

PLANTS & FUNGI

Version 3-29-23

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OVERVIEW

This Plants & Fungi collection will focus on various exotic, perilous, and/or useful plants unique to the Destiny Omega/Gelitech story world. These entries will include information on any effects encounters with the subjects might induce, both short and long term.

CONDOMFLOWER TREE

Plant: Tree, Deciduous, Carnivorous, Vore Hazard

Found in the humid Desorrian Rainforest on Ketría II's Fakirra subcontinent, the condomflower tree is a dangerous predatory plant known for snaring large wildlife and incautious explorers alike. These trees are fairly easy to spot under the otherwise high canopy, appearing as 10 meter tall deciduous trees covered rusty orange leaves. Their thick lower branches spread out about 4 meters from the ground, adorned with large downward facing, trumpet like yellow flowers whose round, ruffled openings appear much like an unrolled condom.

Condomflower trees are generally surrounded by a sweet, slightly meaty scent that tends to attract insects to the smaller, and more numerous of the tree's 'flowers'. Hanging down to within about two meters above ground level, the few larger flowers emit chemicals which repel insects which, in combination with the smaller flowers, generally makes camping in close proximity to a condomflower tree seem like a good idea, as insects in proximity generally have no interest in bothering animal interlopers. The same chemicals that repel insects from the area around the large flowers, however, have a subtly enticing effect on animals that grows over time. Should an animal or explorer fail to toy with one of the larger flowers upon encountering the tree, a night's sleep underneath is sure to result in an insatiable desire to do so once awakened.

If an animal or explorer touches the ruffled face of a condomflower tree's larger flowers, it suddenly turns toward them and attempts to unroll itself over their body. The initial attack is almost instantaneous, and before the victim can react, she will be half-wrapped in the flower's rubbery membrane. It takes another few seconds for the membrane to fully unroll, and the victim has a chance to escape if help can be had to pull the tight rim of the flower open enough for her to fall out. Should help not be available, the victim has about fifteen seconds to take hold of any sharp object she might have in her possession and cut herself free. This isn't very difficult, but

should she fail to do so in a timely fashion, she will find herself breathing in a powerful sedative that will almost instantly place her into a dreamy, half-conscious state in which she is aware of the world in a distant, foggy sort of way, but unable to do anything to interact with it besides weakly wiggle and squirm a bit.

Once the condomflower tree has fully unwrapped around its victim, it pulls her upward, while sealing over her feet. Once she's been lifted off the ground, she has only about a half hour to be freed by some outside assistance before she begins to rapidly dissolve. Owing to the potent sedatives, this physical dissolution is both completely painless, and experienced for far longer than one might expect, as the victim remains in her dreamy conscious state until a significant amount of her mass has been dissolved. The victim dies in about fifteen minutes, and another fifteen minutes is required for full dissolution.

Once the digestion of the victim is complete, the resulting mass of nutrient rich fluid remains hanging in the rubbery flower for quite some time. It takes up to a week for the fluid to be absorbed, and the flower to return to its initial state.

The condomflower tree has claimed an unknown number of interlopers over the years, but has also saved countless victims of traumatic injury a significant portion of the physical suffering normally associated with their condition during the initial treatment and healing phases of their recovery. The potent sedative chemicals of the tree, once collected at great risk, were finally synthesized in reliable fashion almost a millennia ago. Lacking side effects, or addiction after long term application, synthetic condomflower extract, or Sycondex, is in common use by medical services and hospitals all over the Fey'li Empire.

FUNGIRL

Fungus: Monstrous, Transformation Hazard

Buried deep in the chilly swamps of Perria III's southern continent, a vast subterranean network of fungal threads spreads out from a single core to cover an area of almost three thousand square kilometers. This fungus sprouts large, three to six meter tall mushrooms with broad, flat caps, forming an exotic under-canopy that is one of the frontier world's principle tourist attractions. So long as one remains on the elevated walkways, wandering among the fungirl 'shrooms is perfectly safe, as its three centimeter spores are too large to become airborne, let alone be inhaled.

