PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE
AB
ABYSSAL BREWS
THE
GARDEN
MATRON
Tending to castle gardens in an endless job and this elemental will see it through regardless.

GARDEN MATRON

The pearl of many a castle are their well maintained gardens protected by their fortified walls. Deep within, far beyond the battlements, hidden in the deepest courtyards lie these pristine monuments to excess and beauty. Some are maintained to flaunt wealth, while others stand as living gifts to ones that the nobility seek to woo, whatever the reason for their existence, each garden needs constant maintenance. For a job such as this, kings and queens may hire in teams of servants that tend to the topiaries and hedges making sure that none are out of place, but for those truly discerning customers, they turn to the help of their courtly wizard.

Through an excruciating process of finding the proper elemental core and applying extensive enchantments to it, a nurturing heart of sorts can be formed. If that heart is then implanted and bound to a topiary of masterful quality, a garden matron can be formed. This process is difficult and often takes many years and the hands of several skilled craftsman including botanist, wizards, and gardeners as well as a bit of luck. Growing and pruning the perfect topiary to implant the heart in is a process that can often take years of dedicated work on its own. The enchantments required to enforce a nurturing nature on the chaotic core of an elemental being is something known to few wizards and druids and often is viciously guarded due to the expense and pride these practitioners take in their creation. The final product though is something truly special. A being perfectly suited to love and nurture a stately garden as if ever petunia was her own child.

The birth of a Garden Matron is something truly special to witness. Watching a being rise from a topiary and gain some semblance of sentience is a magical sight typically reserved for the very few who know how to master these beings. The initial creation is only the start though as it often takes months of rigorous training for the matron to understand her charge. A newborn Garden Matron is similar to a newborn child in that it has very little understanding of the world around it, but feels a deep connection to the flora and fauna in its area of creation. Once fully trained, these beings will tend to a garden almost autonomously, possessing all it needs in its magical abilities to tend to the greenery it is charged with.

It's not known how long a Garden Matron will live, but stories from some adventurers say they still seek to protect their lands even long after kingdoms have crumbled and walls have been turned to rubble. The oldest living Garden Matron is known to be well over 600 years old having stood watch over its crumbled castle for over 400 years autonomously after the place was left to ruin following a siege. It's fascinating to think that one creature could stand guard and provide care for so long with nary a hint of anyone returning to the lands.

GARDEN MATRON CREATURE 14

CN MEDIUM ELEMENTAL PLANT

Perception +28
Languages Common, Elven, Sylvan
Skills Athletics +28, Medicine +28, Nature +31, Survival +28, Plant Lore +31
Str +5, **Dex** +8, **Con** +5, **Int** +5, **Wis** +9, **Cha** +5
Mother's Care The garden matron cares for plants in its chosen garden causing them to grow especially lush and bloom in striking and vibrant colors.
One With Nature The garden matron can ask questions of, receive answers from, and use the Diplomacy skill with animals and plants.

AC 35; **Fort** +28, **Ref** +28, **Will** +25
HP 256; **Resistances** poison 10; **Weaknesses** fire 10
Vineguard ↻ (envision, plant); **Trigger** the garden matron is hit with a Strike; **Frequency** three times per day; **Effect** The matrons curls vines around her limbs granting her a +3 circumstance bonus until the end of her next turn.

Speed 25 feet, climb 15 feet
Melee ❖ vinewhip +29 (finesse, magical, reach 10 feet, trip), **Damage** 3d10+18 slashing
Ranged ❖ thorn throw +27 (plant, primal, range increment 60 feet), **Damage** 3d8+15 piercing
Primal Prepared Spells DC 34, attack +26 ; **7th** regenerate, summon plant or fungus; **6th** cursed metamorposis, tangling creepers; **5th** banishment, heal; **4th** oaken resilience, resist energy; **3rd** earthbind, haste, wall of thorns; **2nd** animal messenger, remove fear; **1st** fleet step, gust of wind, pest form; **cantrips (7th)** detect magic, guidance, light, stabilize
Primal Innate Spells DC +34 , attack +26; **8th** impaling briars; **5th** nature's pathway (×3); **4th** one with plants (×3); **3rd** entangling flora (at will), shape wood (at will); **cantrips (5th)** tangle vine
Pin ❖ (plant, manipulate); **Requirements** the garden matron's previous action was a successful attempt to Trip a creature; **Effect** The garden matron attempts to ensnarl the creature with vines. The creature must attempt a DC 34 Dexterity Saing throw.

