

Home > Games > Magic > Magicthegathering.com > Columns

## Join P.E.S.T.!

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 Uncommon Knowledge  
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I've been dreading this week for a long time. When Mark first gathered the six of us together to be the MagicTheGathering.com family (myself, Anthony, Jay, Randy, Mark and of course Aaron), he explained to us the concept of theme weeks. These would be weeks where each of the five writers explored a common theme; and the example used by Mark each and every time was Squirrel Week™.



I've had a lot of time to think about squirrels. I'm sure you all know the squirrel story in **Magic** by now, how **Waiting in the Weeds** was originally supposed to feature squirrels, but the art came back with cats instead. This meant **Liege of Hollows** ended up being the first squirrel token producer in the game, followed cards in **Unglued**, **Urza's Legacy**, and **Prophecy**. Squirrels became a big part of **Magic** with the introduction of the **Odyssey** block, with no less than eight different squirrel cards between the three sets (**Acorn Harvest**, **Chatter of the Squirrel**, **Druid's Call**, **Krosan Beast**, **Nantuko Shrine**, **Nut Collector**, **Squirrel Mob**, and **Squirrel Nest** for those keeping track at home). And of all the creature cards in the game of **Magic**, only two are squirrels: the **Beast** and the **Mob** from above. The rest all generate tokens. There are enough squirrel token producers out there to drown everyone in a sea of cardboard. It's bad enough to have real squirrels, but it's even worse to have fake proxy squirrels scampering to and fro.

over the world. Since that time I haven't had much love for these varmints, and I certainly wouldn't advocate encouraging them by allowing them to bask in the spotlight of **Magic: The Gathering**.

A deck featuring **Squirrel Nest** won US Nationals this year. Come on. I mean, when Richard Garfield created the game, did he envision one day that small furry tree-loving rodents would be winning tournaments at the highest level of competition?

There are a score of players who love squirrel cards out there. They love producing hundreds of squirrel by bouncing and replaying their **Deranged Hermits** over and over again. They delight in flashing back **Acorn Harvest** after **Acorn Harvest** until the table is filled by token creatures, and then casting **Coat of Arms** or **Overrun** to turn their mild-mannered mammals into a sea of butchering beasts.

But there are those of us who would rather reenact the scene leading up to **Squirrel Nest** than actually play one of these "cute" creatures willingly. If there were supposed to be an 8/8 squirrel in **Magic**, they would have named a certain card "Force of Nurture" and slapped a bushy tail on his rear. **Fallen Empires** would have featured the "Squirrelprolings," a race of sentient chia-squirrels determined to overtake the food sources of Havenwood. Thank god **Magic** hasn't explored flying squirrels yet, because then we might have seen "Squirrels of Paradise," with a picture of Rocky helping Bullwinkle pull a mana out of his hat.

This brings us to the title of the article: P.E.S.T. As I mentioned earlier, almost every squirrel in **Magic** is produced as a token creature. P.E.S.T. is an acronym for "Please Exterminate Squirrel Tokens!" It is a group with simple rules.

1. No member of P.E.S.T. may ever play with a card which produces squirrel tokens.
2. If a member of P.E.S.T. is faces an opponent playing **Deranged Hermits**, **Squirrel Nests**, or any other deck featuring squirrel tokens, they will try extra, extra hard to exterminate the squirrel infestation.
3. P.E.S.T. members will gleefully take advantage of an opponent's squirrel token by playing **Squirrel Mob**, since it is an actual squirrel and not a token. Likewise, **Krosan Beast** may be used to eat up as many as eight blocking squirrels at once, fifteen if backed by a **Might of Oaks**.

If you'd like to become an inaugural member of P.E.S.T., send an e-mail to [bleiweiss1@cox.net](mailto:bleiweiss1@cox.net) with your name, email address, and a short paragraph explaining why you hate squirrels. Band together, and rid **Magic: The Gathering** of squirrel tokens today!



Update on Rain Delay



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P.E.S.T.



Ben Bleiweiss has written about his obsession with **Magic: The Gathering** for over a decade. He's travelled the world because of **Magic**, both as a player and a writer. When not spending time playing **Magic**, writing about **Magic**, or thinking about **Magic**, Ben is employed by [StarCityGames.com](http://StarCityGames.com), where he works with **Magic** cards all day long. He lives with his wife in Virginia, and they sleep comfortably at night under their Orgg down comforter.



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