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# Rootshaper

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Building on a Budget  
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PRO TOUR-VALENCIA

With [last week's article](#) I seemed to have hit a chord with the readers. Perhaps listening to the scores of emails that the readers send in paid off. This week's article is written in the same vein as last week's, but with one exception – the combo is more viable in tournament play, and is a little more complex to pull off. Call it the next level of **Dross Scorpion** combos. The best way to make a combo deck better is to take out the highest casting cost cards and make your engine cards as cheap to play as possible. The reason why a deck like Scorpion Foundry can only really be used in casual play is because it has lots of combo pieces that cost 4 mana. This deck, on the other hand, uses pieces with much lower casting costs.

The next thing you can do to make your combo deck better is decrease the amount of cards needed to make your combo work. A deck that uses **Wall of Blood** and **Grab the Reins** is good at that, since it is effectively a 2 card combo. **Channel-Fireball** comes to mind as well. This deck has many pieces to the combo (4 in all...3 is average) but can go off rather consistently and kill all of your opponents on turn five. That's right...turn 5. Those of you who played the Scorpion Foundry deck probably couldn't go off until turn 8 at least. Hold onto your seats...



This deck was actually the very first deck that Team CMU made for their Kobe testing. Eugene Harvey and I goldfished this deck over and over until we knew what to do with it. Of course, our versions had things like **Chrome Moxes**, **Reshapes**, and **Arcbound Ravagers**...but I tried to spare as much expense as possible here (I know this one is slightly over 30 tickets guys, sorry – but I thought most of you should have invested in 4 **Skullclamps** by now, which always seems to be the bulk of the cost of building a deck these days). We decided that we couldn't play the deck in the Pro Tour because the combo is easily disrupted by the instant removal that everyone was sure to be playing at the time. Even so, this deck will cause a ruckus in the casual scene.

First, let's take a look at the decklist:

## Building on a Budget: Rootshaper

(slightly over 30 tickets...sorry!) dec

Main Deck 60 cards		
7 Plains	4 Auriok Steelshaper	4 Fabricate
6 Island	4 Myr Retriever	1 Fireball
4 Ancient Den	4 Ornithopter	1 Chromatic Sphere
4 Seat of the Synod	4 Myr Moonvessel	4 Tangleroot
21 lands	4 Frogmite	4 Skullclamp
	20 creatures	1 Spawning Pit
		4 Talisman of Progress
		19 other spells

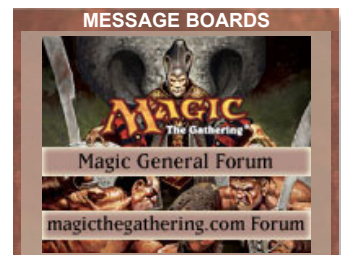
Ok, so just by looking at this list it may not be apparent as to what this deck actually does. In the end, you will have infinite mana, infinite 2/2's and 1 **Fireball** split between infinite targets for infinity each...except replace infinity with an arbitrarily large number that strikes your fancy.

## How it Works

You will need 2 **Skullclamps**, 1 **Auriok Steelshaper**, and 1 **Tangleroot** in order to start going off. You can do it with just 2 Clamps and a Steelshaper with 3 mana open and getting a little lucky, but I recommend having a **Tangleroot** in play first.

You start by playing a free creature such as an **Ornithopter** or a **Frogmite** (**Myr Moonvessel** is also effectively free for our purposes). You will get a G in your mana pool due to **Tangleroot**. You then clamp the creature with as many **Skullclamps** as possible until it is dead (usually 2). You can do this for 0 mana because of the Steelshaper. You will draw several cards from clamping your creatures and some of these cards will be more free to cast creatures. This will effectively add even more mana to your mana pool because of **Tangleroot**. Eventually you will have enough mana to play out a second **Tangleroot** that you have drawn...then a third.

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Once you have three **Tangleroots** in play, that's when the infinity starts to happen. Play out a **Myr Retriever**, this will effectively gain you a mana. Kill it with the **Skullclamp**, drawing two and getting back another **Myr Retriever** from your graveyard. Repeat this process until you have your whole deck and lots of spare mana. Play out **Spawning Pit** and continue to repeat the process with the **Spawning Pit** instead of using **Skullclamps** – this is so you do not deck yourself from the forced draw, and gives you the added bonus of making infinite mana while also getting infinite 2/2 creatures. When you have all the mana you want, cast your **Chromatic Sphere** (or get it back from the graveyard with a **Retriever**) make a red mana, and blast your opponents into oblivion.

As you can see, this is not the easiest combo in the world to perform (or go through the motions as combo players like to call it), but it is consistently able to go off on turn five (though not earlier, typically).

## Tips on playing the Deck

- You are going to **Fabricate** for **Skullclamp**...a lot. You really need 2 in order to go off effectively.
- If you only have one **Skullclamp**, sometimes you can make due with a **Spawning Pit**, since it will let you sacrifice a clamped guy even if it has 2 toughness, and it allows you to generate extra clamp fodder.
- Besides **Skullclamp**, the next most **Fabricated** card is **Tangleroot** – sometimes you even **Fabricate** for this while going off if you have spare mana.
- **Myr Retriever** is a boon when going off, as it essentially lets you dig deep into your deck without much mana commitment. You can get back an **Ornithopter** or a **Frogmite** for the first few – but remember that you will need at least one left in your deck to go infinite.
- If you have to pop your **Chromatic Sphere** early, don't worry. You can get it back with the **Myr Retriever** when you're ready to win.
- You can filter green mana into blue and white mana via the Talismans.



## Adding Money to the Deck

I mentioned **Arctbound Ravager** and **Chrome Mox** before. The Ravager serves the same function as the **Spawning Pit**, but leave you more kill options if you are running tight. You can have **Blinkmoth Nexus** for extra **Skullclamp** fodder and another way to win with the Ravager (evasion). **Glimmeroids** and **Cities of Brass** help out, and make it so you are not forced to leave up your **Chromatic Sphere** (or way to get it back). A couple **Reshapes** are nice (maybe two) because you will **Reshape** for zero sometimes... sacrificing a clamped guy to get an **Ornithopter** or Artifact Land. This deck is pretty easy to modify once you get the hang of playing with it. You will quickly learn what is important and what is not.

Have fun playing this deck and surprising all your friends!

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