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March 31, 2004



Q: "I have a friend who is a plant fanatic and enjoys using saprolings and has, in fact, stumbled into several infinite combos with them. He has been looking for more spells that produce saprolings, but unfortunately, he hasn't had much luck and has been stuck using a combination of a saproling spells and common treefolk like **Ironroot Treefolk** and **Redwood Treefolk**. I was wondering if you could provide a list of all of the saproling-producing and assisting spells so that I could help him in his endeavor. Also, he wants to know if **Magic** will ever go back to the Fungus or Saproling creature type?"
-- Sam, Lakeland, Florida

A: From **Devin Low**, Magic R&D:

"Hi Sam, I have a list of Saprolings for you, but first let me tell you how to find this kind of list for yourself. Then you can find all the **Elementals**, all the **Insects** or whatever you want. The answer is **Magic Online**. Even if you don't buy anything, you can [download](#) the program for free, and use it as a comprehensive, searchable encyclopedia for the game. Unlike cardlists on fansites, **Magic Online** also gives you the cards' art, flavor text, and oracle wordings. Be sure to have the 'Show all versions' box checked, and the 'My cards' box unchecked.

"Your next question is whether we will ever go back to Fungus or Saprolings. We like to keep the token creatures in a block as centralized as possible. For example, if a card makes 1/1 artifact creature tokens in the *Mirrodin* block, it will always create Myr tokens. Doing this allows us to make cards like **Myr Matrix** that will affect all these token creatures at once. Which token creature type we use in a particular block depends on the world concepts dreamed up by the worldbuilder guys, like **Magic** Creative Director Brady Dommermuth and Creative Coordinator Brandon Bozzi. For *Mirrodin* block, our Green 1/1's are Insects, like **One Dozen Eyes**. In *Fallen Empires* and *Invasion*, they were Saprolings. Will Saprolings ever return? On any world where globs of Fungus rear their ugly mutated heads and googly eyes, there you will find the clever little monsters called Saprolings.

"With those larger questions out of the way, here are all the Saprolings:

"Night Soil, Thallid, Elvish Farmer, Thallid Devourer, Spontaneous Generation, Verdant Force, Greener Pastures, Sporogenesis, Saproling Burst, Saproling Cluster, Saproling Infestation, Saproling Symbiosis, Verdeloth the Ancient, Artifact Mutation, Aura Mutation, Rith the Awakener, Nemata, Grove Guardian, Rith's Charm, Last Stand, Death Mutation, and Aether Mutation."

March 30, 2004



Q: "Does playing in a Pro Tour Qualifier earn you Pro Tour Points? I was reading the policy on how Pro Tour points and that they are awarded based on how you finished in

GP Individual or Pro Tour Individual, but I was unsure if the qualifiers were included in these groups." -- John T. Frankowski, Lombard, IL

A: From **Scott Larabee**, DCI Program Manager:

"Pro Points are not awarded at Pro Tour Qualifier events. Pro Points are only awarded at [Grand Prix](#) (Top 32 finishers only), [Pro Tour](#), and [World Championship](#) events. A player who simply qualifies for these events does not earn Pro Points, but must actually show up to play in the event."

March 29, 2004



Q: "Do you have any plans to reinstate Question Mark, the daily Trivia feature that used to run on www.sideboard.com?"

-- Antony, UK

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** lead designer:

"Antony, I'm happy to hear that my little trivia column is missed. Question Mark went away basically because I was overloaded with work and had to cut back on my responsibilities. (Faithful readers might remember the growing mistake rate near the column's end.) My recent promotion and the birth of my twins hasn't exactly reversed the trend. So, are there any plans to reinstate Question Mark? No. That said, if enough of you make it known that you'd like to see some trivia on magicthegathering.com, we'll think about putting something new together. It just might not be me writing the questions."

March 26, 2004



Q: "Back in the day of Sideboard.com they had this convenient thing called tournament archives. I can't seem to find it. Is it obsolete or just hidden? It's really making me mad that I can't find Pro Tour Kobe. A link to the archives page would be really nice." -- Matt Green

A: From **Scott Johns**, magicthegathering.com Content Editor:

"Matt, the information you're looking for can be found in the [Tournament Center](#) section of the site. From the front page, just click on the 'Tournaments' box. Then just click on the link '[List of past events with coverage](#)', under 'In the Books.'"