The real risk of the 'shrooms comes when one steps off the path and comes into direct skin contact with a growing mushroom that has yet to break the surface of the mire. As a defense mechanism, a small amount of fungus will adhere to exposed flesh. It will immediately, and quite painlessly, insinuate itself into its victim's flesh. It also begins to grow upon the surface of her body, using both nutrients from the swamp and those collected as its threads spread through her body in order to fuel its growth. After a mere twenty seconds, no place within her body will be free from fungal filaments. The smooth, cream colored outer coating takes about a minute to fully form, eventually covering her face and head withing a solid, unbroken fungal mass.

Despite the significant effects within the victim's body, she is almost completely unaware of her transfiguration. The fungal spread is painless, and the chemicals it exudes directly into her bloodstream alter her sense of physical self to make it seem as if her new body is perfectly normal, and altering her memories to match. Surprisingly, considering the magnitude of the physical effects, the victim faces no further repercussions, so long as she doesn't come into contact with the fungal mass again.

If the victim does come into contact with the fungal mass again, she will be fully subsumed by the fungus and transformed into a new, roughly humanoid sized mushroom over the course of a few minutes. This time she will be very much

aware that her new state isn't natural, though there is nothing she will be able to do but live out the centuries-long life of a mushroom with a fungus-transformed brain trapped inside.

If the victim leaves well enough alone, she can go on living an often much extended life as a fungirl. She cannot speak, though she can hear in a significantly dulled way. She has no sense of smell, nor any sense of taste. Her sense of touch is extremely dulled, and her vision is limited to a very primitive sort of fungal heat-sense. She cannot eat in a conventional sense, and obtains nutrients by direct contact, causing food to rapidly desiccate as its nutrients are absorbed, as well as drawing in any needed moisture from the air, or by direct contact.

Fungirls retain the ability to engage in physical intercourse, though most might find the idea of engaging in that sort of intimacy with a creature who's genitals are made of fungus quite unappealing. Should a fungirl and a funguy come into close proximity, in an appropriate swampy setting, they will feel compelled to mate. There is a small, but not insignificant, chance that this results in their merging and transformation into a new fungal mass which burrows into the ground and forms a single humanoid sized mushroom overhead. As with the mushroom transformation of a fungirl who touches her parent fungus a second time, this results in their minds being trapped within their new bodies, though in this case the entrapment is likely for the potentially million+ year lifespan of the fungal mass as a whole.

Fungirls will live up to two hundred years after their transformation, and are largely immune to disease. Due to the alterations of their senses, they are largely incapable of living what a typical humanoid would consider a productive life. They do find a few niches in industries where simple presence of their unusual bodies on display can make up for their limitations.

FUNGUY

Fungus: Monstrous, Transformation Hazard

A funguy is the male equivalent of the fungirl. He is transformed in the same fashion, and has all the same properties as his female equivalent, save for the form of his fungal genitalia and retained sexual identity.

GOLDEN KISITTI TREE

Plant: Tree, Deciduous, Transformation Hazard

The golden kisitti tree is a large deciduous tree native to the Drochaki homeworld of Anochak III. Its smooth bark has a sparkling golden sheen, while its leaves are a translucent amber in color. Its large amber flowers are notable for their sweet, honey scent. They produce copious quantities of pollen, but cannot be fertilized, and thus cannot produce fruit. The actual reproductive process of the tree is far more insidious, and equally astonishing to behold.

Should a sapient organism come into contact with the trunk of a golden kisitti, luminous, golden amber sap oozes out of the bark and quickly adheres the interloper to the tree. The bark then parts, forming a glowing, sap filled bole into which the captive is partially drawn. The subject is then rapidly transformed into solid amber, still partially sticking out from the bole. This does not kill the subject, but rather causes her to enter into a strange, semi-conscious state wherein she can feel the amber of the bole as if it were all her body.

Over the course of several months, the bole will rise up the golden kisitti tree, shrinking as the captive form is slowly absorbed. The bole will completely vanish as it reaches the tree's high canopy. After another month or so, a perfect, 15 centimeter sphere of glowing amber with form beneath one of the branches. This 'fruit' and its captive consciousness will drop to the ground after a few weeks. If planted into the ground in a suitable location, it will grow into a new golden kisitti tree.

