

FLORAL DRAGONS



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the Field Guide to
**FLORAL
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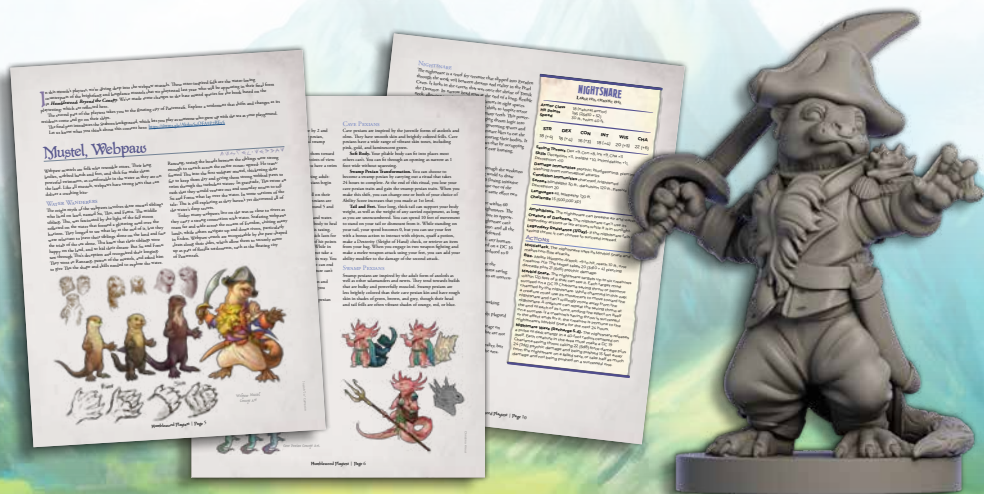
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Callianthe Dragon

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| ☐ Tiny | ☒ Large |
| ☐ Small | ☐ Huge |
| ☐ Medium | ☐ Gargantuan |

PHYSIOLOGY

In the wild, callianthe dragons have been recorded up to eight feet in length, reaching up to six feet in height when they extend their hind legs fully. In captivity, tamed callianthe dragons are bred to be a more manageable size, capping out their length at six feet and their height around four. Because of more dedicated care and grooming, living amongst humanoids extends the life of a callianthe dragon considerably, living up to 50 years in captivity and only 25 to 30 in the wild.

Their blooms range from yellow to orange-red and their petals exhibit prominent dark red veining that give the callianthe dragon an almost molten lava look in contrast to the green of the rest of their petals. This vibrant coloring continues in large scale-like petals on their back, as well as crests on their head and fore-limbs. These vibrant colors act as a deterrent to predators as they are reminiscent of flames when hit with sunlight. The callianthe dragon's blooms are edible, often ground up into a spice blend or eaten whole.

The callianthe walks on its hind legs like a bird, moving with an awkward gait at slow speeds with an almost comical bobbing back and forth. They lose this awkwardness immediately when they start to run, their legs extending a foot or more beyond their tail and snout, accelerating them to speeds of more than fifty kilometers per hour. Some wild callianthe have been measured moving up to eighty kilometers an hour while tearing through the jungle to flee a larger predator.

WILD NO MORE

Day 453

I never thought the day would come where I would be writing this journal entry. My hands won't stop shaking! It finally happened—the callianthe allowed me to climb up on its back. Months and months of sweating in this jungle, bonding with this creature, creeping closer to it day after day, and it has finally happened. It was a short trip, of course, once the creature realized what it had allowed me to do it quickly bucked me off. I'm fine, I had hidden some padding under my clothes for just that reason. It was an experience worth a few bumps and bruises!

The strange thing is—that wasn't the end of our encounter. I had assumed that after this first attempt the callianthe would dash off into the bush, but it stayed nearby. It wasn't scared or upset, simply curious about what had occurred, at least, that's my interpretation. I sat on the jungle floor, still in the spot I had landed, looking up at this strange dragon I had slowly been befriending over the past year, as it looked down at me, a quizzical look in its eyes.

And then, suddenly, our roles were reversed. The callianthe began cautiously approaching me, step by step, inching forward just like I had been doing all this time, until it was close enough that I could feel its breath on me.

To say I wasn't a tad frightened would be a lie—I was reminded in this moment of the true size difference between myself and the vibrant, wild animal before me. As big as a horse, it could have easily harmed me, however... it didn't. The callianthe lowered its head and pressed its forehead against mine, ever so gently. I am embarrassed to say that I shed a few tears when this happened, but also felt an overwhelming sense of joy. What a day!

I'll have to end this entry here, as the callianthe has followed me home and I need to clear out most of the furniture in my quarters to give it room to nest. After that, my task is designing a proper saddle. The unusual hump on the dragon's back is going to make it... interesting.

Oh, ho ho just wait until the university hears about this, their jaws will be on the floor.

We are truly blessed to have these creatures living amongst us. They feed us, they protect us, and they help us take on long journeys. What would our village do without the callianthe dragon? We owe them so much and they ask for so little in return: just some affection and a safe place to nest.

I saw this rider hugging his callianthe after a quick harvest of its blooms, and the love between them was palpable. We care for them, they care for us. There is nothing more wonderful.

