

Magical Creature Hack SCS: Artificial Evolution

Bennie Smith

Friday, September 27, 2002



- [Bennie Smith Archive](#)



Single Card Strategy typically focuses on interesting commons and uncommons in current and upcoming sets, but for this column Mr. Forsythe tossed me a rare goodie--[Artificial Evolution](#), a tribal card from *Onslaught*. But don't worry folks; most of the hard-core competitive crowd will probably undervalue this card so it shouldn't be too hard to pick up a few.

To start off, while brainstorming uses for this card,



I wondered what would happen if you changed the word "Wall" on a Wall card into a creature type that your opponent is playing, such as Goblins. Since there is reminder text on Walls that says "Walls can't attack," would you be able to stop Goblins from attacking? As cool as this sounded, it doesn't work. According to Paul Barclay, "The text changes, but does not affect the game. So the card will say Goblins can't attack, but Goblins can still attack. Reminder text does not actually do anything except remind people of the rules, and you can't hack the rules."

Even though [Artificial Evolution](#) can't hack the rules, you can still have plenty of fun with it! One thing you may want to do before using this card is get familiar with section "K.11 - Creature Type" from the Comprehensive Rules.

PARTNER WITH UNNATURAL SELECTION

Very similar in flavor to *Apocalypse's* [Unnatural Selection](#), the first use I saw for [Artificial Evolution](#) was in a deck that uses both along with cards that key off creature type. While [Unnatural Selection](#) can noodle around with creature types on the fly, [Artificial Evolution](#) goes to the heart of the matter, altering the creature-type card itself. [Rebel Informer](#), [Spirit Mirror](#), [King Suleiman](#), [Alpha Kavu](#), and [Coastal Drake](#) can become powerful board control engines when you can tailor them to problem creatures your opponent control. Legendary controllers like [Karakas](#), [Tsabo Tavoc](#), [Willow Satyr](#), and [Empress Galina](#) can be downgraded to playing havoc with the Goblins or Soldiers your opponent are playing. Similarly, if your opponent decides not to play his Dragon deck against you, you can still make use of [Hivis of the Scale](#) to steal whatever they're playing. [Tivadar's Crusade](#) can be Evolved into a one-way [Wrath of God](#), and you can hack [Suleiman's Legacy](#) to completely shut down your opponent's creature theme deck. [Knight of the Mists](#) can be turned into a [Nekrataal](#) if you time it right.

WIDENING THE SEARCH

Certain creature types get the benefit of some powerful search engines, especially from the *Mercadian Masques* block. Wouldn't it be nice to search for your [Meddling Mages](#) with your white/blue Counter-Rebel deck? [Artificial Evolution](#) makes it easy. Do similar tricks with [Mercenaries](#) in black, red's [Mogggcatcher](#), green's [Skysmrounder Poacher](#), and especially blue's [Seahunter](#). And why should Dragons have all the fun with [Zirilan of the Claw](#) when you can search out Beasts or Orggs? Or would that be considered Devolution?

WHEN BOOSTERS NEED BOOSTING

Ever wonder why the Lords in **Magic** weren't the same creature types as the creatures they enhanced? Evolution is the answer, turning creature type Lord into the appropriate boosted creature type! [Lord of Atlantis](#) looks much more impressive as a 3/3 for 🐉🐉 while islandwalking with his subjects. [Eladamri, Lord of the Leaves](#) is more effective when he's as untargetable as his Elven friends. [Goblin King](#), [Lord of the Undead](#), and [Elvish Champion](#) go from being lazy rulers who stay at home to true heroes leading the charge. Wouldn't [Goblin Wizard](#) be interesting if, once he's finished putting Goblins into play, he could Evolve into putting Dragons into play, and then protect them from the inevitable [Swords to Plowshares](#)? And [Orc General](#) suffers from the fact that there's not very many good Orcs out there. Hack him to boost your Goblin or Barbarian hordes. Similarly, there are so many [Kobold boosters](#) from *Legends* and really not all that many Kobolds so drop them in your Dwarf deck and start hacking. Or approach the problem from another way-- drop a [Wall of Kelp](#) into your Kobold deck and Evolve it to produce Kelp tokens... that are Kobolds.



FURTHER TRICKERY

[Chainer, Dementia Master](#) is a greedy Lord who takes his Nightmares with him when he dies. Time it right, you can hack him when he dies so that he takes out some of your opponent's creatures instead, and leaves his animated Nightmares behind. You can do similar timing tricks so you can permanently keep your Tombspawn Zombie tokens when [Tombstone Stairwell](#) leaves play.

