

5E

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

Medium elemental, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 222 (22d8+123)

Speed 30 ft., 25 ft. climb

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws DEX +9, WIS +8

Skills History +6, Insight +8, Medicine +8, Nature +6

Damage Resistances poison

Condition Immunities charmed, diseased, poisoned, sleep

Senses darkvision 60 ft., Passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish, Sylvan

Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Proficiency Bonus +4

Matron's Care. Plants around the matron grow lush and dense while the matron is present and will seek to protect her. The matron has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects while she is within her garden.

Return to Nature. If the Garden Matron dies, its body withers and disperses into naturally decaying plant matter leaving behind any equipment it was wearing.

Actions

Multiattack. The garden matron makes three attacks choosing from any combination of Vinewhips and Thorned projectiles. It can replace one attack with a use of its Innate Spellcasting.

Vinewhip. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d8+2) slashing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Thorned Projectile. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d10+2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.

Innate Spellcasting. Garden Matron's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). It can cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *Create or Destroy Water, Detect Evil and Good, Detect Magic, Fog Cloud, Purify Food and Drink*

3/Day: *Tongues, Water Breathing, Water Walk*

1/Day: *Conjure Elemental, Control Water, Gaseous Form, Invisibility*

Reactions

Vined Carapace. Twice per day, when the Garden Matron would be hit by a melee or ranged attack, it can pull vines close to itself creating a hardened shell around its body. Until the end of its next turn, it gains a +3 bonus to its AC.

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

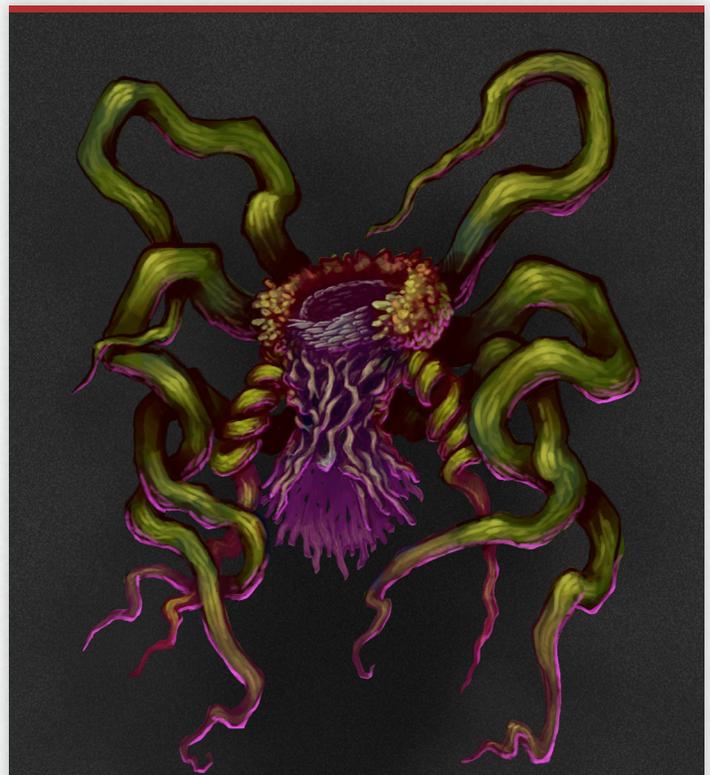
Garden Matrons are first and foremost tenders of their gardens. They care for the plants and wildlife within them as if they were their own child. They typically don't attack on first offense, but if intelligent creatures would seek to harm the plants or harvest them for their own benefit, then it is 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 that the matron is immune to many conditions and has resistance to poison damage. This is important for keeping her alive.
- 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 ground and attack from range.
- She can replace one of her attacks with a spellcasting action. This is a bit unique, but should be used when things are dire.
- Her thorned projectile can be dangerous from range. Use this to pepper the enemy while utilizing other creatures for more melee combat.
- Vined Carapace will help the Matron survive in a pinch, but don't rely on it to keep her alive forever.

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.



GARDENKEEPER

Breastplate, Very Rare

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 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. This armor has two states listed below. During your turn, you can use a bonus action to switch between the active state. Only one state can be active at any time.

Swifthusk. The vines retract leaving the inner bark as your only layer of protection. You have a +1 bonus to AC while wearing this armor. Additionally, you gain a +5 foot bonus to your standard land speed and you gain a climb speed equal to your land speed as the vines reach out to grip onto surfaces around you.

Vineguard. The vines wrap tightly around your body offering a thick layer of protection. You have a +3 bonus to AC while wearing this armor. Additionally, you gain resistance to poison damage. While in this state, you have a -10 foot penalty to your standard land speed as the vines make it difficult to move smoothly.

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