

# MYCELIUM

Rot, consumption, decay. A landscape swallowed up by mushrooms spewing spores, fields of primordial sludge, where plants and animals, even the rocks and stones themselves are little more than the food of some massive, unthinking super-organism. A place that seems to be utterly hostile to life itself, yet possesses an ecology all its own, one where life, however alien, still thrives. It may sound like something out of a horror story, a cautionary tale about the perils of alien life, but in the New World, this phenomenon is all too real. This bizarre phenomenon is known as the Mycelium, a primordial fungal super-organism that claims whole swathes of the surrounding terrain as its own. Thickening the air with deadly spores, gorging itself upon rivers of decaying sludge, it is utterly inhospitable to anything that sets foot within its depths—anything that isn't itself. Though its unending advance across the terrain is kept in balance by other natural forces within the New World's biosphere, if it were to enter an environment without such factors, where there is nothing to halt its unyielding hunger, the results would be apocalyptic indeed.

**Living Landscape.** It is easy to assume, upon first glance, that a place so full of rot and decay is a land touched by death itself, yet nothing could be further from the truth. From the spores that fill the air to the fungal saplings growing from the rocks, every single thing in the Mycelium is a living organism, a unique facet of its bizarre biology. Though the Mycelium is simplistic on a small scale, each and every organism within it forms part of a greater whole, a whole that only thrives by consuming the living world around it. Only able to grow and evolve through the consumption of decaying organic matter, the Mycelium only grows more complex as it is fed, as though the biome itself is a massive, predatory creature.

**The Rot.** Unlike plants that put down seeds and roots, or animals that breed, the Mycelium spreads itself through its spores, which infect other living creatures, resulting in a sickness commonly referred to as "The Rot". As the name would imply, this disease quite literally causes the host creature to decay from within, the spores within digesting it for nourishment. If a victim is lucky, death comes within days— if they aren't, their fate is far worse. As it is a means of carrying the Mycelium's spores farther than wind or luck could ever manage, a creature carrying the Rot could unwittingly allow the Mycelium to take hold far from where it was encountered, giving the organism greater reach than could have been imagined.

## JOURNEY THROUGH THE MYCELIUM

If for one reason or another, you want to feature the Mycelium as an environment in your game, consider the unique challenges your players will face when traversing its fungal landscapes. Here are a few environmental features unique to the Mycelium:

- **Toxic Atmosphere.** Because of the spores of the Mycelium, the air is not safe to breathe. A creature without any gear that filters the air around it takes 3 (1d6) poison damage and must succeed a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or is infested with mycelium spores, contracting "**The Rot**".
- **Rotten Environment.** Since the spores in the air slowly dissolve organic matter that they touch, food must be stored in airtight containers. Food that is contaminated with the mycelium spores spoils and becomes inedible. Needless to say, any food or water that can be foraged in the mycelium is contaminated with its spores.
- **Fungal Veil.** The spores of the mycelium are so dense in the atmosphere that they form a green-yellow fog that hinders sight. A creature can't see further than 60 ft. in this veil and making ranged attacks against targets further away than 30 ft. grants the target half cover. Particularly dense areas such as ravines and caves might reduce the sight to 20 ft. The veil is denser on ground level, so finding leverage will allow a group to make out distant landmarks for orientation.

**Air Protection.** One of the first things a group will need, is a method to protect themselves from the toxic atmosphere of the mycelium. These can come in the form of protective gear, such as gas masks or other air filters, or unique spells. You can make a point in your game that acquisition of protection is the first hurdle the players in your game have to overcome, before journeying into the mycelium.



## MYCELIUM THRALL

The true purpose of the Rot becomes all too clear once the host creature inevitably succumbs to their infection. Within days of fully consuming the host's body, the spores reconnect dead tissue and take control of the brain, spreading neurological impulses to bring the deceased creature back to life- or a parody thereof. Unlike undeath, the host is not imbued with new consciousness, but is merely a biological puppet of the spores, driven by only one simple instinct: to spread the Mycelium far and wide.

