

**Background**

Five children have been taken into a mellipheon hive. These large wasp-like insects take small mammals, which they paralyze and then the Queen lays her eggs within the still-living hosts. The locals beg you to enter the hive and retrieve the children. A master physicker from the community will go with you as a non-combatant, to care for the children and provide whatever treatment she can. The party receives \$150 and 25 XP for each child saved, with an additional bonus of \$250 and 50 XP if all five are saved.

Each chamber of the hive is shaped as shown on the map included. The three lettered hexes (A, B, & C) are where passages to adjacent chambers are found. In the chamber table they are listed with which room they lead to and which passage hex in that room. So an exit listed B7C means that the party can exit the chamber through B and will enter chamber 7 in C. An exit marked with two dashes (C--) is a dead-end that goes nowhere. Two Xs (AXX) is an exit from the hive. The letter-number hexes are where contents are placed according to room descriptions. Use center of referenced megahex to place contents. The chamber walls are a stone-like composite of wood pulp and resin made by the mellipheon, and the dark hexes are impassible solid supports of the same material. Below are the stats for the various castes of mellipheon the party may encounter, plus the other beings that may be found in the hive.

The Mellipheon

Worker (W) – The most common caste in the hive. Workers perform the duties of keeping the hive operating, including excavating the hive, building the walls, and gathering nectar, pollen, and fruit for daily food. They are the size of a medium dog. Workers have ST 6, DX 10, IQ 2, and MA 12. Their chitinous shell stops 1 point of damage per attack. They bite for 1d-1 damage, or do 1d+1 damage in HTH.

Soldier (S) – Fed a special hormone when young, some Workers develop into Soldiers. They are tasked with defending the hive, with some standing guard at entrances and others performing regular patrols. They are the size of a large wolf. Soldiers have ST 8, DX 9, IQ 2, and MA 10. Their hard carapace stops 2 points of damage per attack. Their claws do 1d+1 damage, or 1d+3 in HTH.

Assassin (A) – Also raised with a special hormone, Assassins are specialised Workers with a paralytic venom in their stinger. They are the ones tasked with gathering hosts for the Queen's eggs. They are the size of a Worker, but with a distinctive appearance. They paralyze the prey for initial delivery to the hive, and then top up the venom to keep the prey alive but quiescent. The venom wears off in about three days, or 5 minutes after antidote is administered. Assassins have ST 5, DX 11, IQ 2, and MA 12. Their chitinous shell stops 1 points of damage per attack. They can sting for 1d damage, and the poison does 2d fatigue damage (but doesn't kill unless a further sting is given after the prey is at 0 ST). Victims get a 4/ST save roll to resist the venom effects.

#	CONTENTS	EXITS
1	S (A5), W (C4)	AXX B2A C3A
2	W (C4), D (B7)	A1B B4A C5A
3	W (C1), D (B3)	A1C B-- C6A
4	S (A5), D (B7)	A2B B7A C--
5	W (B1), G (B6, C3, C5)	A2C B8A C--
6	S (A6)	A3C B9A C10A
7	W (B2), G (C5, C6)	A4B B11A C--
8	S (B3), G (C5), C (C6)	A5B B12A C9B
9	A (B4), <i>weapon poison flask (5 doses)</i>	A6B B13A C10B
10	P (B7), W (C3), G (C5)	A6C B9C C15A
11	A (C1), <i>molotail</i>	A7B B16A C12B

Using the Mellipheon in your Campaign

Mellipheon are more normally found further away from civilised areas, typically in forests with nearby meadows. The forests provide the necessary hosts for the Queen's eggs, and the meadows are a good source of the foods the hive relies upon. Sometimes mellipheon will build a hive in an abandoned underground structure, or in just part of one if it is an extensive dungeon. In such cases the walls will be covered and shaped by the same pulpy resin they produce for building their hives.

Drone (D) – The only male mellipheon in the otherwise all-female hive. Drones exist to mate with the Queen, and to attend to her wants. They are the only mellipheon with wings, and while not graceful in flight they can move at a good speed through the air. They are the size of a woodchuck or badger. Drones have ST 5, DX 10, IQ 2, and MA 10 (20 when flying). They have a weakly venomous sting that they use to discourage intruders from the hive. Their sting does 1d-2 damage, and if it penetrates armor will deliver a 1d venom. Victims get a 3/ST save roll to resist the venom effects.

Grub (G) – These are the larval stage of mellipheon. They are small, the size of a rat, and weak with poor senses. Grubs have ST 2, DX 8, IQ 1, and MA 4. Their bite exposes the bitten to a saliva with a dizzying toxin in it. The bite does 1 point of damage, but is cumulative over turns as the grub gnaws on the victim, and once damage is inflicted the saliva gets in the bloodstream. The saliva causes -3 DX for 4 turns.

Queen (Q) – Each mellipheon hive has a single Queen, who is mother to all the hive members. If she dies a grub is selected and fed royal jelly, which will cause it to mature into the next Queen. The Queen lays her eggs in paralysed mammalian hosts, from which 6-18 grubs will emerge, depending on the size of the host. She is much larger than other mellipheon, equal in size to a large bear. The Queen has ST 24, DX 9, IQ 4, and MA 8. Her thick exoskeleton stops 2 points of damage per attack. Her claws do 2d damage, and she can spit venom. The venom spit is caustic and does 1d damage, and is treated as a thrown weapon. She can attack with claws and spit in the same turn at -3 DX.

Others

Children (C) – These are the children taken by the mellipheon. They are from whatever race(s) you decide the village is made up of, as long as they are from common humanoid races (Human, Dwarf, Elf, Halfling, Orc, etc). When a child is found the physicker will apply antidote. The child will need 5 minutes to recover before they can walk. The children have ST 4, DX 9, IQ 7, and MA 10.