Why should Griffins have all the fun of [Griffin Canyon](#)? Hack away. Or drop [Aboshan](#) into your Wizard deck and Evolve him to make use of that creature type. And wouldn't it be nice if [Nemata, Grove Guardian](#) could create Elves instead of Saprolings? He could make your [Priest of Titania](#) positively sick. You could do similar things with [Squirrel Wrangler](#) and [Deranged Hermit](#). Elf tokens baby!

DEFENSIVE EVOLUTION

[Artificial Evolution](#) can be a nice defensive tool. Is your opponent's Bird deck wrecking your [Soulcatchers' Aerie](#)? Hack it from Birds to Wizards and put it to work for you. Is your opponent's [Karakas](#) harassing your cool Legend deck? Neuter it by changing it from Legends to, say, Wombats. Is your opponent's [Engineered Plague](#) taking the steam out of your Squirrel Opposition deck? Hack your [Squirrel Nest](#) into producing a different creature type token, preferably something he's playing so he'll have to hurt his own position to stop your Nest.

WALLS: THEY'RE NOT JUST FOR BLOCKING ANYMORE

Wizards often makes Walls that would be fierce in combat... if only they could attack. [Artificial Evolution](#) can hack your favorite wall into a fighting machine. Wouldn't a 10/10 [Shifting Wall](#) be ugly if it were an Elf that could attack? Put some copies of [Testament of Faith](#) in your Soldier deck and enlist their help in battle. [Illusionary Wall](#) would be frightening as a 7/4 flying, first striking Merfolk. [Sunweb](#) wouldn't be too shabby as a 5/6 flying Archaeologist on offense. And for massive style points, turn your [Wall of Wood](#) into a Berserker and swing... followed by a [Might of Oaks](#), [Giant Growth](#), and [Berserk](#) for the win.

Walls make good blockers, but sometimes your opponent just doesn't play them, making cards like [Juggernaut](#), [Rampart](#), [Crawler](#), [Bog Rats](#), and [Tower of Coireall](#) less than impressive. Hack 'em to be unblockable by whatever creatures your opponent is playing and watch them start to sweat... well, at least they'll sweat your Juggernaut and Tower.

MAKING BAD CARDS... NOT QUITE SO BAD

Do you find yourself rooting for the underdog? Do you feel bad for cards that are banished to the back of people's trade binder or, worse yet, the circular file for the sheer misfortune of just being bad? Do you wish you could shame the local loudmouth by defeating him once--just once--with a horrible card? [Artificial Evolution](#) gives you that opportunity with some notoriously bad cards. Hack your [Sword of the Chosen](#) and suddenly your little Merfolk just got problematic. Drop an [Aurochs](#) into your Elf deck and evolve him to Go Large with the elves. [Marble Priest](#) can be artificially enhanced to be a perfect foil for your friend's Saproling deck. [Masked Gorgon](#) would take some work not only with [Artificial Evolution](#), but you'd probably want to hit it with [Alter Reality](#) too.



ONSLAUGHT'S TYPOGRAPHY

The best news of all is what I can't really tell you about. Namely, *Onslaught's* focus on "tribal" cards that make creature types matter opens up all sorts of possibilities with [Artificial Evolution](#). Before the prerelease, I can't delve into them here but let's just say that [Rotlung Reanimator](#) and Wirewood Savage are certainly hack-worthy.

Make sure to get your hands on some [Artificial Evolution](#), and don't let creature types stand in the way of cool decks.

Elves Say They Want an Evolution



Main Deck 60 cards

15	Forest	4	Artificial Evolution
1	Gaea's Cradle	3	Coat of Arms
2	Wirewood Lodge	2	Crop Rotation
4	Yavimaya Coast	1	Overrun
_____		4	Power Sink

22 lands

14 other spells

- 1 [Deranged Hermit](#)
- 2 [Elvish Lyrist](#)
- 4 [Fyndhorn Elves](#)
- 4 [Llanowar Elves](#)
- 1 [Nemata, Grove Guardian](#)
- 4 [Priest of Titania](#)
- 4 [Skyshroud Poacher](#)
- 4 [Urborg Elves](#)

24 creatures



Bennie may be reached at singlecardstrategy@email.com.