Success The creature is unharmed
Failure The creature is restrained until the end of their next turn
Critical Failure As failure, but the creature also takes 3d10+18 bludgeoning damage

Walking into a garden that is maintained by a Garden Matron is almost like walking into the fey itself. Miraculously large plants and meticulously groomed topiaries dot the perfectly pruned hedges and grasses. There is nary a blade of grass nor a leaf out of place as the Matron flits about her charge tending to every spare bud and even befriending the local wildlife. They are known to form ties with the squirrels, birds, and other wildlife that exist in these gardens, looking upon them as children of her own.

Garden Matrons are slow to anger in most situations, but if you seek to harm her plants or wildlife, then woe be to you traveler. Matrons will never strike back against the garden's owners, but to those who would intrude, they are ruthless in their pursuit. They will bring the full fury of their magical prowess as well as calling in favors from the fey and fauna that call the garden their home. It's best to mind your step when visiting the grounds of a castle garden maintained by a matron.

TACTICS

Garden Matrons are first and foremost tenders of their gardens. They care for the plants and wildlife within them as if they were their own child. They typically don't attack on first offense, but if intelligent creatures would seek to harm the plants or harvest them for their own benefit, then it is likely that a Garden Matron will attack. They are powerful casters with a number of spells at their disposal and will not hesitate to bring down the full force of that skill on interlopers. Additionally, they rarely fight alone calling in aid from the creatures in their gardens.

- Make sure to cast early and often. They have a number of tools at their disposal to interrupt the battlefield. Don't hesitate to blow big spells early and make it a problem.
- Notice the trip on the matron's vinewhip attack. Make sure to use this whip to trip and attempt to pin on occassion. This can shut down pesky melee attackers.
- The matron has a climb speed and that should be used early to her advantage. If she knows she's outnumbered she will seek high grown and attack from range.
- One with Nature should be used to try to keep the peace if any problematic creatures make their way in.
- Her thorn throw can be dangerous from range. Use this to pepper the enemy while utilizing other creatures for more melee combat.
- Vineguard will help keep the matron alive when things get difficult but shouldn't be relied upon for defense.

SUGGESTED PAIRINGS

Garden Matrons are rarely alone and often employ the help of fey and wildlife in their gardens.

- Most any fey or plantlike elementals would be appropriate to use as they would often be friends to the matron.
- Don't neglect the power of swarms of small beasts that would emerge from the plants to protect the matron. Ill-tempered badgers and others could be particularly dangerous when they come in numbers.

GERDENKEEPER ITEM 14

UNCOMMON | INVESTED | MAGICAL

Price 4,200 gp
Usage worn armor; **Bulk** 2

The natural world offers many wonders and one such creation is living armor. Grown by particularly adept botanists that use magic as part of their process, this *+2 resilient wooden breastplate* is composed of living bark and plant matter. Vines wind around its extremities and constantly move, seemingly aware of its surroundings and ready to take action should the moment arise.

While wearing this armor, you gain a +5-foot item bonus to your base Speed. As the vines wind and pull you along your path. Additionally, you gain a Climb Speed equal to half of your base Speed.

Activate ◆◆ envision; **Frequency** once per hour;
Effect You will the vines to retract and wrap themselves tightly around your body providing additional protection. The armor casts 4th-level Oaken Resilience on you. While under the effects of this spell, you lose the bonus to Speed and Climb Speed that this armor conveys.

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