

## Homesteader

A game for 2 - 4 players

For the *food-forest* playing cards



### Equipment

One deck of Food Forest cards without blanks or instruction cards

Lots of pennies (50 per player is usually plenty)

Spacious table or comfortable floor

### Preparation

- Separate house cards and deal one to each player – set aside until the end of settlement phase
- Shuffle deck and deal 15-30 cards to each player **face down**. The more cards you deal, the more complex the game will be. Start with 15 cards until you are ready for more complexity.
- Place the remaining cards in a reserve card deck, to be used later in the game.

### Settlement Phase

During the settlement phase, each player stakes out property. Cards represent property; pennies represent fence posts.

Your goal, in this phase, is to stake out as many adjacent squares (either empty or occupied by a card) as needed. A “square” is an imaginary space the size of a card. When settling, be sure to leave at least 2 empty squares somewhere in your property. The house card is not placed until the end of the settlement phase and will fill one of these voids.

At the beginning of the settlement phase, each player places a card in the center of the playing space. Pennies are placed as shown in the following images for 2-player, 3-player and 4-player games:



2-player start configuration



3-player start configuration



4-player start configuration

Play begins with the youngest player and proceeds clockwise. Each settlement turn has two steps.

Step 1: place a face-down card such that:

- The card is either next to or touching the corner of another of your cards.
- Your cards must form a grid, but empty spaces may be surrounded and left vacant. The grid may have stepped edges, but any empty spaces must be the right size for the grid.

Step 2: place at least two fence posts (pennies), to extend your fence line. Fence post requirements:

- New fence posts must extend an existing line of fence posts.
- New fence posts must only be placed at a corner or the middle of the edge of a card (ie: there should be no more than three pennies touching any one side of any one card).
- Corner fence posts may be shared by cards that would, otherwise, touch at corners

- You may extend your opponent's fence, so long as it is adjacent to one of your own cards.
- During the settlement phase, fence posts may not extend through empty space. They must be placed along the sides or corners of your own existing cards.
- By the end of the settlement phase you must complete the fence and enclose your property.
- Later, during the play phase, voids may be created so fence lines extend through empty space.
- After the settlement phase, cards will move but fence lines must not be moved.

### Strategy of the Settlement Phase

The image on the left shows the end of a typical 4-player settlement phase. Each player's property is a different shape surrounded by fencing.

Block-shaped properties are more advantageous than straggling lines. Blocks with empty space in the middle are even more advantageous, because they give you room to transplant. You may use the outputs of all adjacent cards to satisfy your cards' input needs, even if they are across fence lines and belong to a neighbor.

Do not close your fence until you have placed all of the cards in your hand. If your yard is accidentally enclosed too soon, you may put down the remaining cards, but must leave one empty space.



*Example: end of settlement phase for 4 players*

When all cards are placed, the property must be surrounded with pennies. The house card is placed in one of the empty spaces. If there is not at least one spot in the middle of your property for the house card, you must remove and discard a card without looking at it. This card goes, face-down, at the bottom of the discard pile. **Play Phase**

Object: the object of the play phase is to organize your homestead with the following requirements, described in more detail further below:

1. Inputs of each plant, animal or structure must be satisfied to be scored at the end of the game.
2. Plants must be placed within their proper Permaculture zone (optional for beginners)
3. All cards must remain within the boundaries of the property.

Inputs: The top six icons on the left side of the card are the inputs. You may ignore the infinity icon.



On the blueberry card, shown here, you can see that the water, pollinator, nitrogen and groundcover icons are colored dark black on the left-hand, input, side. The water and the trellis icons are greyed out. Therefore, the blueberry requires water, pollinators, nitrogen and a groundcover. It must be placed adjacent to cards that satisfy these needs or it cannot be considered satisfied at the end of the game.

Permaculture Zones: Permaculture zones range from 0 to 5 and are defined by their proximity to the house card (which is pz 0). These zones are suggestions to help us orient our gardens so the most frequently visited plants are located closest to the house. In real life, you might make different pz decisions than we have with the cards. Cards should be placed such that every card must touch a card with an equal or lower pz value than itself. Ex: a pz 2 card must touch a card with a pz value of 0, 1 or 2. If it is surrounded by pz 3, 4 and 5 cards it is not scored at the end of the game.

1 or 2. If it is surrounded by pz 3, 4 and 5 cards it is not scored at the end of the game.

The play phase begins after the properties have been outlined with pennies. Play continues clockwise and only ends when all cards have been turned face-up. Each turn is broken into several possible actions described in greater detail a bit later:

1. The flip (required): turn **one** card face up within your own property.
2. The discard (optional): This is only possible if there are cards left over in the “reserve” deck. Directly after the “flip”, the revealed card may be swapped with the top card on the reserve deck. All cards that leave the game, for any reason, are placed face up at the bottom of the reserve card deck. When these face-up cards rise to the top of the reserve deck, the reserve deck is refreshed by shuffling and turning the reserve deck face down.
3. The transplant (optional): you may relocate a maximum of **one** card per turn within your own marked property. The house card may not be transplanted, and barn cards may only be moved once, when they are first revealed.
4. Plant swap (optional): once during the game, each player can announce a plant swap with another player. This player then chooses one plant from another player’s property, giving a card in return. Limitations:
  - a. Each player may initiate only one swap per game.
  - b. Barns and houses may not be swapped.
  - c. Each player may only initiate one swap but may be the target of any number of swaps.
  - d. A player who was previously the target of a swap may not take back the card that was taken. However, the player may swap for a **duplicate** of the card from the same player if that player has a second copy.
5. Disasters & pests: if a player turns over a natural disaster or pest card, the player must play it, either on himself or on another “target” player. All cards lost this way are discarded at the bottom of the reserve deck, face-up.

Here are the cards and their effects:

- a. Tornado: target player must remove one tree (if the player has one).
- b. Drought: target player must remove one plant that has a water input but is not yet touching a water source (if the player has one).
- c. Aphids: target player must remove one plant of any sort (if the player has one) unless the player has ladybugs or praying mantises. If player has ladybugs or praying mantises, the aphids card is discarded, leaving the beneficial insect card in place. Note: beneficial insects are not retroactive. If you are attacked by aphids and later flip or draw a beneficial insect, you do not get your plant back.

Play ends after the last player has turned over his last card and completed his turn.

## Scoring

Each player calculates points by scoring each card on her property as follows:

1. Place a penny on each card that has the following criteria<sup>1</sup>:
  - a. All inputs are satisfied by the outputs of cards beside it or touching its corners OR the card’s output satisfies the input of another card.
  - b. Optional: card is in its proper “Permaculture zone” (as described above).
2. On each remaining card, add one penny for each input (NOT each output) that is satisfied.
3. Count your pennies. The player with the most pennies wins!

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<sup>1</sup> Pennies may be recycled from fence posts but, to avoid confusion, you may not want to remove fences between your property and your neighbor’s property.