Most golden kisitti fruit are created from drochaki who accidentally touch the tree trunk while trying to collect the pollen which gives their honey its ability to sustain the life of those encased within it. More recently, a fair number of fruit have been created during the process of collecting the sap in order to make biogel. This involves actually touching the tree, hoping that one can pull away quickly enough to avoid being caught. The resulting sap is collected, with those who weren't quite quick enough a constant

reminder of the price of failure as they made their way up the tree to become fruit themselves.

Most recently, and thanks to the increasing public acceptance of physically transformational xenoexperience, an increasing number of golden kisitti encounters are with non-drochaki actively seeking to partake of the experience for their own curiosity and pleasure. This has resulted in a glut of golden kisitti fruit wherever there are drochaki hives away from Anochak, and it has become increasingly common to find the resulting fruit used as sapient baubles. As such golden kisitti fruit can be acquired for roughly €5,000 on the open market.

ODANGI MUSHROOM

Fungus: Swamp, Transformation Hazard

The infamous odangi mushroom is the spore structure of the aphix odangi fungus native to the swamps of Jevia III. The pale blue, phallic mushrooms appear in clusters of three to five, thrusting up from a cream white lump of fungal mass. Mature odangi in their prime are prized for their sweet, almost candy-like flavor, and their strong aphrodisiac qualities which become quite potent after cooking. Raw odangi are edible, but the glowing blue fluid which gives them their sweetness also ensures that anyone consuming them will find themselves unable to escape the effects of the potent "shroom spoo".

Immature odangi, under about 28 centimeters in height, have no intrinsic value. Though edible, they lack the succulent sweetness of mature examples. Over-aged odangi, over about 70 centimeters in height, are bitter and generally unpalatable. They also lack the aphrodisiac qualities of younger samples. Both immature and over-aged odangi also lack the defense mechanism which has made the species both famous and infamous.

Mature odangi are perfectly passive organisms until the presence of certain mammalian pheromones triggers their defense mechanism. They will then twist their caps toward any nearby source of heat, and ejaculate their blue fluid filling in short, powerful bursts. This sticky shroom spoo instantly adheres to fur or flesh, and quickly morphs into a dangerous, cream colored fungal matter. This immediately begins to grow, and won't stop until it completely covers the victim from head to toe.

In its native environment, odangi-imparted fungal growth is relatively slow. Each growing patch will spread to cover between one and four additional square centimeter of the victim's body every ten minutes. This rate depends on how large the patch is, with larger patches growing faster, as well as how much outward growth occurs. These fungal nodules and ridges form as the fungus is allowed to linger, and areas so covered are more difficult to free from the infestation.

Despite tales to the contrary, odangi fungus can be removed from a victim, a fact which allows brave colonists to venture into the swamps and pick them by hand, though not without considerable personal risk. If the shroom spoo splatters on, or the fungal growth finds its way into, any of the victim's body orifices, it will become permanently entrenched. It will regrow no matter how many times removal is attempted, and faster each time. A full covering of fungus therefore becomes inevitable.

Shroom loving colonists on Jevia know to be careful when they go picking. Some take the precaution of wearing some protective clothing to cover their abdominal orifices. Many, however, swear that such precautions don't produce mushrooms as sweetly saturated with shroom spoo as those who pick in the nude. One thing they can all agree upon, is that letting the fungus grow on their bodies feels really, really good. And the more, the better. At least up to a point.

Odangi fungus doesn't actually cause physical harm to its victim prior to full encasement. It does, however, exude an insidious aphrodisiac that it readily absorbed through its victim's skin. As soon as the fungus starts growing upon their body, the victim starts to feel completely at peace with the world around them, and just a tad bit aroused. At ten percent coverage, inhibitions start to fade away. At forty percent coverage, survival instinct starts to wane. At about sixty percent coverage, the victim feels an insatiable urge to let the fungus fully cover her body. At this point, unless someone else intervenes, and assuming the fungus hasn't entered a body orifice, full encasement is virtually inevitable.