Giant Spider (X) – A giant spider has made a nest in a disused chamber of the hive. See *In The Labyrinth* for more on this creature.

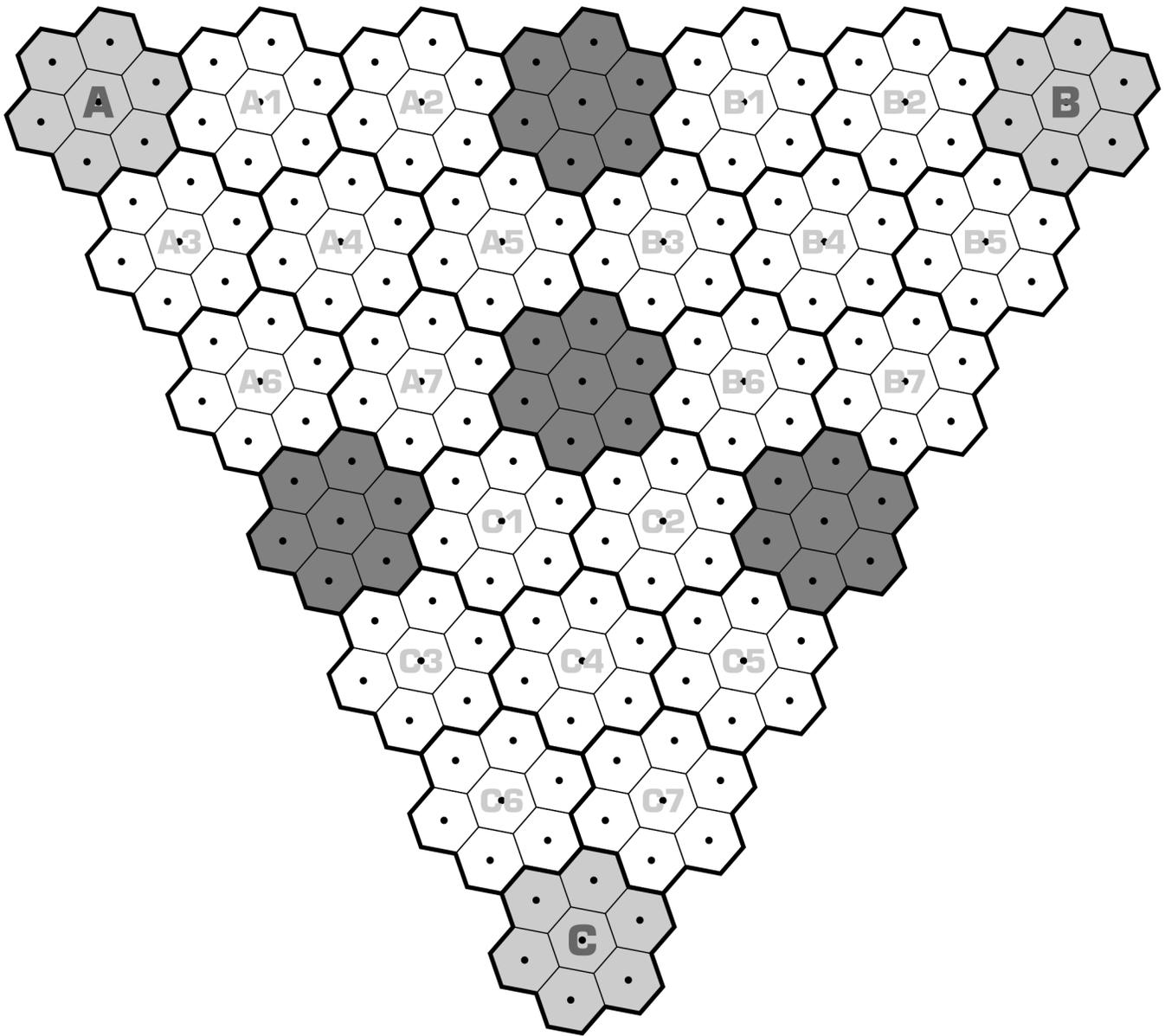
Plocker (P) – A plocker has tunneled in seeking nectar and grubs. See *In The Labyrinth* for more on this creature.

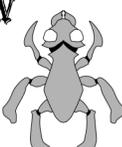
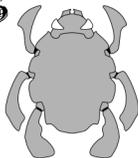
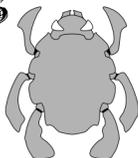
Red Slime (R) – A pair of red slimes have oozed into a peripheral chamber. See *In The Labyrinth* for more on this creature.

Resting in the hive is dangerous. For every 5 minutes that someone stays put, roll a die. On 6 a patrolling Soldier finds them and attacks.

The table below contains the chambers that make up this hive. The party enters in megahex A of room #1. Italics indicate *treasure* that is found after combat.

#	CONTENTS	EXITS
12	D (A7), W (B4)	A8B B11C C13B
13	X (B4), C (C5)	A-- B12C C--
14	W (A7, B4, C3), C (A2)	A-- B19A C20A
15	D (A5, B7, C3), C (B2)	A10C B-- C21A
16	R (B3, C4), C (B5)	A11B B-- C17B
17	S (B7), W (C4)	A-- B16C C18B
18	S (C4), <i>healing potion</i>	A-- B17C C22B
19	S (B4), <i>dazzle gem</i>	A14B B22A C20B
20	D (A6), A (B3)	A14C B19C C21B
21	W (B7), S (C1)	A15C B20C C--
22	W (B6), D (C3), Q (C4)	A19B B18C CXX



W 1	W 4	G 1	D 1	D 1	S 3	A 1
						
W 2	W 5	G 2	D 2	D 2	S 4	A 2
						
W 3	G 3	G 4	G 3	D 5	S 5	A 3