March 25, 2004



Q: "Was Matt Place serious about the new color, puce, in a recent 'Ask Wizards'? I am of course talking about the [March 9th](#) answer, in which he says: 'The only exception to this will be when we add the sixth color to **Magic**, puce, which will use an ultraviolet border' (when answering the land's background color question)." -- Dominik N, Ontario, Canada

A: From **Matt Place**, R&D Associate Developer:

"No I was not being serious when I mentioned a sixth color in **Magic**. I underestimated how many people would take me seriously and I would like to apologize to all of you. My 'joke' also got me in trouble here at R&D. Instead of going to lunch last week, Rosewater had me doing laps around the mana pool, so believe me when I say that I have learned my lesson!"

March 24, 2004



Q: "I'm just wondering if there are counterfeited **Magic** cards? If there are how can we notice when they are original or fake?" --Alex Rdz, Mexico

A: From **Elena Moye**, **Magic** associate brand manager:

"By now some of you have encountered counterfeit cards and been burned as a result. We want you to know that we are pursuing counterfeiters across the globe.

"You can see our [Legal Corner page](#) for our position on counterfeiting, how to spot counterfeits, and what to do if you encounter a counterfeit."

March 23, 2004



Q: "With the hefty increase in the use of creature types in the *Onslaught* block, plus their expansion in *Mirrodin* (particularly, Human being a creature type), has Wizards

every considered doing a lot of creature type erratas for older cards? Making **Samite Healer** a Human Cleric instead of just a Cleric, **Stalking Tiger** a Cat Tiger, or even giving **Aladdin** type Human?" -- Josh Liller

A: From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:

"We've talked about it quite a bit, actually. Our current opinion is that there's a big downside whenever we issue errata on a card. We want everyone to be able to play **Magic** just by reading their cards and playing by the text that is printed on them. You shouldn't need to lug a copy of the **Oracle** around just to know what all your cards do. Sometimes we *have* to issue errata (if the card doesn't work intelligently or the **Magic** rules have changed since the card was printed, for example), but we do not use errata to change cards just because we don't like the functionality that's printed on them. Because of this policy, we do not plan any mass errata to older cards just to bring their creature types up to date. Yes, we would do them differently if we did them again, and we also consider updating them on a case by case basis whenever we reprint them (like when we added type Soldier to **Yotian Soldier**), but in general we won't be doing any mass updating."

March 22, 2004



"I know **Magic** is all about making rules and breaking rules. Are there any rules that you guys have decided would be too much of a hassle to break (e.g. allowing sorceries to be played as instants or letting players skip their upkeep phase)?"

Thanks, Mike O'Leary

From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** lead designer:

"Mike,

"The Golden Rule of **Magic** design is that every rule can be broken. Including the Golden Rule. Which means? Well, chaos basically. That said, are there rules that we choose not to break? Yes.

"The rules we tend not to break are of a very different kind than your suggestions (which, by the way, are all fair game). For example, one of our current unbreakable rules is that we don't let players put other people's cards in their hands. The reason for this rule is that we don't want to create a situation where one player doesn't like how his opponent handles his cards. (And note that even this rule was broken in *Unglued* with the card **Mirror, Mirror**.)

"Other examples of unbreakable rules: the text must fit in the text box, we don't repeat card names (unless it's the same card), flavor text doesn't have a game relevant function, cards that search the library for a specific subset must be shown to the opponent to be verified, and nothing works at interrupt speed. As you can see, there are numerous rules we try not to break.

"Then again, here's some old unbreakable rules: cards must always be laid out the same, players cannot touch the opponent's library, cards in play must always have their information public, cards cannot have an ability before the first turn, and never let Mark design a card without supervision. What does all this mean? **Magic** is a game in flux. Nothing is truly off limits. Things that seem forbidden today might be normal tomorrow.

"Who knows what rules *Fifth Dawn* might be breaking?"

March 19, 2004



Q: "Whatever happened to the maps you mentioned on the storylines page? I would very much like to see all the worlds that are always being mentioned." -- Matthew Miles, Watson, New Zealand

A: From **Daniel "Reepicheep" Stahl**, Managing Web Producer:

"Once upon a time the continuity department commissioned (in true RPG cartographic glory) detailed maps that tried to synch up all the lands and locations mentioned within the various card expansions. The most *infamous* of these maps was a hand-drawn globe (by none other than Pete Venters) showing the land masses and island clumps that visualized the world of Dominaria - the setting (ie. plane) for most of **Magic's** history. This globe was the reference used to create the maps for the *Invasion* block, which to the best of my knowledge are the only maps we have officially published on the website (unless Aaron dug out an old map and made an Arcana out of it). You can find these maps at the old <http://www.magicinvasion.com> site which was devoted to the *Invasion* block environment. If you're looking for more maps, you might want to go on a

treasure hunt through the old *Duelist* magazines which at various times published smaller insets and sketches of Dominaria.