**Medium of the Mycelium.** Carrying a piece of the original Mycelium organism that infected them, each Thrall becomes an extension of their progenitor's will. Depending on the complexity of the original Mycelium, a Thrall's tactics may become more devious than simply to wander off and die. A 'smart' Thrall may find a water source used by local fauna to drink and drown itself there, or present itself as prey to a particularly voracious predatory species. Even greater beasts of the land may become the victims of these biological weapons, consuming a Thrall only to become its new host.

**Mycelium Harbinger.** Ultimately, it is the goal of a Thrall to die somewhere far from the Mycelium's original location, somewhere it hasn't yet reached. With only so much capability to wander, eventually a Thrall will perish, at which point a new biological process will begin; the growth of a unique new type of fungus known as a Mycelium Harbinger. These bulging biological sacs develop their own stockpile of spores, growing until they eventually burst, spreading the spores far and wide to seek out new hosts, create new Thralls, and begin the cycle anew.

## MYCELIUM THRALL (HUMAN)

*medium plant, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 11 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 26 (4d8 + 8)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	9 (-1)	15 (+2)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	1 (-5)

**Proficiency** +2

**Damage Resistances** acid

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Spread the Spores.** When the Mycelium Thrall dies a Mycelium Harbinger spawns from its body after 1d4 days, unless the body is completely destroyed, by burning or other means.

**The Rot.** When a nonplant, non-undead, creature touches the Mycelium Thrall, or is hit by its slam, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be infected with the Rot.

**Fungal Body.** A critical hit scored with a weapon attack against the Mycelium Thrall is a normal hit.

### ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.

## MYCELIUM HARBINGER (TRAP)

A Mycelium Harbinger is fungal growth that exclusively grows out of the fallen remains of a Mycelium Thrall. It forms a sizable spore sac which bursts upon agitation or after 2d4 days after growing. It occupies as much space as a medium size creature.

A Mycelium Harbinger bursts when taking any damage, it has an AC of 5 and 1 hit point, and immunity to poison and psychic damage. A creature can carefully navigate its way around a Mycelium Harbinger when moving through its space by succeeding a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. A creature that moves through the space using a dash action makes the check with disadvantage. Otherwise the Mycelium Harbinger bursts.

When a Mycelium Harbinger bursts by being agitated or by being destroyed by any damage except for fire damage, it explodes in a 10 ft. radius centered on itself. Each creature in the area must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and be infected with the Rot. On a successful saving throw a creature takes half as much damage and is not infected. A creature killed by this damage raises as a Mycelium Thrall after 1d4 days. Once a Mycelium Harbinger bursts, it's destroyed.

A Mycelium Harbinger that bursts after growing to its full size spawns a Mycelium Spore Swarm.



## MYCELIUM THRALL TEMPLATE

A Mycelium Thrall is any creature that succumbed to the Rot and its body is repurposed as a husk with the single purpose to spread the growth of the Mycelium. A creature without flesh and blood, or a body to leave behind upon death (such as a construct, elemental, ooze, plant, or undead) can't become a Mycelium Thrall. When a creature becomes a Mycelium Thrall, the following changes are applied to its characteristics:

**Unchanged Characteristics.** The thrall keeps its Armor Class, Hit Points, Hit Dice, Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Resistances, Immunities, and Vulnerabilities.

**Lost Characteristics.** The thrall loses any saving throw and skill proficiencies, special senses. It loses any action that isn't multiattack, or a melee weapon attack, which can only deal bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, unless it comes from a piece of equipment.

**Type.** The thrall's type becomes plant.

**Alignment.** The thrall's alignment becomes unaligned.

**Speed.** Any speed the thrall has is reduced by 10 feet, to a minimum of 5 feet.

**Ability Scores.** The thrall's ability scores change as follows: Int 2 (-4), Wis 6 (-2), Cha 1 (-5).

**Resistances and Immunities.** The thrall gains resistance to acid, immunity to poison, and gains the following condition immunities: charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned.

**Languages.** The thrall no longer speaks.

**Abilities.** The thrall gains the following abilities:

**Spread the Spores.** When the Mycelium Thrall dies a Mycelium Harbinger spawns from its body after 1d4 days, unless the body is completely destroyed, by burning or other means.

**The Rot.** When a nonplant, non-undead, creature touches the Mycelium Thrall, or is hit by its slam, it must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be infected with the Rot.

