

PATHFINDER
COMPATIBLE

AB
ABYSSAL BREWS

THE **SAPIENT SPAN**

A living, breathing bridge that you
just might make it across alive.

SAPIENT SPAN

There exist creatures in this world that only the rare few will ever get to lay their eyes upon. Then there are those that you may see often, but have no idea you've even spotted one. The Sapient Span may be crossed hundreds of times while those that use the bridge for their daily back and forth know little about the nature of the thing upon which they tread. Content to live out their days in serving a helpful purpose to the woodland creatures and dwellers that use it, the Sapient Span could be considered a friend and protector to the forests they call home.

Many consider Sapient Spans to be the separated cousins of Arboreal Regents and other sentient plant species, but they separate themselves by serving as both protector and infrastructure in the forests that they call home. Sapient Spans often place themselves upon already established game trails and pathways. They delight in seeing the creatures of their home use their passings in their daily lives. They prefer to place themselves across rivers, allowing them to dip their

living roots into the waters below to keep a steady source of nutrition without having to move to get it. Sapient Spans don't take the act of movement lightly as it expends large amounts of energy and resources that it would rather use to continue its long life of service.

If the Sapient Span feels that not enough animals are using it as a crossing, it will often speak to the woods around it and learn of a better place to call home. Most find the Sapient Span to be a pleasant enough creature, but those who would harm their woodland homes just may face their wrath if they are not careful.

Protectors of the Natural Order. The woods that Sapient Spans come to inhabit are important to them. They consider the flora and fauna around them to be their family and thus don't tolerate outsiders who would wish to harm the woods. Many Druids and Rangers who respect the woods have reported communicating with Sapient Spans in a friendly manner and so long as they promise to leave the wood untouched, they are allowed to pass without incident.

SAPIENT SPAN

CREATURE 8

CN GARGANTUAN ELEMENTAL WOOD

Perception +16; low-light vision, tremorsense (precise) 40 feet

Languages Arboreal, Common, Fey; speak with plants

Skills Athletics +21, Deception +21, Nature +18, Stealth +21

Str +7, **Dex** +6, **Con** +7, **Int** -4, **Wis** +3, **Cha** -5

AC 30; **Fort** +21, **Ref** +13, **Will** +13

HP 173; **Immunities** bleed, paralyzed, poison, sleep; **Resistances** mental 8, poison 8; **Weaknesses** axes 8, fire 8

Fling ➤ **Trigger** A creature that is currently Grabbed by the sapient span attempts to Strike it or Cast a Spell;

Effect The sapient span attempts to Shove the creature away from it. Regardless of the result, the creature is no longer grabbed.

Speed 15 feet

Melee ♦ vine +18 (reach 15 feet), **Damage** 2d8+9 slashing plus Grab

Constrict ♦ 2d8+9 bludgeoning, DC 23

Lurch ♦♦ The sapient span roils and lurches attempting to throw creatures from it. The sapient span attempts to Shove all creatures that are currently on top of it. Creatures that are successfully shoved out of a space that the sapient span occupies fall into whatever gap the sapient span is spanning.

Mimic Bridge ♦ (concentrate) The sapient span assumes the form of a bridge after it expands over a gap. It has an automatic result of 28 on Deception checks and DCs to pass as a bridge

Retract or Expand 1 minute **Effect** The sapient span spends 1 minute either retracting away from a gap or expanding to bridge a gap. If it is expanding, it can grow to cover an 80 foot gap. If it is retracting, any creature that ends its turn on the sapient span must succeed on a DC 23 Reflex saving throw or be knocked prone.

Conversely, loggers, hunters, and others that would seek to exploit the forests for their own gain have been found at the bottom of deep ravines, their bodies shattered beyond repair, while a wooden bridge sits above.

Long Lived. Sapient Spans rarely move and conserve their energy, often entering dormant periods for decades or even so long as a century. It is not known how long Sapient Spans can live naturally, but some that have befriended Druids have mentioned that they remember a time before most humanoids existed. It is thought that their lifespan could be thousands of years if allowed to exist unfettered.

TACTICS

Sapient Spans are not fighters by default and should be thought of as more of a puzzle encounter. Players will likely be hesitant to cross a bridge if it looks alive and that should give them some pause if you show them art.

- Sapient Spans will often question humanoids that wish to pass on them and will retract themselves if they are not satisfied with the answers presented to them. Remember they protect the woods and the creatures within it. Use this to inform the interaction.
- Don't worry if the damage output seems a little low. The real danger of Sapient Spans is their ability to buck creatures from their sturdy footing. The creature is less dangerous than the gravity it can inflict.
- The Sapient Span will talk with the woods around it to learn of your party and their action in the woods before they arrive.
- Lurch is the Sapient Span's signature skill and can be used to buck creatures from on top of it. Do this early in a fight should your players try it.
- Hitting with its vines can cause a creature to be susceptible to the Span's Fling reaction. Keep an eye out for it.

SUGGESTED PAIRINGS

The best thing to pair with the Sapient Span would be others that use the bridge in peace.

- Consider placing them with druids, centaurs, or others that make the wood their home and seek to protect the natural order.
- You should always start the encounter with the Span already in place across a deadly or dangerous drop. This should ratchet up the tension and make this more of a puzzle to solve.



SPRIGSTEPS

ITEM 8

INVESTED MAGICAL

Price 450 gp

Usage worn shoes; Bulk L

The interior of these boots is lined with an extremely comfortable mix of cotton and leather making them feel especially agreeable to wear. The exterior seems to be composed of a still living wood that grows into leafy sprigs toward the collars of the boot. When you don these shoes, the wood grows and contorts to wrap itself to you making a snug, but sure fit.

These boots grant you a 5-foot item bonus to your speed as well as the ability to ignore difficult terrain from plants and fungi.

Activate ♦ envision; **Effect** You Stride once, but the roots of the boots grow in an instant allowing you to move the entirety of your speed in one step. You can clear any horizontal gaps or hazards so long as they are not wider than your speed.

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