"Will we ever be able to provide maps of ALL the worlds of **Magic**? Unfortunately, I don't think they ALL exist. However, if you do some searching you might be able to find small snippets (you'll see one of *Ice Age* as an Arcana sometime soon). In the future we will be attempting to providing more block environment information so that you can fully investigate the *Multiverse of Magic*TM. But keep in mind that our philosophy is to provide a snapshot of the environment, and then your imagination will be free to explore the rest.

"By the way, if your imagination is lacking, you'll just have to believe that the world is flat and thus if you *explore* too far - you'll fall off the edges.

"That is if you don't run into one of the thousand islands first.

"(Wait a minute... isn't that a salad dressing?)"

March 18, 2004



Q: "Where do I find the recent Banned & Restricted announcement?" -- Jill Stevens, New York

A: From **Scott Johns**, magicthegathering.com Content Editor:
"The recent Banned/Restricted announcement can be found in the [Tournament Center](#) under the "Announcements" section."

March 17, 2004



Q: "As I was looking through some cards the other day I realized that Wizards never made an Urza or a Mishra card, except for in *Vanguard*. For a series of books that went on for about five years, just about them two, it is strange to see that they have no card. Why is that?" -- Julien

A: From **Aaron Forsythe**, Magic R&D:
"A popular question, Julien. While many characters in books and storylines have been made into cards--**Kamahl**, **Gerrard**, and **Glissa**, for example--they are but pawns in the big picture, to be controlled by you, the player. As a player, you represent a 'planeswalker'--a type of mighty being that commands a variety of creatures and magic to battle on his behalf. Urza is also a planeswalker, which means a card of him would need to be as powerful as a player in order to be considered accurate.

"There are many planeswalkers besides the famous brothers that have been written about in novels, appeared in card art, and have been referenced in flavor text, yet never made into cards. Some of them include Freyalise, Serra, Feroz, Teferi, Jaya Ballard, and Tevesh Szat. Some legend cards that weren't planeswalkers *became* planeswalkers later in the storyline, for example **Karn**, **Silver Golem**."

March 16, 2004



Q: "When are the Regionals? Everyone keeps talking about them, but when exactly are they?" -- Colin Clarke, Isle of Wight, England

A: From **Scott Johns**, magicthegathering.com Content Editor:
"Regionals scheduling and info can be found by going to the [Tournament Center](#) and clicking on the Regionals logo under the Organized Play section."

March 15, 2004



Q: "I noticed (from the photos of [PT Kobe](#)) that most, or maybe all of the top 8 players play without protectors. Is this their own choice or is it a rule? Also is there any rule about the condition, language, and edition of cards at a Pro Tour?" -- Sean P

A: From **John Grant**, Organized Play Policy Manager:
"Thanks for your email and interest in the Pro Tour, Sean. We ask players in the Top 8 of a Pro Tour stop to unsleeve their decks. The stage lighting used for the Top 8 webcast reflects brightly off of most sleeves, making the cards nearly impossible to see.

"Players in the Top 8 of a Pro Tour can choose any tournament-legal version of the cards they wish to use, including the use of non-English cards. All cards in a player's deck must be unmarked; decks are scrutinized for marks by the Pro Tour judging staff prior to their use in the Top 8."

March 12, 2004



Q: "While glancing through my *Unglued* cards I recognized a special word after each card number. The problem is, I don't have that many *Unglued* cards. It seems to me that these words build some kind of sentence if they're ordered correctly...." -- Thomas Heilbock, Germany

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, lead designer of *Unglued*:

"Let's assume hypothetically that the lead designer of *Unglued* was a bit on the crazy side. Now imagine he was put in charge of a **Magic** product where he was pretty much allowed to break all these rules that he had been following for years. A devious mind such as his might have come up with the idea of sneaking a secret message into said product just because he could. But if said designer, who enjoyed writing about himself in third person, admitted to such a secret message then it wouldn't be all that secret, would it?