**Fungal Body.** A critical hit scored with a weapon attack against the Mycelium Thrall is a normal hit.

**Attacks.** The thrall gains a slam attack, using strength as its ability score. On a hit a slam deals bludgeoning damage and poison damage. How much damage is determined by the creatures size:

### THRALL SLAM ATTACK DAMAGE

Size	Damage
Tiny	1d4 + Str modifier bludgeoning plus 2 (1d4) poison damage.
Small	1d6 + Str modifier bludgeoning plus 3 (1d6) poison damage.
Medium	1d8 + Str modifier bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) poison damage.
Large	2d8 + Str modifier bludgeoning plus 10 (3d6) poison damage.
Huge	3d8 + Str modifier bludgeoning plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.
Gargantuan	4d8 + Str modifier bludgeoning plus 21 (6d6) poison damage.

### THE ROT

The Rot is a unique sickness caused by an infestation of mycelium spores, which slowly spread through the host's body to take it over. Symptoms manifest quickly, within 1d4 hours of infestation the creature is overcome with nausea, headaches and lightheadedness, causing the creature to be poisoned. This poisoned condition can be remedied with treatment, which takes 10 minutes, using a healer's kit and a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) check. Alternatively other spells or effects that remove poison can remove the symptom as well. This symptom manifests anytime the infested creature finishes a long rest as long as it is diseased.

When ever an infected creature finishes a long rest, it must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save the Rot progresses and the creature gains a level of exhaustion and its hit points are reduced equal to its hit dice value (if the creature has more than one type of hit dice, choose type it has the most off, if they are tied, use the highest). If the creature's maximum hit points are reduced to 0, it succumbs to the Rot and will rise as a Mycelium Thrall within 2d4 hours after its death.

On a successful save, a creature loses no hit points, and gets one success on its way to shake off the disease. Three successes are needed before the creature recovers from the Rot.

With failed saving throw the creature begins to further to rot away, as the spores multiply. A creature that gained at least 3 levels of exhaustion from the Rot begins to cough up spores which can infect other creatures (DC 14 save).

Because of the Rot's unique infection, the spell *Lesser Restoration*, or similar effects that remove diseases will not cure the disease instantaneously, but will count as one success towards recovery. A creature can benefit from this way of recovery only once per long rest.

A creature that has recovered from the Rot regains part of its reduced maximum hit points, whenever it finishes a long rest, recovering a value equal to one hit dice (same as before) with each rest, until fully recovered.

The spell *Greater Restoration*, or *Lay on Hands* used by a paladin of level 9 or higher is able to instantaneously remove the Rot from the victim, as well as recover any reduced maximum hit points.



## SWARM OF MYCELIUM SPORES

Large swarm of tiny plants, unaligned

**Armor Class** 17

**Hit Points** 23 (3d10 + 6)

**Speed** 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	24 (+7)	14 (+2)	1 (-5)	16 (+3)	1 (-5)

**Proficiency** +2

**Damage Resistances** acid, bludgeoning, piercing, slashing

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, restrained

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Senses** blindsight 30 ft. (blind beyond), passive Perception 13

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Merge.** When the Swarm of Mycelium Spores occupies the same space with another Swarm of Mycelium Spores and both have half or less of their maximum hit points, it can use an action to merge with the other. The other Swarm gains hit points equal to the hit points of the merged Swarm and any condition or effect the merged Swarm had, carries over to the other.

**Swarm Cloud.** The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening that is large enough for air to pass through, unless it is filtered by a fine cloth or similar. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points except through its Merge feature. The swarm partially blocks sight, Large or smaller creatures behind it half cover.

**The Rot.** A nonplant, non-undead, creature that starts its turn occupying the same space as the Swarm of Mycelium Spores must succeed a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or be infected with the Rot. A creature that does not need to breathe automatically succeeds the saving throw.

### ACTIONS

**Spores (swarm has more than half HP).** Each non-plant, non-undead creature in the swarm's space must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save a creature takes 18 (4d8) poison damage and half as much on a successful one. [Constitution Based]

**Spores (swarm has less than half HP).** Each non-plant, non-undead creature in the swarm's space must make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save a creature takes 9 (2d8) poison damage and half as much on a successful one. [Constitution Based]

Artwork by DM Tuz

## MYCELIUM SPORES

Insidious as these means of propagation are, a particularly evolved Mycelium growth may not need to rely on them at all. The spores of these ascendant growths may not even need to rely on the wind or the chance wanderings of a feral beast to spread, for they are able to organize themselves into a lethal airborne collective that is capable of maneuvering wholly independently. Able to hunt for their own food- as well as a suitable new 'home'- these predatory spores will settle only when they've found somewhere where their growth of a new fungal landscape will produce the most effective result...





