

# Understanding the Playing Cards

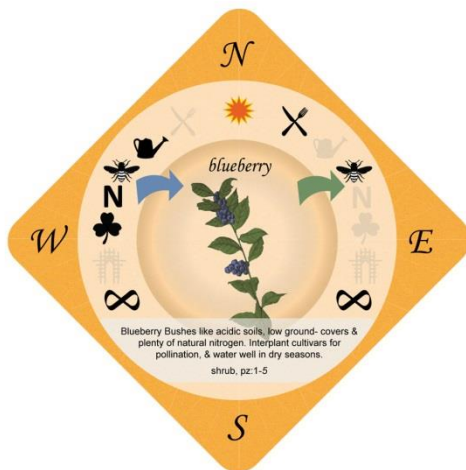
## Introduction

Food Forest is a versatile set of playing cards that can be used for playing many exciting games. As with ordinary playing cards, games are based on matching. Unlike ordinary playing cards, you match "inputs" and "outputs". Inputs are on the left side of the card (with the arrow pointing in) outputs are on the right (with the arrow pointing out). These inputs and outputs can be matched by comparing the little black icons on the left hand side of one card to the same black icons on the right side of another card.

You see, every plant has things that it needs (inputs) and things that it provides (outputs). These inputs can be as simple as half-decent soil and occasional rainwater. When that's all the plant needs, we do not bother to list these inputs on the card since you probably already have access to these resources. As you can see above, clover needs little in the way of inputs but offers a lot of great outputs!



Clover Playing Card

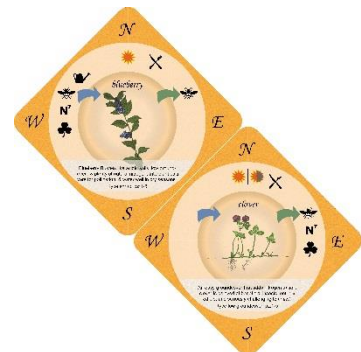


Blueberry Playing Card

Perhaps, however, a plant requires more nitrogen than basic soil can continuously provide. In that case, we would list N7 (the symbol for nitrogen) on the playing card as an input (rather than an output), and the card would pair well with this clover card, which offers nitrogen as an output. Thus, the blueberry bush, which requires extra nitrogen for healthy production, pairs nicely with the clover card, whose root nodes are able to take nitrogen from the air and feed it directly to the clover stalks and leaves. The clover, over time, is naturally composted, providing excess nitrogen for the blueberry plant to use.







## Points of Contact

For the purposes of most games, each card has 8 points of contact (4 corners + 4 sides). At these 8 contact points, a card can be joined with other cards. Two or more cards can thereby become "companions" (aka: a guild), with one card's output satisfying another card's input. Which side or corners you connect matters only when one card casts shade upon another.



## Relationships

The simplest relationships are pairings, but many more complex relationships can be built, depending on the card game. Relationships can be made between plants (and other things) using the following six icons:

Icons for matching	 Food	<i>On left:</i> the card requires food <i>On right:</i> the card produces food
	 Water	<i>On left:</i> mature plant or animal needs supplemental water <i>On right:</i> card stores &/or provides supplemental water. <b>Note:</b> all plants need extra water when young or in drought!
	 Pollinators	<i>On left:</i> benefits from pollinators <i>On right:</i> attracts pollinators (or is a home for pollinators, like the bee hive)
	<b>N</b> Nitrogen	<i>On left:</i> needs extra nitrogen <i>On right:</i> is a source of nitrogen
	 Groundcover	<i>On left:</i> can benefit from a groundcover <i>On right:</i> is a groundcover
	 Trellis	<i>On left:</i> requires a trellis <i>On right:</i> can act as a trellis (when fully-grown)
	 Infinity	<i>Left &amp; right:</i> represents connections that players know about but that are not shown on the cards (not used in all games)

## Central Image

In the center of each card is an image. Artist renderings can be imperfect, but we have done our best to portray a good likeness of the plant or other element described.

## Cardinal Directions (N,S,E,W):

The corners of the cards match the directions on a compass, from the perspective of the northern hemisphere. This aids in placement of cards, which should be played with the southernmost corner pointing at the player, and the northernmost corner pointing away. Sometimes you will notice that N, E or W is partly or totally shaded. In some games, this indicates that these cards cast shade on the cards above or beside them.

## Sun Symbols



A card also shows preferred sun requirements for the card in a temperate climate. The sun symbol can be found near the top of the card, directly under the "N" for North. This symbol describes how much

sun a plant prefers. If the plant needs full sun, some games will require that you *not* place it on the shady corner of a card that casts a shadow.

### **Description**

At the bottom of the card is a description of the item and a type (ie: tree). In future drafts this “type” will be replaced with the word “layer” and will indicate to which of the 7 layers of a forest this element belongs: canopy, understory, shrubs, herbaceous, ground cover, climbing, roots, and fungus/bacteria.

### **Permaculture Zones (Pz)**

Indicates an area in proximity to your farm. Zone 0 is the home, Zone 1 is your kitchen garden, needing frequent care; zone 2 is elements that may not require daily attention but still require frequent visits; zone 3 is main crops, pastures and larger trees; zone 4 is part wild, part managed: forage, timber production and grazing pasture; zone 5 is wilderness, often fairly remote. Detailed descriptions of Permaculture zones can be found online. Permaculture zones are not used in every game and, thus, are relegated to a small spot near the bottom of the card.

### **Role**

The Role is found to the left of the “pz”, this is the role that the card plays in a food forest (ex: canopy, understory, shrub, insect, etc). We are working on games in which “roles” may be used to make “straights” and “flushes”.