"But such designer is not a mean person and down deep he wants such a hypothetical secret message to get out. (After all does a message have a purpose if no one reads it.) But he couldn't just spill out such a message in 'Ask Wizards,' could he? That would make him the weak **link** in the chain. Much like **Link** of the 'Mod Squad.' Hmm, sausage **links** sound good right now. Anyway, I'm sorry I couldn't help you with your problem. Thanks for writing in."

March 11, 2004



Q: "Whatever happened to cool mechanics like rampage, or shadow? I for one would really like to see rampage come back." -- Colin

A: From **Henry Stern**, Magic R&D:

Rampage 2 (*For each creature assigned to block it beyond the first, this creature gets +2/+2 until end of turn.*)

"Rampage was introduced in the *Legends* set, and was reasonably well received. There was one problem with this mechanic though: we in R&D felt that the "beyond the first" was just excess baggage and that the mechanic would just be cleaner without it. Thus, we introduced what we called "new rampage" in *Urza's Saga*. **Cave Tiger** is an example.

Whenever a creature blocks it, Cave Tiger gets +1/+1 until end of turn.

(Purists might claim that *Stronghold's Spined Sliver* is the first.) Although we have not used new rampage all that much, it is still in green's color pie, and will show up from time to time.

"Shadow, on the other hand, was a Rath Cycle specific mechanic. Like other block specific mechanics, we might bring it back for a block at some time, or we might not. But we won't reprint just a single shadow creature out of context."

March 10, 2004



Q: "I'd like to know the process for deciding mana costs for cards. **Goblin Replica** and **Elf Replica** are very similar creatures, but the cost of their abilities seem are very different to the point the elf looks like a much better deal than the goblin."

A: **Brian Schneider**, Magic R&D:

"We thought **Goblin Replica** had a more powerful effect (especially in an environment with a strong complement of artifacts) than **Elf Replica**. In the *Mirrodin* environment you're far more likely to use the Goblin's ability than the Elf's. Accordingly, we costed its ability higher."

March 9, 2004



Q: "In regards to the border colors on lands with the new card faces: I understand why

the lands that are aligned with a color have borders that are colored red, green, blue, etc.... Can you explain what the determining factors are that make a land's border have the gold hue (i.e., **Mirrodin's Core**) versus the darker gray hue (i.e., **Blinkmoth Nexus**)? I haven't been able to figure this out. Thanks!" -- Joe Miller

A: From **Matt Place**, Research & Development:

"The color of a nonbasic land's border is determined by the mana it can produce. Lands that produce colorless mana have a gray border. Lands like **Mirrodin's Core** and **City of Brass** that produce all five colors of mana receive a gold border. For lands that produce two colors, the border and text box matches the colors it produces, for example **Shivan Oasis** fades from red into green. Basic lands simply match the color of mana they produce. The only exception to this will be when we add the sixth color to **Magic**, puce, which will use an ultraviolet border." *[Editor's note: Matt is joking about puce, folks. There are no current plans to add a sixth color to **Magic**.]*

March 8, 2004



Q: "What is the story behind 'Big Furry Monster' (B.F.M.)?" --Anonymus

A: From **Mark Rosewater**, **Magic** lead designer:

"Well, early in *Unglued* design I got a number of artist-type people (employees from Production, Graphic Design, Art, etc.) and got them into a room for a brainstorming session. I explained to them that *Unglued* was free to mess with the cards visually in any way we desired. During that brainstorm session we came up with the idea of having art that crossed over from one card to another. When I heard the idea, I asked if we could create a card that was **two cards** put together. Once I was told yes, my designer mind started churning.

"What kind of card would need to be two cards instead of one? And then the answer hit me. How about a really big creature? I mean really, really, really big. A magnitude larger than we've ever created. At the time, the largest creature was 12/12 (**Phyrexian Dreadnaught**). What if I went to three digits and made him a 100/100? Bill Rose later convinced me to drop it to 99/99. (We didn't need three digit inflation, he said.)

"Everyone I talked to seemed very excited by the idea. And that is how the **Big Furry Monster** came to be."

March 5, 2004



Q: "Do you consider getting rid of basic lands? I'm very impressed by the changes **Magic** underwent since *Sixth Edition*, but I still don't like the part basic lands play in the game -- about 40% of a deck just there to put other cards in play. **Magic** introduced the 'growing resources' model but, since then, other games have provided very interesting alternatives to lands. **Magic** is the CCG that has evolved the most but basic lands stay the same. Could this be the focus of a long term change?" -- Stephane Bura

A: From **Mark Gottlieb**, **Duel Masters** Rules Manager:

"I could invoke tradition, economic models, or the like. But really, I have two simple answers to your question.

