of *cheap* quality.

[2] DR cannot be reduced below 1.

[3] Provides cover DR equal to SM×4.5, round down; minimum 1.

[4] Treat as Diffuse to impaling and piercing attacks.

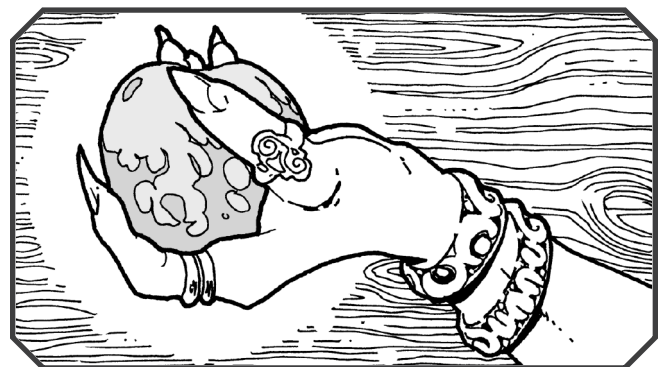
[5] See *Throwing* (p. B355) for use as a weapon.

[6] For example, a pumpkin or squash.

[7] Corn stalks and other tough crops get +2 HP.

[8] If cleared with bladed melee weapons, the items can get stuck as per *Picks* (p. B405).

[9] When dry, halve weight, and *Flam.* becomes 30.



Hypnotic Leaves

Area; Resisted by IQ

This spell animates all leaves (or flower petals, moss beards, etc.) in its area of effect such that any sentient creature that sees them must resist with IQ or become hypnotized. Those who lose are motionless and unaware of the passage of time; even Danger Sense is at -5. The condition ends if the subject's sight of the leaves is blocked (even for a second), the leaves are destroyed, or he's attacked. It stops for everyone when the spell ends, of course. Successful resistance gives the subject immunity to the spell's effects for 30 seconds. After that, if he's still in the area and can see the leaves, he must make a new resistance roll.

The GM can penalize any resistance roll if the leaves are unusually plentiful (-1), very colorful (-2), or falling (-3). These three penalties are not cumulative. Add -3 for anyone with Peripheral Vision that's at least two yards inside the area. Use darkness penalties as a *bonus* to the roll – in dim light, the leaves are difficult to see, so they're less likely to hypnotize. (The bonus is ignored if the subject has traits that allow him to see in the dark!) When using the *Density of Vegetation* rules (p. 6), alter the roll by +2 if the subject is in a Sparse hex when he rolls. Adjust by -4 if the hex is Dense or Impenetrable.

The magic does not affect anyone who is outside the area looking into it. Witnesses might see a number of victims standing around in the thicket or garden, staring at the pretty leaves (GM's decision if any current victims are in view). If the witness is a plant mage, he can roll IQ+5 to correctly guess what's going on.

Duration: 1 minute.

Base Cost: 2 to cast. Half to maintain.

Time to Cast: 4 seconds.

Prerequisites: Magery 1, Daze, and Plant Sense.

Item

Jewelry or staff; usable only by a mage. *Energy cost to create:* 900.

Improved Firewood

Regular

This spell can be cast on any piece of dead wood, dry, damp, or even freshly removed from a tree. Its flammability (p. B433) rises to Highly Flammable when the spellcaster deliberately tries to ignite the wood. Once lit, it burns three times longer than it normally would (like Essential Wood) and emits no noise or smoke! If anyone but the caster tries to set it on fire – or the caster exposes it to flame accidentally – treat the wood as it was before the spell was cast. If it catches fire in this way, the spell ends. Improved firewood is very useful in enclosed settings such as tombs and deep caves.

The wood remains under the effect of the spell until it becomes ash (if it was lit properly). It can be detected as magical, and Dispel Magic ends the effects at any time.

Duration: Permanent.

Cost: 1 per lb.

Time to cast: 10 seconds per 5 lbs., round up.

Prerequisite: Identify Plant.

Item

Jewelry or staff. *Energy cost to create:* 100.

Invoke Fence

Regular

This spell creates a low (3' tall) barrier comprised of sticks, brushwood, and larger pieces of fallen trees. The spell assembles existing material rather than conjuring plant life, magically gathering the components from the surrounding area. Up to a half-mile away, branches and chunks of bark disappear and then reappear, piece by piece, to create the fence. Its length is based on the amount of energy spent (see below). The barrier has no supernatural qualities; it functions like any other fence, marking a boundary or corralling cattle.

The mage can create a similar barrier using Plant Growth and Shape Plant, but it will look unnatural, with a shape that suggests supernatural power was used to create it. The fence, meanwhile, shows no signs of supernatural creation and will not provoke suspicion among ordinary people.

Cost: 3 for every 10 yards to cast.

Time to cast: 2 minutes.

Prerequisites: Magery 2 and Heal Plant.

Item

Staff. The mage traces a line on the ground before activating the spell, marking where the fence will appear. *Energy cost to create:* 200.

Useful New Spells for the Dungeon

In a fight, use Blade of Grass (pp. 10-11), Green Death (p. 14), Shuriken Leaf (p. 19), Slimy Skin (p. 19), and Wooden Arm (p. 21). Construct traps and improvised tools by applying Join Plants (pp. 15-16) and Plant to Object (p. 16) on branches or leaves. Bend thick wooden doors with Shape Plant. Create Paper (p. 12), Improved Firewood (p. 15), and Trapped Light (p. 20) will come in handy as well.

Join Plants

Regular; Resisted by IQ+5 (p)

This spell fuses plants together. They must be of the same type (see p. 4), but the mage may combine living and dead. The caster can bind them extensively (turn a braid of ivy into a solid ivy rope) or partially (connect the tips of two leaves or link two flowers by their stems). A fusion of living plants can continue to grow. This spell complements Shape Plant. Both render wood and vegetation in the caster's grip into a soft, claylike material.

A few of the tricks that can be performed with this spell: Reattach picked fruit, connect a dozen wide leaves into a blanket, or build a knobby pole by fusing thick branches end-to-end. To determine the success in building complex items (such as a cage made from branches), use Artist (Sculpture), Camouflage, or Traps.

Duration: Permanent.

Cost: 3, or 4 for unliving material, to cast.

Time to cast: 10 seconds.

Prerequisite: Shape Plant.

Item

Clothing or jewelry (a pair of gloves or bracelets). *Energy cost to create:* 500.

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*The temple bell stops but I still hear the sound
coming out of the flowers.*

– Matsuo Basho

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