

Nature Power

The Uses of Druids in Fantasy Warriors

by Robin Dear



A druid is one of the most useful individuals available to fighting men, halfling or wood elf armies. Although druids have only a few spells (called powers) compared to wizards, each power has the ability to change large areas of a battlefield. A druid can use his powers to turn a piece of terrain into an impassable barrier or hostile enemy. These powers can be used on any natural terrain feature such as hills or rivers. The other power for druids is the power to summon a tree spirit which can singlehandedly destroy whole units. This power can of course only be used when the druid is near trees !!In addition to these powers I have created a new (unofficial) druid power for you, to use in your games, called Growth. Druids must be handled differently from other individuals because they must remain

stationary to utilise their powers. This makes them easy targets for enemy wizards and marksmen. Providing a few other individuals such as scouts to act as bodyguards will help to keep your druid alive longer. Placing a druid in a unit is another way to stop him from being shot or blasted but means a whole unit cannot move while a druid uses his powers. If you are unable to give your druid some bodyguards then try to place them away from the front line. In a place were they will not attract too much attention. Druids charged by bloodcrazy destroyers tend not to live very long! Because powers used by druids are usually run for several turns they can be heavy on magic points. A druid with only a few magic points will quickly become exhausted. So it is far better to have one powerful druid with

Diagram 1

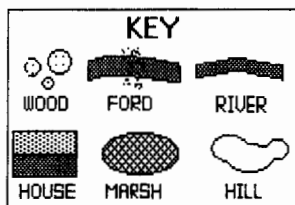
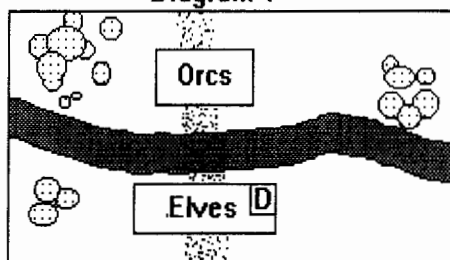


Diagram 2

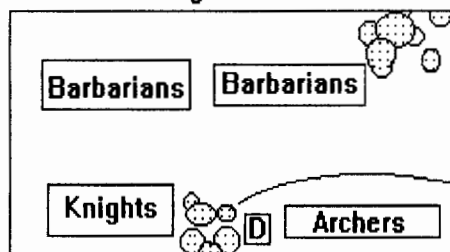
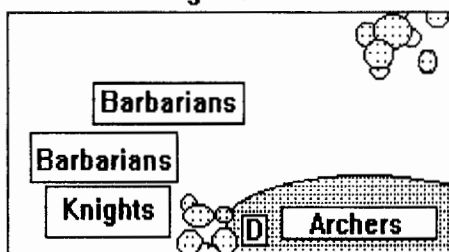


Diagram 2 a



D = Druid

= Impassable Terrain

plenty of magic points than several Less powerful druids each with only a few magic points. Besides the new (unofficial) druidic power described at the end of this article, every druid has three powers; creating impassable terrain, creating hostile terrain, and summoning a tree spirit. Each power has it's own advantages and disadvantages, but here are a few guidelines that will help you get the most from your druids.

Creating Hostile Terrain.

Creating hostile terrain is only effective when the enemy has to cross though a particular terrain feature. Otherwise the enemy, if he has any sense, will just move round the hostile terrain. Hostile terrain is also more effective on smaller units because all units suffer the same number of attacks regardless of the unit size. Diagram 1 shows an ideal place for a druid to create hostile terrain. A unit of wood elves are

holding a ford from a unit of orc warriors. The druid is in contact with the ford and has not moved. So he may use his druidic powers. By casting "Create Hostile Terrain" on the ford. The orc warriors will gain casualties from both combat and the hostile terrain while in the ford. Placing the druid in the wood elf unit also has the advantage of protecting him from the orcs while keeping him in contact with the ford.

Creating Impassable Terrain.

The power to create impassable terrain is perhaps the most useful of the druid powers. By turning an important hill or wood into impassable terrain you can quickly bottleneck the enemy's advance or completely stop enemy units from moving. Impassable terrain should not be thought of as just as a defensive tactic. If enemy units are moving though a terrain feature when it is changed into impassable terrain then they

are 'stuck in' that terrain feature. This is particularly effective against enemy units which have no missile weapons. In this way it is possible for a single druid to hold off several of the enemy's units until you are ready for them.

Impassable terrain can also be used as a killing ground for your missile troops. See diagrams 2 and 2a for an example. By making the hill impassable, the longbowmen have a killing ground that the barbarians cannot cross. They will have to retreat or suffer repeated volleys of arrows. Also the unit of knights cannot be charged in the flank by the second unit of barbarians without lengthy manoeuvres.



Summoning a Tree Spirit

Summoning a tree spirit at the right moment can be a battle winner. The problem is, you stand a chance of having your druid killed, losing the tree spirit, and having to take a

command test. So think carefully before summoning a tree spirit.

Unlike wizards controlling a fiend, a druid cannot automatically control a tree spirit by using lots of magic points. A druid controls a tree spirit with only one die roll. This means there is a chance every turn that you can throw a one from the magic point drain to control the tree spirit. When this happens you will be forced to make a saving throw. Therefore when summoning a tree spirit, the timing is very important because it is only a matter of time before you fail to control the tree spirit.

New Druid Power

Growth.

The power to create terrain from nothing.

Magic Power Cost

- ◆ Cost- 5D6 Magic Points to initiate power.
- ◆ Cost- 1D6 Magic Points to maintain power.

Initiating the power.

- ◆ Rules to initiate the power are the same as described in Create hostile terrain on page 40 of the Companion, except the cost is now 5D6 magic points.

Maintaining the power.

- ◆ Maintaining the power is as described on page 40 of the Companion.
- ◆ If the power is no longer maintained the terrain feature created should be immediately removed.

Effects.

- ◆ Growth creates a terrain feature consisting of trees and bushes next to the druid. These should be placed on the table immediately.
- ◆ This terrain feature should not be more than 24" x 24" in area.
- ◆ Another druid may contact this terrain and use his druidic power upon it. However if the terrain feature disappears, whatever he created with his power disappears also.