



Homesteader: A game for 2 - 4 players

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Equipment

One deck of Food Forest cards without blanks or instruction cards – 62 playing cards + 4 house cards

As many pennies as necessary to create property borders (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
- Make pennies available to all players
- 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.
- Players must not look at cards.
- Place the remaining cards in a reserve card deck, which will be used later in the game.

Settlement Phase

During the settlement phase, each player will stake out his or her 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. By the end of this phase it will be convenient to have several empty squares in the middle of your property. The strategic player will attempt to create several voids. 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 eventually form a grid and are not placed at odd angles. The grid may have stepped edges but any spaces left between cards must be the right size so that you can place cards in the empty spaces.

Step 2: place a minimum of two fence posts (pennies) on the middle edge or corner of an existing card, extending the fence line. Fence post placement 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 edge of each side of a card (ie: there should be no more than three pennies touching any one side of any one card).
- Corner fence posts are shared by cards that would, otherwise, touch at corners
- Cards of opposing players may share fence posts and should not have a double line of posts unless separated by at least one card-sized, empty square.
- 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, cards may be moved away from fence posts, sometimes creating voids so that fence lines extend through empty space.
- After the settlement phase, cards will move but fence lines must not be moved.



Example: end of settlement phase for 4 players

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 but entirely 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 within which 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.

During the settlement phase, you should not close your fence until you have placed all of the cards in your hand. If you create an enclosed space before all of the cards are used, the unused cards go back to the discard pile. It is often prudent not to extend the fence line by more than 2 posts unless you are certain that you will still have a good place for your next card.

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

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.

Inputs: The top six black icons found on the left hand side of the card are the inputs that the card requires to be satisfied. You may ignore the infinity icon at the bottom. When colored dark black, these input icons represent things that the card needs, like water, pollinators, etc. These inputs are matched to identical *output* icons, colored dark black and located on the right hand side of each card. When one card's inputs are satisfied by outputs of cards next to or touching corners with it, the card's needs are considered satisfied. Icons, and their inputs and output descriptions can be found in the table below:

	Input: the card requires food. Output: the card makes food.
	Input: the card requires frequent watering. Output: the card provides water.
	Input: the card needs pollinators to produce food. Output: the card attracts pollinators to the area.
N	Input: the card has above average nitrogen requirements. Output: the card provides nitrogen.
	Input: the card can benefit from the water retention properties of a groundcover. Output: the card serves as a groundcover.
	Input: this card requires a trellis or other structure to climb. Output: this card can serve as a trellis.
	NOT required for this game. The infinity symbol is optional, allowing advanced players to use agreed upon input/output combinations that are not represented on the cards.



Blueberry Playing Card

In 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.

Also note that the blueberry card provides food and attracts pollinators (as indicated by the icons that are darkened on the left side of the card.) Although the card attracts pollinators, it benefits more if it has other pollinator attractors nearby and, thus, for the purposes of this game, is not self-satisfying with respect to pollinators.

It can, however, satisfy cards adjacent to itself that require pollinators and food. One card can satisfy many cards and can, itself, be satisfied by more than one adjacent card (either beside this card or at touching at the corners).

For more details on icons, please refer to the "Understanding the Playing Cards" guide on our website.

The play phase begins, again with the youngest player, 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): turning **one** card face up within your own marked property (you may only turn over your own cards.)

2. The discard (optional): there will generally be two or more cards left over in the “reserve” deck after the deal, unless players have elected to play with all cards in the 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 transplant a maximum of **one** card per turn within your own marked property. The house card may not be transplanted, and any 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 gets to choose one plant from another player’s property, and gives the other player 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 same card that was taken. However, the player may swap for a **duplicate** of the card if one exists. (ex: there are two grape vine cards in the deck. If his grape vine is taken during a swap, the target player may turn around and take *the other* grape vine card during his own swap.)
5. Disasters & pests: if a player turns over a natural disaster or pest card, the player must play the card, 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 criteria¹:
 - a. All inputs are satisfied by the outputs of cards beside it or touching its corners.
 - b. Optional: card is in its proper “Permaculture zone” (as described above).
2. When all cards have been examined, remove all cards with no pennies on them.
3. On each remaining card, add one penny for each input (NOT each output) that is satisfied. Remember, inputs are found on the left hand side of the card, outputs are found on the right.
4. Count all of the pennies that you have placed on your cards and you have your score. The player with the most pennies wins!

¹ 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.