Artwork by DM Tuz

## MYCOLOSS

Despite its seemingly simplistic nature, the Mycelium is not without its defensive measures. In cases where the collective is being harmed by some outside entity, it can create protective measures much like a body fighting infection may produce antibodies. These fungal behemoths are known as Mycoloss, and they are grown from the very fungal weave and sludge they are born to protect. Simple though they may be, they are anything but harmless- as an invading organism is often quick to discover.

**Fungal Shepard.** Though it doesn't possess a complex intellect, the Mycoloss has a strong protective instinct. The sight of fungal entities created from the same host Mycelium as it throws the creature into a berserker rage, and given its unique nature, it is difficult to bring down once its rampage has begun. Without vital organs or even a brain to destroy, the sheer brute force of the Mycoloss can usually only be met with overwhelming, blunt power- which few unwary invaders may possess.

**Spore Host.** Even if one is lucky enough to bring down a Mycoloss, their victory is likely to be short lived. Surrounded by a cowl of deadly spores like most everything else in the Mycelium, it is extremely likely that in the course of a battle, the Mycoloss will simply infect its opponent with the same rot that spawned it. Even in the unlikely event of escape, this new host will likely do little more than spread the Mycelium further, succumbing to infection and ensuring its victory is pyrrhic at best.

## MYCOLOSS

Gargantuan plant, unaligned

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 202 (13d20 + 65)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	9 (-1)	21 (+5)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Proficiency** +4

**Damage Resistances** acid

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Compost.** The Mycoloss can use a bonus action during its turn to absorb the body of a dead plant creature of its choice within 10 ft. of itself. It heals itself for 7 (2d6) hit points for each plant absorbed.

**Fungal Body.** A critical hit scored with a weapon attack against the Mycoloss is a normal hit.

**Rotten Cowl.** The Mycoloss is surrounded by a cloud of spores in a 10 ft. aura. The aura of spores grants the Mycoloss half cover against ranged attacks. Additionally, any non-plant, non-undead creature that ends its turn within the aura must make a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one. A creature that does not need to breathe is unaffected.

[Constitution Based]

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Mycoloss makes 2 Slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (4d10 + 8) bludgeoning damage.





## ASPECT OF ROT

Though it is rare, the evolution of a Mycelium mass does not end once it has consumed much of the surrounding landscape. In cases where it has grown so mighty and vast that it isn't simply a blight upon the land but one of its most notable landmarks, this vast and mighty creature begins to take in enormous amounts of primordial energy, developing thought, wisdom... and understanding. The node of this newfound consciousness takes the shape of a great and mighty avatar, something through which the Mycelium can channel its power, and something capable of stepping in where the great organism's natural defenses are insufficient.

**Growing Consciousness.** With greater growth comes greater intelligence, and as the Mycelium develops wisdom, it also gains knowledge that serves as a natural safeguard. Realizing that if it were to grow infinitely, it would kill off its food source- and by extension itself- the newly-sapient consciousness develops an understanding of the natural balance, and its place within it. Serving as a managing entity, the Aspect of Rot then ensures that life around itself may continue to flourish, and that it takes only what it needs, managing the Mycelium's growth to ensure its ongoing survival.

**Balance of Life and Death.** An Aspect learns with time the importance of balance within the natural order. Though they may bring about death to feed the Mycelium or to remove threats that may harm it, they are also beings of life, able to heal and to grow where needed. With a deep reserve of primordial power at their disposal, this is reflected in their magic as well; equally as able to harm as they are to heal, these consciousnesses, though bizarre, are a perfect example of the balance all nature strives towards.

### FROM MY OTHER WORKS...

Additional monsters that can be featured seamlessly in the Mycelium from my own work are the **Fungal Scratcher**, **Fungal Artillery**, **Unclean Giant** and their higher challenge variations found in my Darkest Dungeon 5e bestiary!

