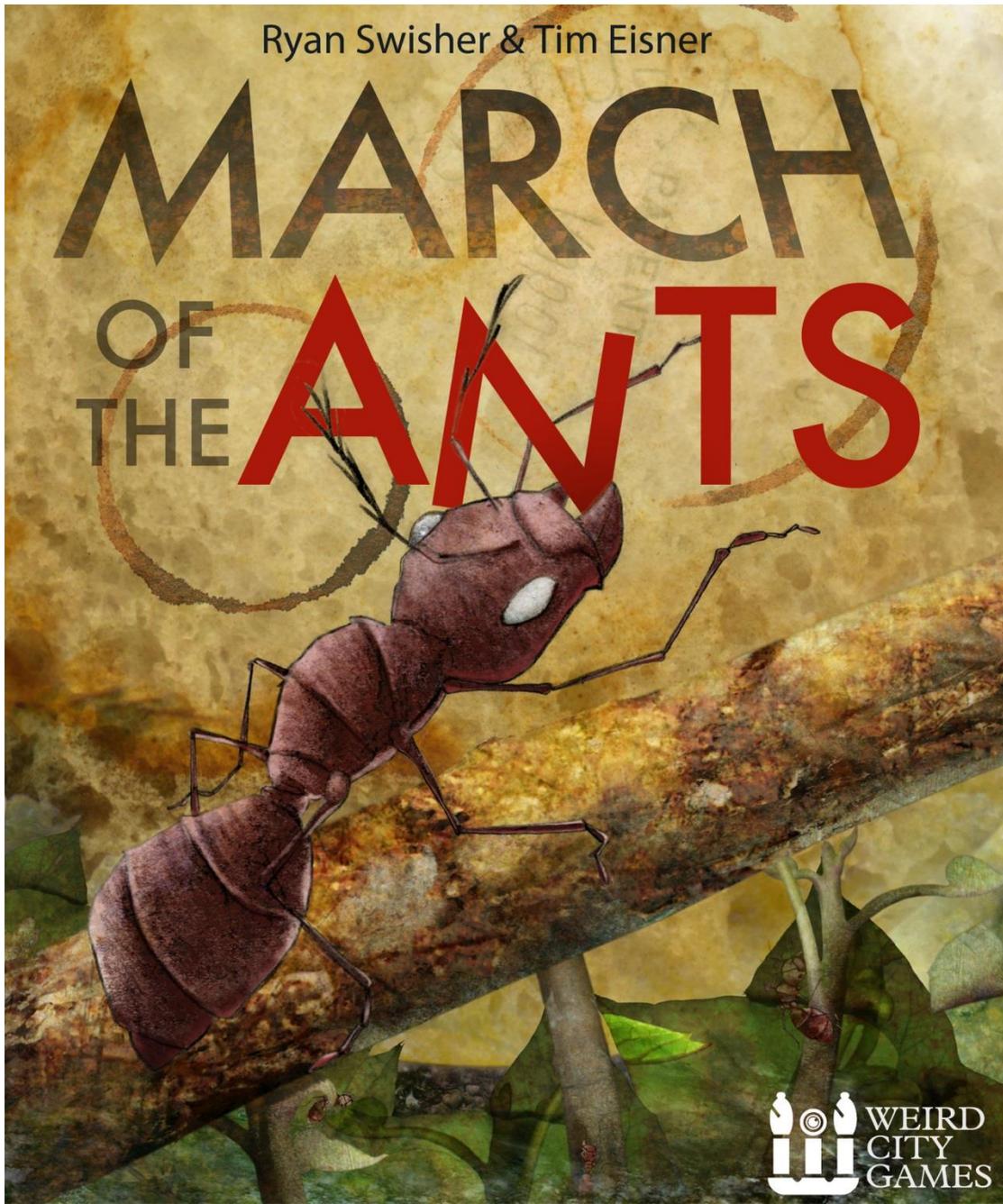


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# MARCH OF THE ANTS



*As spring dawns the great thaw begins. Deep beneath the lush meadow grasses, the queen stirs in her nest and the colony comes to life. Soldiers venture forth, battling centipedes and clashing with opposing colonies for territory. Workers dig an ever-expanding network of tunnels in their tireless search for food. The first larvae hatch and it is clear this generation will be different: the young colonies rapidly evolve into a multitude of new forms. The ants march out to claim the meadow as their own.*