Only when the victim is full encased does the odangi fungus begin to insinuate itself into her flesh. This process is completely painless, and its progress can be gauged by the growth of a spore structure around, and over her head. This flat mushroom spreads out to a diameter of a roughly one meter, and each centimeter of growth coincided with about one percent of the

victim's body becoming infused with fungal threads.

It takes about a day for the mushroom cap to fully grow, though the victim becomes a virtual zombie several hours before it finishes. Still conscious, but under the complete control of the fungal stew injected directly into her brain, the creature shuffles about the swamps in proximity to an odangi cluster. Should it encounter an interloper, it will attempt to gently, physically coax the new victim toward a crop of mature odangi mushrooms, and not allow her to leave until she has an ample mass of fungus growing on her body.

So-called shroom-zombies live between one month and three years depending on their circumstances. Fresh shroom-spoos renew them, though they are incapable of obtaining it for themselves. Only by obtaining new victims, and being splattered as the mushrooms ejaculate upon them, can the zombies survive for any length of time. When they do eventually perish, they collapse into a mass of cream colored aphix odangi, and will begin to sprout their own odangi mushrooms within days.

The only evidence that a particular mass of aphix odangi was once a zombie, and not a product of spores, is the bones that often stick out of the mass, and the bits of clothing or accessories they were wearing when the fungus encased them. Most mushroom pickers who brave the swamps consider it bad form to pass up mature odangi produced by formerly zombie specimens. They consider the picking an act of respect, and one which certain risks were acceptable in order to carry out. Not a few lingered within their growing coat of fungus just a bit too long in order to pick such mushrooms, eventually becoming a new patch of fungus to perpetuate what any rational soul ought to have considered a perverse and completely unnecessary side-cycle of life.

Aphix odangi present a further peril in the event that a stalk is inserted into an abdominal body orifice. In this case, the fungus begins to develop within and rapidly subsume the subject's body. In a disturbingly pleasant feeling process, flesh

becomes fungus, binding the subject's legs together as densely packed leaves of fungal structure grow all around. Colorful blooms burst out from body orifices and, in the case of female subjects, breasts. A mushroom cap eventually forms over the victim's head, while the fungus-flesh shrinks, revealing skeletal features beneath. Within an hour, the subject is left in a completely addled mental state, immobile and helpless. Intense pheromones spread from the new mushroom's colorful blooms, helping to entice new victims to the aphix odangi which inhabit the swamps around it. Depending on the nature of the environment, the new mushroom might go on living for months in a fairly arid environment, or several years in a temperate swamp.

In modern times, most odangi mushrooms are harvested in large, automated bio-industrial facilities. Unlike native, naturally occurring odangi, examples produced in this fashion have a far more virulent spoo. The resulting fungal mass grows much more quickly upon its victims, at a rate of ten to twenty square centimeters every five minutes. It is also virtually impossible to remove, insinuating threads of itself into the painlessly victim's skin as soon as it begins growing.

Industrial odangi also lack most of the aphrodisiac qualities of the natural variety, though they maintain the sweet flavor. Odangi thus produced can be obtained in many places throughout the Marian Drift prefecture, always thoroughly pre-cooked to prevent zombifying accidents. These are considered acceptable, if uninspiring by the culinary elite, and thanks to the recent liberalization of xenosperience law, fresh, natural odangi have made their way onto the market, along with all their attendant risks.

Unknown to the public, the vast majority of industrially harvested odangi are utilized by Vixanti Corporation, and its Gelitech subsidiary. Shroom spoo is one of the principle ingredients of biogel. It gives the gel its self-healing qualities, and the ability to insinuate itself into the host's flesh, converting it into

more biogel while maintaining its functionality with respects to the host body's overall life processes. It's also what converts the hosts body completely into biogel when triggered, either deliberately, or by imbalances within the gel itself.

Cooked industrial odangi are available to the public at the prohibitive price of ¢500 per average, 40cm stalk. Natural, cooked odangi can be acquired for ¢1,000 per stalk. Natural, uncooked odangi are classified as xenoexperience catalyst items, rather than food. They can be acquired for ¢85,000 per stalk, and not a little jumping through hoops owing to their additional classification as aggressive biohazards.

