

Turning up the amplifier SCS: Daru Stinger

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Single Card Strategy" is honored to introduce one of the flagship new mechanics of *Legions*, the aptly-named amplify! While the ability obviously fits right into Limited's tribal strategies, it also offers creative players lots of interesting new deckbuilding considerations for Constructed decks.



The card we'll be looking at today—[Daru Stinger](#)—features this brand-new mechanic and lends itself nicely to thinking outside the box when building decks around creatures. Reminiscent of the *Urza's Destiny* cycle of Scents (such as [Scent of Ivy](#)), amplify creatures get juiced up when you show your opponents that you've got some of their friends in hand. In the case of [Daru Stinger](#), for each Soldier that you reveal when it comes into play, [Daru Stinger](#) gets a +1/+1 counter on it that also determines how powerful its "pinging" ability is.



So how does the Stinger measure up? Well, if you do a baseline comparison with a similar creature, such as [Heavy Ballista](#), it's obvious you need to work harder to get similar results. For the same mana, [Heavy Ballista](#) gives you a bigger creature with a set ping of 2 to attackers or blockers. In order to match that, you'd need to reveal two Soldiers in your hand when you cast the Stinger. So, if you want to play [Daru Stinger](#), the key would be to really emphasize its amplify ability. And for that we need a few good men. And Birds.

PICK A PECK OF SOLDIERS

To maximize the amplify ability we'll need to build a Soldier deck. There are plenty of good Soldiers to go around—stretching from the Icatians in the *Fallen Empires* set to the Darus of the *Onslaught* set—especially if you dig deeper into your card pool. First strikers in particular will benefit from the pinging ability of the Stinger, warriors like [Icatian Infantry](#), [Ranger en-Vec](#), [Longbow Archer](#), and [Daru Lancer](#). There are plenty of pinger backups for the Stinger in addition to the aforementioned [Heavy Ballista](#). You can choose [Crossbow Infantry](#), [D'Avenant Archer](#), [Catapult Squad](#), and [Gravel Slinger](#)—all help set up an impenetrable defense while making blocking your attacker a losing proposition. You can also back up the Stinger with white tappers like [Whipcorder](#), [Master Decoy](#), and [Benalish Trapper](#) (tapping down the big boys while Stinger holds back the smaller guys).

NOT GETTING OUT OF HAND

So how do you keep your hand chock full of Soldiers waiting to boost up your Stinger when it comes into play? You probably won't be able to afford to just sit there and let [Daru Stinger](#) be the first creature you cast while holding back on all of your other Soldiers; you'll want to play a good amount of cheap Soldiers for early defense. Cards like [No Rest for the Wicked](#), [Remembrance](#), and [Aphetto Dredging](#) will let any early casualties stock your hand with Soldiers in preparation for Stinger's appearance. If you're playing nearly all Soldiers or have a way to stack your deck (with say [Brainstorm](#), [Scroll Rack](#), and so on), try running [Enlistment Officer](#) to draw plenty of Soldiers. [Enlistment Officer](#) even has first strike to go with your pinging strategy. [Pack Hunt](#) will let you get three more copies of any Soldier you have in play. There are even a few Soldiers that can jump back into your hand, such as [Skywing Aven](#) and [Thalakos Scout](#), when the time comes to amplify. Gempalm Avenger—another *Legions* card—will be perfect, as you'll typically keep it in hand anyway until you want to cycle it for its effect.

COUNTER-STRIKE

Ultimately, [Daru Stinger](#)'s ability to increase its pinging power while making itself bigger is what will make it shine. Think of amplifying as a built in way to toss a few initial +1/+1 counters on it when it comes into play, but don't stop there. Digging through your collection, you'll find all sorts of ways to add more counters to [Daru Stinger](#). [Spike Feeder](#), [Dragon Blood](#), [Invigorating Boon](#), [Forcemage Advocate](#), [Ferocity](#), [Elven Rite](#), and [Spoils of War](#) all let you go hog wild with the +1/+1 counters. And don't forget that one of the most powerful +1/+1 counter generators ever, [Forgotten Ancient](#), which was designed by the **Magic** public, will be making an appearance in the *Scourge* set! If you've been playing long enough, you can find counter producers farther back with cards like [Afiya Grove](#), [Infinite Authority](#), [Miraculous Recovery](#), and [Nature's Blessing](#). One ugly combo is enchanting [Daru Stinger](#) with a [Vampiric Embrace](#), so that every creature it kills with its pinging makes its pinging even stronger.



LAST BUT NOT LEAST

I have to admit to being a tiny bit disappointed when the *Onslaught* set came out. I had hoped that we'd be seeing a return of 1/1 Insect tokens, and that, along with the Insects from the *Odyssey* set, gave me hope that one of my all-time favorite cards would be reprinted. Yep, that's right—[Saber Ants](#)! Don't you think it would be perfect in this block? Especially with pingers like [Daru Stinger](#)? You could create an army of 1/1 Insects out of nowhere! I'm feeling the need to create a deck featuring [Daru Stinger](#), but guest-starring my beloved Ants.

The Sting and the Saber *Lite!*



Main Deck

60 cards

4 Elfhame Palace	2 Dragon Blood
5 Forest	2 Ferocity
4 Daru Encampment	_____
11 Plains	4 other spells

24 lands

4 [Catapult Squad](#)
 4 [Daru Stinger](#)
 2 [D'Avenant Archer](#)
 4 [Deftblade Elite](#)

- 2 [Forcemage Advocate](#)
- 4 Gempalm Avenger
- 4 [Longbow Archer](#)
- 4 [Pearlspear Courier](#)
- 2 [Saber Ants](#)
- 2 [Whipcorder](#)

32 creatures



With twenty-eight Soldiers, your Stinger should always hit with a couple of extra counters on it. I particularly like the [Deftblade Elite](#) in this deck; with a big enough Stinger to back it up, the Elite's provoke ability can "call out" any creature to get stung and killed before it's able to deal damage. [Ferocity](#) turns your Stinger into an amazing blocker and eventually into a lethal attacker. I built "The Sting and the Saber" without the benefit of any rares, but I thought I'd mention a few in case you have them. [Brushlands](#) would obviously help smooth out your mana. A [Mobilization](#) or two works great in any Solider deck but is especially brutal with a Stinger out. [Intrepid Hero](#) deserves a place in your sideboard or even your main deck to handle opponents who play with big creatures. For some more ideas for Soldier themed decks, see my [article](#) on *Onslaught* Charms. Have fun!

Rules Corner: Amplify

From the *Legions* FAQ:

The official rules for the amplify ability are as follows:

502.27. Amplify

502.27a Amplify is a static ability. "Amplify [X]" means "As this card comes into play, reveal any number of cards from your hand that share a creature type with this card. This card comes into play with X +1/+1 counters on it for each card revealed this way. You can't reveal this card or any other cards that are coming into play at the same time as this card."

502.27b If a creature has multiple instances of amplify, each one works separately.

* The player who will control the creature is the one who reveals the cards.

* Each revealed card must share a creature type with the amplify card. The reminder text reminds you what those types are.

* Playing the *Onslaught* card [Artificial Evolution](#) on an amplify spell on the stack can change what types need to be revealed. The card [Conspiracy](#) can also change what types need to be revealed.

* If multiple creatures with amplify are going to come into play under your control at the same time, you're allowed to reveal the same cards for each of them.

* If you play [Clone](#) and choose for it to copy a creature with amplify, you get to reveal cards and get +1/+1 counters.

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