## **Game Components:**

The Great Tunnel

24 Meadow Hexes

-8 Starting Hexes (Gold borders)

-16 Standard Hexes (Brown borders)

54 Ant Cards

4 Nest Mats

144 Egg/Larvae/Ant cubes - 36 in each player color (Red, Yellow, Black, Blue)

30 Food Tokens (Brown discs)

Score Track

8 Centipede/Wormhole Counters

1 Round Marker

1 Starting Player Marker

## **Set Up:**

1. Give each player all larvae/ant cubes of their desired color and one nest mat.
2. Place The Great Tunnel in the center of the table.
3. Place the Score Track on one side of the play area.
4. Each player places five cubes of their chosen color in its larvae chamber, one cube in The Great Tunnel, and one cube on the start square of the Score Track. Each player places the remaining larvae/ant cubes of their color to the side of his or her Nest Mat.
5. Shuffle the standard meadow hex tiles and deal two cards to each player. Place the deck face down next to The Great Tunnel.
6. Randomly select two starting meadow hexes per player, shuffle and place them face down on top of the standard meadow hex pile. Return any unused starting meadow hex tiles to the game box.
7. Shuffle the Ant Cards and place them next to play area.
8. Place food and centipede/wormhole tokens in an area where all players can reach them.
9. In a game with two or three players, each player places three food into their food stores. In a game with four players, each player places two food into their stores.
10. Place the round marker on the Great Tunnel hex on Round One (Early Spring). In a two player game place the round marker on Round Zero (Snow Melt).
11. Randomly select the starting player.

## **Game Overview**

March of the Ants is played over several rounds that represent the passing seasons. Each player controls a nest of ants vying to establish the greatest colony in the meadow by collecting colony points. The player who has the nest with the most colony points wins.

## **Sequence of Play**

Each round has four phases: The Worker Phase, in which the majority of actions are undertaken; the Soldier Phase, wherein battles in contested hexes are resolved; and the Queen Phase, where resources are collected, ants must be fed, the Royal Decree is given, and finally all the players gather points during Slumber.

## **Worker Phase**

During the Worker Phase, players take turns in clockwise order beginning with the starting player. Each turn a player may take one action. Play continues until two players rest. During each turn a player may perform one action or rest.

There are two types of actions players can take: Food Actions and Card Actions. Food Actions require that the player spend one food to take the action. Card Actions require the player to spend a number of larvae and or ants to play a card.

Each action consists of a primary action performed by the player that chooses it and a secondary action which all other players may perform. Secondary actions have no cost and are performed in clockwise order from the left of the player who selects the Action.

## **Explore**

**Primary:** Draw and place one meadow hex. The meadow hex must be placed in a manner that allows at least one of your ants to move into the hex with one step. You must move one or more ants from an adjacent meadow hex into the explored meadow hex. *If an explored meadow hex has a centipede symbol, place a centipede token on it.*

**Secondary:** You may place one larva from your Larvae Chamber on any meadow hex you inhabit or on the Great Tunnel. *If a player has no larvae they may not perform this action.*

## **March of the Ants**

**Primary:** Move up to five steps, moving larvae first and then ants. One step can move a single larva from the Larvae Chamber to any meadow hex that you inhabit or to The Great Tunnel, or one ant from any meadow hex to any adjacent meadow hex that is connected by tunnels. Any larvae you wish to move must be moved before ants are moved. When a larva is moved to The Great Tunnel or a meadow hex, it immediately becomes an ant.

**Secondary:** Move one ant one step. (Cannot move larvae.)

## **Inhabiting Collection Sites**

When a larva or an ant is moved into a meadow hex, it immediately inhabits any empty collection sites. If multiple collection sites are empty, the player may choose which site to inhabit. Players do not have to inhabit the Defender Site, though it confers certain bonuses. If no collection sites are empty, the ant is placed in the tunnels of that meadow hex.

**Contested Hexes** - If two or more players have ants in the same meadow hex, and there are ants in the tunnels (not inhabiting collection sites), the meadow hex is considered contested and an ant battle with take place during the Soldier Phase.

**Vacated Collection Sites** - If an ant vacates a collection site, ants in the tunnel of that hex will immediately move to inhabit that site. If ants from two or more players are in the tunnel of that hex, ants are moved in clockwise order beginning with the starting player.