On Jevia, there is a bit of a cottage, pick-your-own tourist industry, where naked guides escort would-be shroom pickers through well maintained swamp environments. There, the tourists can pick mushrooms, feel what it's like to have the aphrodisiac fungus spreading out over their bodies, and maybe even have a carefully managed encounter with the zombie of a previous tourist who wasn't as careful as she should have been.

Relative to many other xeno-peril experiences offered to tourists across known space, picking one's own odangi mushrooms is relatively hazardous. One in fifteen tourist pickers become mushroom zombies on their first outing. That number gradually improves to about one in ninety over six or seven outings, at which point they've become experienced enough to know how to minimize risk without having someone constantly watching over their shoulder.

Though the risk seems quite outrageous, the potential profit to be made is more than enough inducement to bring in a constant stream of prospective mushroom pickers. Trips quickly pay for themselves as tourists become temporary professionals, netting ¢100 per stalk. With each outing netting each picker about 20 stalks, and at two outings per day, the profits add up very, very quickly.

Deliberate insertion of an aphix odangi stalk into one's body is a whole different kind of experience, generally regarded as being taboo in

the 'business' proper. Beyond Jevia III, there is a small, never-quite-satisfied demand for volunteers to be displayed in public fungus gardens along with aphix odangi. Videos of this particular transformation are few and far between, and new productions featuring genuinely willing subjects often command quite a high price from purveyors of xenoexperience related voyeurmedia.

SHIBA & MOKAI SUCCULENTS

Plant: Succulent, Biogel Component

The shiba and mokai plants are large leaved aloe plants native to the world of Kiamar III. The former has very tall, spiky leaves and uniform deep green color, while the latter is a squatter plant overall, with smooth leaves possessing a bright yellow tiger stripe pattern. The aloe within the leaves of both plants has the very peculiar quality of being able to stretch and contract in almost arbitrary fashion based on various stimulus from the green plant matter surrounding it.

The shiba plant is fairly slow moving, able to bend its tall leaves into a smooth ninety degree curve in about six seconds. It does this both to manage the amount of sunlight on the leaves in order to help remain fully hydrated during the dryer months of the year, as well as to discourage larger predators who might be nibbling at the leaf tips.

The mokai plant can move its leaves quite quickly. It does so to shake off predatory insects and to slap at larger predators who might attempt to browse on its leaves.

The aloe jellies of both the shiba and mokai plants are used as a basis for therapeutic slime baths. Generally mixed with water and artificially manipulated electronically, the shiba jelly is typically used for gentle, massaging baths, while the mokai jelly is used for faster vibrating baths. Pure jelly can be applied in massaging and vibrating poultices as well.

The most extraordinary use of the aloe jellies of the shiba and mokai plants is as fundamental components of biogel. Combined in a suspension with golden kisitti sap, odangi mushroom ejaculate, natural black latex, and other components, it serves as the mechanism through which biogel can move and change shape. When biogel is shaped into some specific fixed form, the aloe jelly component is effectively deactivated. In certain cases, such as with biogel gummy 'dolls' containing the living souls, the jelly component allows for natural posing, and the application of

heat can allow for a certain degree of weak movement controlled by the gummy themselves.

Shiba and mokai plants are readily available on as small, novelty decorative plants for under 100 imperial credits. They will grow to the size of their root environment, and can easily be kept in small pots for the entirety of the 12-16 year lifespan.

TAVIX

Plant: Succulent, Transformation Hazard

Despite its relatively benign outward appearance, the tavix is one of the most dangerous succulents known to modern botany. Each of the plant's six, two meter tall leaves constantly emits a potent cocktail of pheromones which, when combined with its pleasingly minty scent, are sure to attract the attention of curious sapient beings who might be passing nearby. The powerful chemical inducements cause victims to feel quite pleasant and comfortable in the plant's presence. Some might even find it intimately arousing.