"Answer 1: Stephane, you may be interested in the upcoming [Duel Masters trading card game](#), which will hit stores on March 5. Created by Wizards of the Coast, it's been a smash hit in Japan for two years. The game features ferocious combat between wickedly awesome creatures. It was designed to be a cousin of **Magic**: A version of the color wheel is present, many game mechanics crossed over, and you summon creatures and cast spells by tapping cards for mana. The element of the game that may interest you the most is that every **Duel Masters** card, both creatures and spells, can also be used as a mana card! The game has no "lands." Instead, you can put one card a turn from your hand into your "mana zone." Once there, it does nothing but produce mana. When you tap it, it will make one mana of its color that you can use to cast other creatures and spells.

"Answer 2: No way. Never. Not a chance."

March 4, 2004



Q: "My friend and I were talking and the shadow cards came up. We noticed that slivers came back which was cool, but we wonder if shadow will ever come back?" -- Robert, Aurora, CO

A: From **Brian Tinsman, Magic R&D:**

"Hi Robert,

In the past few years R&D has become much more willing to bring back old and beloved mechanics. Slivers and cycling are good examples of mechanics that players welcomed back with great affection. But shadow is an ability that caused a fair amount of controversy in its day. It was flavorful and powerful, but it also made games very fast and somewhat more luck-based since most shadow creatures weren't getting blocked. Some people also felt that the ability was uninteresting because it was so similar to flying. As a designer, if you want shadow to play differently from 'unblockable' you need to have lots and lots of shadow creatures in the set so everyone will have access to them in limited formats. This all or nothing tendency makes it somewhat more difficult to find space for them in a set. I'll never say never, but we would need to find solutions to these problems before shadow could return."

March 3, 2004



Q: "I recently went to PTQ for San Diego, and I didn't know what place I came in. Is there a section on Wizards.com or another site I can go to to find my place online?" -- Nick

A: From **Doug Beyer, Magic** web developer:

"Yes! For DCI sanctioned tournaments, once the results of the tournament are processed by the DCI, you can find your tournament results at the [DCI Personal Information Center](#). Just log in using your DCI number and DCI password (you can retrieve your DCI password by clicking 'Forgot Password' on that page), and then look for your tournament history.

"In the future, you can always find a link to the DCI Personal Information Center under 'DCI Ratings & Rankings' in [magicthegathering.com](#)'s [Tournament Center](#)."

March 2, 2004



Q: "I have recently begun to read the **Magic: The Gathering** books, however I am confused about the order that they were written and the order they should be read in. If you were going to read all the books to get the history of **Magic** from *Chronicles* to *Mirrodon*, which order would you read the books in? Thanks." -- Dan, Newport Beach, CA

A: From **Daniel Stahl**, Managing Web Producer:

"The simple answer is, the page you seek is here: [Magic Storyline](#)

"However, with that said, I'd like to take the opportunity to provide a little foreshadowing on novel continuity.

"Over the years, the **Magic** novels have entertained several different philosophies regarding how to treat continuity between the novels and the cards. At times the novels have been so integrated with the cards that one could actually read the novel prior to the expansion release and get spoiler clues as to what was going to be in the upcoming set.

"One of the reasons we have temporarily removed the above link from [magicthegathering.com](#) is that we are in the process of changing the way we present **Magic** novel continuity in relationship to the expansions. Our goal is to redesign the "storyline" pages to reflect [Wizards' current philosophy](#) that the novels are free to create a storyline within the environment defined by the expansion, but are not constrained by the cards (or vice-versa) nor the environment of previous blocks.

"Thus, in the end, the grand continuity you seek might not be as easily defined as it moves more towards a block environment philosophy (much in the same way that not all Trek or Star Wars novels get along). I will suggest that when you are reading **Magic** novels, you treat each block (or 'cycle' in novel-speak) as its own story and enjoy them as such."

March 1, 2004



Q: "Where can I find information about this year's Regionals?"
-- Multiple players

A: From **Doug Beyer**, Magic web developer:
"Thanks to everyone who asked about the 2004 Regionals Championships. The [Tournament Center](#) now has a Regionals tab: it takes you to the Regional Championships page (www.wizards.com/regionals), where you can click your country and find a schedule for the tournaments in your area."



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