## **Forage**

Primary: Draw two Ant Cards.

Secondary: Gain one larva.

*(If at any time a player would draw an Ant Card, and there are none left in the deck, all cards in the discard pile are shuffled and become the new deck.)*

## **Play a Card**

Primary: Play one Ant Card from your hand.

Secondary: Each other player may discard a card to draw a card.

Card Actions do not cost food, but instead have an ant cost which must be paid with larvae and/or ants. To play a card, a player destroys an amount of its larvae and/or ants equal to the ant cost of the card. To destroy larvae and/or ants a player removes them from the Larvae Chamber or from the meadow and returns them to the side of its player mat. In addition to the ant cost each card has a “Pow” number which is used in battle and by certain evolution cards.

Events, Evolutions and Colony Goals are the three types of cards in March of the Ants:

**Event** – Events are one time effects that represent the actions of ants or the natural forces. After an Event card is resolved it is placed face up in the discard.

The ant cost of Event cards is reduced by one for each Thorax evolution a player has in play. The cost of Event cards cannot be lower than zero.

**Evolution** - Play one Evolution card from your hand, placing it in the body segment indicated on the card. New evolutions are placed on top of any previously played evolutions in each body segment. Evolutions grant a permanent upgrade to the nest. Each evolution offers a unique bonus to the nest’s ants. Only the topmost evolution in each body section grants its unique effect. Each evolution also grants a caste bonus based on the body segment it occupies. Caste bonuses are counted for each evolution a player has in play.

Caste Bonuses-

**Soldier – Head:** During the Soldier Phase increase Army Size by one per head evolution.

**Worker – Thorax:** The cost to play Event cards is reduced by one per thorax evolution.

**Queen – Abdomen:** During the Queen Phase, each food feeds one additional ant per abdomen evolution.

**Colony Goal** – Colony Goals are cards which give a player colony points each Slumber, if they meet a condition. Colony Goals are stashed when played on the edge of the nest mat. Colony Goal cards are scored at the start of each Slumber.

## **Rest**

The first time, during each round, that any player rests, it gains one larva. The first player to rest gains the starting player marker. After resting, a player must rest on each subsequent turn, gaining one food each time. Players that have rested may still perform Secondary actions. The Worker Phase ends immediately when a second player rests. *In a two player game, when one player rests, the other player takes one final turn and then the round ends.*

## Soldier Phase

Resolve battles in numerical order by hex number. If a centipede battle and an ant battle would take place in the same hex, resolve the centipede battle first, and then the ant battle.

### Battle Rules

Battle ensues in all contested hexes. A hex is contested when there are two or more players present in the hex and there are more ants than collection sites. A meadow hex containing a centipede is always considered contested. Battle never takes place in The Great Tunnel as it cannot be contested.

In each contested hex, the defending player is the player that controls the defender collection site. The other player is the invader. The centipede is always the invader. If three or more players are present in a contested meadow hex, the invading player is the player with the most ants. In case of a tie, the defender chooses which player is invading.

### Stages of Battle

1. **Declare Army Size** – each player states the number of ants they have in the contested hex plus the number of head evolutions they have in play.
2. **Battle Strength** – starting with the invader, each player that is battling, may discard one card from their hand face down. Reveal the discarded cards. Each player adds their discarded card's (Pow) to the number of ants they have in the hex.
3. **Outcome**- the player with the highest total is the winner. The defender wins ties.
4. **Casualties** -the winner destroys enemy ants equal to the number of ants they have in the hex, and the loser destroys enemy ants equal to half the number of ants they have in the hex, rounded down. (*Casualties happen simultaneously.*) If all ants from the winning player would be destroyed, the final ant is not destroyed.
5. **Spoils of War** – the winner gains one colony point, and may move ants already present in the contested hex to inhabit any empty collection sites.

When an ant is destroyed, the player whose ant was destroyed chooses which ant is removed. Destroyed ants are returned to the side of the Nest Mat.

Two players will battle only once in each meadow hex during each Soldier Phase, even if the hex continues to be contested after the battle is resolved. After an Ant Battle is resolved in a meadow hex, if there are ants present from a player that did not participate in that battle, and the hex is still contested, the player that inhabits the defender site will battle the player that hasn't fought.

**Centipede Battle Rules:** To declare army size the centipede discards the top card of the deck. The centipede's base army size is equal to the (Pow) of the discarded card.