What makes the tavix truly dangerous is the fact that it is capable of hijacking portions of a sapient beings connection to its immortal higher-planar existence. Anyone within twenty meters of a tavix is subject to potentially permanent alteration of their perceptions, inhibitions, memories, and even survival instincts, all specifically with respect to the tavix. All who are affected find themselves knowing all about the peril posed by the plant, but also find themselves totally at ease with the idea of becoming its next victim. They know it will be fun, and very much want the plant to invite them to enjoy it for themselves.

When tavix are found in close groups, the range of their mind altering powers expands considerably. For every tavix within the range of a particular tavix' powers, its range expands by twenty meters. This can bring more tavix within range, expanding its own range even further. Tavix have a maximum range of about one kilometer, and their tendency to survive only in smaller patches of ten plants or less ensures against the hazards of total planet coverage.

A single victim will, of course, get that invitation without a moment's delay. If the victims come in a group, the tavix will read their minds to determine who among them is regarded as the most attractive, and most likely to make for a pleasing display to the remainder. That individual will find themselves taking their clothes off in fully willing preparation to offer their bodies to the plant.

Though each tavix has six leaves, there is a surface penetrating 'node' for a seventh at the front of the plant. The selected victim will stand on this node. The new leaf will instantly begin to form. Walls begin to grow upward around the victim's legs, while a body hugging sheath of plant matter begins to encase them. Not long after, minty aloe begins to fill the 'cup' formed by the walls.

Together, all these rise up around, and then eventually within, the victim's body. To her, it feels at first quite pleasant. Once it enters her body, it begins to feel positively pleasurable, a fact that she will be more than happy to make quite clear to anyone watching. After four or five minutes, her body is completely surrounded in its tight inner encasement. After another minute, the walls of the leaf seal shut around her. A few moments later the aloe completely fills it.

The immediate victim of a tavix plant remains alive within the plant's grasp for several days before suddenly dissolving into the aloe, along with her inner encasement. It is uncertain whether or not the victim actually dies, or if her transdimensional 'life essence connection' is bound up with the plant's own. Though generally reported as the former, the marked effectiveness of each individual plant's ability to permanently alter the minds of its targets with each newly absorbed victim suggests the latter.

Remaining victims in a group who were left to watch the absorption of one of their number will be directed to other nearby tavix who can make immediate use of their bodies. Should none be present, the victims minds are further altered to set up future 'dates' with the plant. Depending on how many prior victims the plant has absorbed, that date, along with all of the other mental alterations, might become permanently affixed in their mind or it might eventually be forgotten. For plants which have absorbed six or fewer victims, the alterations fade within two weeks. For seven to twenty victims, the alterations fade within a month. For twenty to fifty victims, it can take

up to six months for the alterations to fade. Over about fifty, and all alterations become permanent.

The aloe of a tavix' seventh leaf is particularly minty, and highly soothing when applied to one's body. It is also extremely rare, largely owing to its far flung foreign sources. While normal tavix aloe is worth only ₺500 per liter, largely as a result of its curiosity value, the same quantity of pure tavix seventh-leaf aloe is worth ₺15,500 on the open market. Each leaf contains about 220 liters of aloe, and can fetch upwards of ₺8 million fully intact.

Efforts to cultivate tavix domestically have largely failed owing to the impossibility of shielding sapient beings from its mind altering abilities, and the range of those powers when placed in groups. Only the Chi'ma Riyune Farm, located on the North Riyune Ledge to the northeast of Mashiva has been able to maintain a consistent crop at a volume high enough to make it worth the effort. This is largely thanks to the Mashiva's booming xenoexperience tourism industry, which brings more than enough curious potential aloe stock to the isolated farm to keep the plants producing seventh leaves.

As with other efforts to cultivate tavix, the Chi'ma Riyune farm relies on robots to maintain and harvest the seventh leaves from the isolated field. The need for more personal attention ensures that someone has to go out every so often to make an attempt to see to various issues that crop up. This can only happen when all of the plants have seventh leaves as it ensures against farm hands becoming an immediate victim. However, it doesn't protect them from the mind alterations, and they're sure to be returning to the field the moment there's been a harvest.