

Advanced Dungeons & Dragons[®]

Player's Handbook

2nd Edition

Rules Supplement

The Complete Druid's Handbook

by David Pulver



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Mysterious guardian of a sacred grove, wise counselor to monarchs, cunning master of many shapes, friend of animals, and terrible defender of unspoiled Nature: This is the druid of the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game.

Although the priests of the Celtic tribes of Western Europe in the time of Rome called themselves druids, the druids of the AD&D® game are not Celtic priests, nor do they practice the bloody rites that made the ancient druids infamous in the eyes of Rome. Rather, these druids more closely resemble creatures of Victorian romance and modern fantasy, Merlin figures who revere Nature and wield power over plants, animals, the weather, and the elements.

This book is designed to illuminate the many abilities of druids and show how the neutral and "unaligned" druid can best adventure with a party of predominantly good characters. It also reveals what a druid does when not adventuring and demonstrates how a druid can become the center of a new and exciting campaign.

The Complete Druid's Handbook adds numerous options to the druid class from the *Player's Handbook*, including druids from regions other than the woodlands, and introduces many specialized druid kits. Also included are new spells and magical items, as well as rules for a druid's sacred grove.

Those using this book with the AD&D Original Edition game should know that page references correspond with the AD&D 2nd Edition *Player's Handbook (PH)* and *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide (DMG)*. The original druid class appears here as an appendix, with some material from the AD&D Original Edition reference book *Unearthed Arcana*.



The traditional druid is a guardian of the woodlands. Nature, however, is vast and diverse; thus the druids detailed in this book might live their lives protecting jungle rain forests, arctic tundra, or even the subterranean Underdark. As a result, several distinct branches of druid are presented here, each essentially a new subclass built around the basic concept of the druid class. As a player, choose your druidic branch right after deciding to play a druid character.

Druidic Organization

The basic druid as described in the *PH* is referred to here as the “forest druid.” The names of the other branches reflect their geographic specialty: arctic druids, desert druids, and so on.

Members of all the branches of the druidic order have the same alignment—true neutral—and worship Nature. They share one ethos and owe at least nominal allegiance to the world’s Grand Druid. But, as befits the infinite diversity of Nature, every branch differs in details and approach to its mission. The granted powers and spells that Nature finds appropriate for a druid in one region are often inappropriate for a druid from a very different climate and terrain.

For instance, while the forest druids described in the *PH* have major access to the Plant sphere of priest spells, the branch of desert druids has only minor access to that sphere, reflecting the less abundant plant life in the desert. Similarly, while a forest druid’s ability to pass through overgrowth is very useful in the woods, it has much less utility



for a desert druid. Instead, the branch of desert druids has granted powers enabling them to survive in arid country.

Some rivalry exists between the different branches of druids. On most worlds, the forest druids belong to the dominant branch. However, on a few worlds (such as one in the midst of an ice age) another branch might wield the most power. For more details on rivalry between branches, see Chapter 3: The Druidic Order.

The Dungeon Master can restrict some branches to nonplayer characters (NPCs) or even prohibit them to suit the background or direction of a campaign. For example, the Dungeon Master (DM) might decide that the gray druids of the Underdark would make exciting adversaries for the characters. Since having player characters (PCs) as gray druids would water down the impact of the gray druids as foes, the DM can prohibit players from choosing that branch. Later in the campaign, after the party has encountered the gray druids, the DM might open the branch to players.

Similarly, some druid branches simply may not seem very logical or useful in certain campaigns. A wise DM would discourage players from selecting the arctic branch for their druid characters in a campaign set in a jungle.

The Essential Druid

Some characteristics and limitations apply to all branches of the druidic order. The following section expands on the rules for druid characters in the *PH* (pgs. 35–38).

Alignment and Ethos

All druids are of neutral alignment and share an ethos devoted to protecting the wilderness and maintaining natural cycles and a balance between good and evil (*PH*, pgs. 37, 47). For a detailed discussion of the neutral

alignment and the beliefs of druids, refer to Chapter 4: Role-playing Druids.