The ants fighting the centipede may then discard a card to add battle strength.

The centipede then discards another card from the top of the deck, adding the (Pow) to its base army size.

If the ants win, the centipede is destroyed and the centipede token is returned to the supply. The player that won gains one food and one colony point.

The centipede inflicts casualties based on its total army size (Pow from both cards combined.)

If the centipede wins it destroys all ants in that contested hex.

## Centipede Battle with Two or More Players

In the event that two or more players have ants in a hex with a centipede, the centipede will first battle the player that inhabits the defender site. If the centipede is defeated and the hex is still contested, than normal ant battle ensues. If the centipede wins the first battle it will then fight the player that that now inhabits the defender site. Each player will only battle the centipede one time.

If the hex is still contested after the centipede battle is resolved, an ant battle occurs.

## Queen Phase

During this phase all players Harvest, Feed Ants, give the Royal Decree, and Slumber.

**Harvest:** Each player collects resources from all collection sites that its ants inhabit. For each food or larvae collected, take one token of that resource type and place it in the corresponding spot on the nest mat. For each card collected draw one card from the Ant Deck. For each colony point collected advance your player marker cube one step on the Colony Score track. Collection sites yield one resource unless indicated otherwise with a number in or next to the icon.

**Feed Ants:** One food token feeds four ants. Larvae do not need to be fed. A player must use available food to feed their ants. If all food is consumed and ants remain unfed, that player must destroy one of its larvae for each unfed ant. If all larvae are consumed, the player must destroy any ants that have not been fed.

When counting ants for feeding, round up:

4 ants = 1 food, 6 ants = 2 food, 13 ants = 4 food

**Queen Caste Bonus:** Each food feeds one additional ant for each abdomen evolution in your ant body. (*A player with one abdomen evolution would be able to feed five ants with one food and up to ten ants with two food*).

**Royal Decree:** Each player gains either two food or five larvae.

*There is no Royal Decree in the final round.*

*Royal Decree can be resolved simultaneously, but if play is very serious then the Royal Decree is resolved in clockwise order beginning with the starting player.*

## Slumber:

Each player gains one colony point for each meadow hex they are defending that is adjacent to The Great Tunnel.

Each player gains colony points for meeting the conditions of Colony Goal cards they have in play.

Advance the round marker one space.

After Slumber the next Worker Phase begins, unless it is the last round in which case the game ends.

## Game End and Victory

After Slumber in the final round, end game colony points are awarded, colony points are totaled and the winner is declared.

### Scoring Colony Points:

Whenever a player gains colony points, it advances its player marker (cube of the same color) one space on the score track for each colony point gained. Colony points are earned at different points of the game in the following ways:

During Play

**Battles** – Winner gains one colony point for each battle.

**Colony Point Collection Sites** – Collect colony points each Harvest.

Each Slumber

**Inner Meadow Hexes** – Each player gains one colony point for each meadow hex it is defending that is adjacent to The Great Tunnel.

**Colony Goals** - Each player gains colony points for meeting the conditions of Colony Goal cards that they have in play.

End of Game

**Evolved Ant Body** – Gain four colony points for each ant body that is complete. A complete body has a head, a thorax, and an abdomen. Players may complete multiple ant bodies.

**Descendants** – Three colony points for the player with the most larvae.

**Greatest Store** – Three colony points for the player with the most food.

**Untold Potential** – Three colony points for the player with the most cards in hand.

*If two or more players tie for any of the end game rewards, each tied player gains one colony point.*

The player with the most colony points wins! In case of a tie, the player with the most ants in the meadow wins.

### Strategy and Tactics

Each player needs to carefully manage its larvae and food, ensuring it has enough of each to perform Food Actions, play cards, muster ant armies and feed its ants. In the Early Spring it is essential to explore to secure food collection sites, as food is what allows your nest to continue expanding and evolving. Players may pursue strategies that focus on expansion, evolution, collection, or war and will likely need some combination of all to become the most successful player. Any player that wishes to pursue an aggressive strategy will need to first build a solid base of resource to be able to feed and populate its armies. In the Queen Phase choose carefully whether your queen will produce larvae or food as you need the right balance of both to thrive.

### Wormholes

Meadow hexes that contain wormholes are considered to be adjacent to all other meadow hexes that contain wormholes. An ant may move from one wormhole hex to another with one step.