This material is freely available on my blog or twitter!



## ASPECT OF ROT

Large plant, neutral

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 153 (18d10 + 54)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (0)	20 (+5)	10 (0)	21 (+5)	10 (0)

**Proficiency** +5

**Saving Throws** Con +10, Int +5, Wis +10, Cha +5

**Damage Resistances** acid, necrotic, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** Any language of any creature it has consumed, can communicate with animals and plants.

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the Aspect of Rot fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Fungal Body.** A critical hit scored with a weapon attack against the Aspect of the Rot is a normal hit.

**Spreading Rot.** A creature that ends its turn within 5 ft. of the Aspect of Rot takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and must succeed a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, or be infected with the Rot.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The Aspect of the Rot's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 18, +10 to hit). The Aspect of the Rot can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At Will: *Druidcraft*, *Poison Spray*, *Cure Wounds*, *Ray of Sickness*, *Inflict Wounds*

2/day each: *Blight*, *Confusion*, *Contagion*, *Cloudkill*

1/day each: *Transport via Plants*

## AN ASPECT OF ROT'S LAIR

An Aspect of Rot's Lair is the Mycelium it manifested from. The very ground the aspect protects is part of itself, making a confrontation with it all the more deadlier in the Mycelium, where the Aspect can extend its control out to its surroundings.

### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the aspect takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the aspect can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The aspect temporarily manifests an appendage from the rotten ground which attacks a creature the aspect can see within 120 feet of it. It makes a slam attack (+6 to hit) which deals 30 (4d10+8) bludgeoning damage on a hit.
- An explosive growth of fungal matter creates a webbing created from hyphae in a 40 ft. radius around the aspect. Each creature other than the aspect in that area not higher than 10 ft. off the ground must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be restrained until the end of its next turn. A creature can use an action to free itself from the webbing with a successful DC 15 Strength check.

### ACTIONS

**Decomposing Touch.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or a failed save its maximum hit points are reduced by the necrotic damage dealt. A creature that is reduced to 0 hit points this way dies and is reduced to a puddle of rotten sludge.

[Wisdom Based]

**Infect.** A creature within 5 ft. of the Aspect of the Rot must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, or be infected with the Rot. [Wisdom Based]

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Aspect of Rot can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Aspect of Rot regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Move.** The Aspect of Rot moves or flies up to half of its speed.

**Touch (2 Actions).** The Aspect of the Rot makes a decomposing touch attack or uses infect.

**Fungal Flight (3 Actions).** The Aspect of the Rot turns into a cloud of spores and moves up to its flight speed. During this movement it provokes no attacks of opportunities and becomes incorporeal, being able to pass through any opening that allows air to pass. Each creature, through which's space the Aspect of the Rot moves through, must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. After this movement, the Aspect of the Rot reforms back into its base form. [Constitution Based]

- The mycelium heals its aspect by transferring some of its life energy into it. The aspect heals 18 (4d8) hit points and has advantage on constitution saving throws until it uses another Lair Action.
- The mycelium releases a thick cloud of spores in a 60 ft. sphere, further hindering vision in the area. Creatures in the area cannot see further than 10 ft. the cloud remains until the aspect uses another Lair Action or a strong wind (at least 10 miles hour) disperses the it.

Destroying an Aspect of Rot, while not directly harming the it, strikes a great blow against a Mycelium. Manifesting an Aspect of Rot takes 7 (2d6) days and demands alot of primal energy from the Mycelium, which could cause it to shrink and diminish. For each day the Mycelium needs to manifest a new Aspect of Rot, 600 square feet of mycelium die off.



**Thank you for your continued support,  
dear patrons!**



### **Adventurers**

Archcanni  
Daniel  
Highway  
Jacob  
Mister Crowbar



### **Bosses**

Dallas  
John  
RatOrchestra



### **Dragons**

Alfred  
Andrew  
Ariel  
Ashes  
Cesar  
Christian  
DConway  
Dillon  
Howard  
Izaya  
Joe  
Jonas  
Lee  
Logan  
Magaret  
Matt

Nicki  
Nicolas  
Nork  
Ryck  
Saccharine  
Scott  
Silverbane  
Stephen  
Thomas  
Thy Anubis