Experience and Hit Dice

All druids must use the druid column of Table 23: Priest Experience Levels (*PH*, p. 33). Druids, like other members of the priest group, use eight-sided Hit Dice (HD), gaining one die per level from 1st through 9th level. After 9th level, druids receive an additional 2 hit points per level, but gain no special bonus for high Constitution.

Proficiencies and Crossovers

Druids gain proficiencies just like other priests (*PH*, p. 50), starting with two weapon and four nonweapon proficiencies.

It is strongly recommended that you, the player, use the optional nonweapon proficiency rules when creating druid characters with this book. The various branches of druids (and the druid kits described later) make extensive use of the nonweapon proficiency system to differentiate among types of druids.

Note that druid nonweapon proficiencies come from the general, priest, and warrior groups. Druids have access to the warrior group (even though many other priests do not) because it contains many of the proficiencies associated with outdoor skills the druid needs to operate in the wilderness.

Money and Equipment

Druids start with 3d6×10 gp, which they can use to purchase equipment. All but a few coins (less than 1 gp) must be spent prior to entering play.

If using the optional druid kit rules described later in this book, both the initial money and the equipment allowed might vary depending on the kit.



Magical Items

Druids use all magical items normally permitted to priests, with the exception of written items (books and scrolls) and those types of armor and weapons that are normally forbidden them. (The weapons and armor permitted to members of each branch and kit do vary, but they remain similar to those allowed to druids in the *PH*.)

Thus, a druid who finds magical chain mail may not wear it, since druids must use only nonmetallic armor. Similarly, a druid cannot wield a magical mace, since maces are not among the permitted druidic arms.

The Secret Language

All druids can speak a secret language in addition to other tongues they know. Using the optional proficiency system, the secret language does *not* require a proficiency slot.

The secret language of the druids has its roots in British tradition. A language called Thari, derived from Celtic roots, apparently was spoken as a secret tongue throughout the British Isles by a small number of traveling folk such as tinkers and bards. It later was adopted by some Gypsy clans in addition to Romany, their own Indic language. Thari may predate the Dark Ages, and some claim fluency in it even today. Certain researchers seeking the roots of Thari as a language distinct from Gaelic have linked its origins to both ancient Celtic craft guilds and to the historical druids. If the DM wants to name the druids' secret language, Thari possesses some historical relevance.

Not only can druids use the secret language to provide passwords, they can speak this private tongue when they wish to baffle

nondruidic eavesdroppers. It is a precise tool for discussing Nature; a druid can say "dense, old-growth pine forest" in one word rather than a whole phrase.

The secret language has a specialized and detailed vocabulary limited to dealing with Nature and natural events; beyond this sphere, it is very basic. A druid could use the secret language to talk about the health of a person, animal, or plant; discuss the weather; or give detailed directions through the wilderness. The language also can describe druidic spells, ceremonies, powers, and any natural and supernatural creatures known to the druids. However, it contains no words for sophisticated human emotions, for most tools or artifacts (beyond those used for hunting, farming, or fishing), or for weapons and armor (other than items druids use). The language also contains few words that refer to concepts peculiar to sentient beings, like *property*, *justice*, *theft*, or *war*. Tense distinctions blur in this secret tongue; usually the concepts druids express bear a certain immediacy or timelessness.

Finally, the secret language of the druids remains a purely spoken tongue. A few simple runes or marks (symbolizing *danger*, *safe water*, *safe trail*, and so on) exist for marking paths and leaving messages, but the language cannot communicate actual sentences and complex ideas in writing.

Here's an example of how the secret language works in practice. Suppose two druids are discussing a magical item and want to converse entirely in the secret language, using no words borrowed from other tongues. One druid wishes to say:

This magical long sword was a gift to Melinda, wife to King Rupert, from Rupert's court wizard Drufus. The mage gave it the power to throw lightning bolts. But then King Rupert grew jealous of Melinda. He had her executed and