Fig. 1A callianthe dragon getting scratches after a successful harvest of its blossoms



HABITAT

Callianthe dragons thrive best in warm, humid climates like jungles. Attempts to transplant them to colder or more temperate areas have proven difficult, as they wither quickly in unsuitable weather. In the wild, they make their nests in open clearings with lots of sunlight where they can create crater-like holes in the ground to sleep. They prefer moist, humid soil, that is crawling with insects and life.

The trees that surround the clearings often are the homes of **amaranth dragons**, who hang down from the branches to eat blooms and petals that have fallen off the callianthe dragons when they rub up against the tree to scratch.

First encounters with humanoids proved difficult, as the callianthe dragons prefer to observe from afar before dashing off rapidly whenever anyone got too close. Over time they became more and more accustomed to the humanoids who share their home, and today they are popular as mounts, bonding with their riders willingly. The callianthe benefit from joining humanoid companions, as modern farming techniques help maintain their nests and provide them better protection. Their speed makes them excellent during a hunt, and their resilience to the jungle heat helps them take their rider on long journeys without exhaustion. Before long journeys, riders will often let the blooms on their callianthe dragon mounts grow a little wilder than usual, and use the blossoms as nourishment during the trip.

BEHAVIOR

Callianthe dragons are insectivores, using their beak-like snouts to dig up grubs, beetles and worms from the warm soil where they make their nests. They have been observed eating berries and leaves as well, though this is mostly to help with digestion and not their primary source of nutrition. They gather food and feed their young directly until they're old enough to fend for themselves.

Once a dragon finds a mate, they are attached for life and fiercely loyal. When one mate dies it can be very distressing for their mated pair, and often these mourning callianthe dragons will pull out their blooms and petals as a sign of grief. A female callianthe dragon will lay between six and ten eggs in her life, and both parents will stay with their children until they reach adulthood around the age of two years old. Once old enough, the young callianthe dragon will venture out on its own, to find a mate and establish its own nest.

In the wild, callianthe dragons are more likely to use their superior speed to dash away from trouble than to stand and fight when threatened. The exception is when their young are in danger—they will fight to the best of their ability to keep them safe. The dragon's main method of attack is kicking at their opponent with their powerful hind legs, attempting to knock them over so the callianthe dragon can use their beak to tear at their attacker's underbelly.

Domesticated callianthe dragons are trained as mounts, and their blooms are harvested to be used as a sweet spice or as a quick snack on their own. Callianthe dragons bond with their riders almost as fiercely as they do with their mates, and there are many tales of the dragons putting themselves between their riders and a dangerous predator. Trainers and breeders who keep callianthe dragons make sure to give them large roaming paddocks with lots of access to sunlight and good soil, as well as well defended fences to protect them and their young.

I witnessed a record breaking dash from a callianthe today, what an incredible sight. Just a blur of legs and dirt as it took off down the course. Even more amazing was the fact this was a mounted record! Those leatherworkers have really figured out how to streamline their saddles. Ironically, the rider, a young elven woman named Pippa, barely used the damned thing—she was holding on for dear life!

Watching this creature move I could almost imagine it being able to fly. Perhaps it once did? I should do some more research into this. It shares so many physical similarities with birds, it's possible a previous evolution may have been able to take to the skies, before nature grounded it.



Fig. 2 A rider on a running callianthe dragon

Something came over me last night. I could not sleep, and sometime after midnight I decided that I needed a walk through the jungle. My old bones ached at the thought, but I wrapped a cloak around myself, grabbed my sturdiest walking stick, and set out into the warm evening air. I didn't intend to stray far from my hut, but I eventually found myself deep under the canopy, alone with only the buzzing night insects for company.



Fig. 3 A wild callianthe dragon

At least, I thought I was alone. There was a rustling in a nearby brush, and my heart began to race as soon as I realized that the insects were no longer making any noise. That's when I saw it, peering into the small clearing only a few feet away from me, its orange and red face almost glowing in the moonlight. It was big, at least seven feet tall at the head, but I was not scared.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Use the Callianthe Dragon Personality Traits and Callianthe Dragon Motivations tables to create original Callianthe dragons.

Callianthe Dragon Personality Trait

D8	TRAIT
1	I bump my head into my friends, sometimes a bit too hard.
2	Racing other dragons is my favorite activity, and I never lose.
3	I leave insects and worms in my riders shoes in case they get hungry.
4	I will sometimes leap onto the roofs of low buildings and roost there in the sun.
5	I screech loudly when I am not getting enough attention.
6	I run in wide circles when I'm too excited and need to burn off energy.
7	I learned how to scratch behind my ear with my hind leg from watching dogs.
8	I thump my foot when my mate comes around.

MOTIVATIONS

Callianthe Dragon Motivations

D6	MOTIVATION
1	I want to feel the dirt from strange new places under my feet.
2	Breaking speed records would be such a thrill.
3	I hope to one day bond with a rider and go on an adventure.
4	These humanoids saved me from a predator and I want to pay them back for it.
5	I'd like to see my home nest again someday.
6	My mate is out there somewhere, I know it.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are some ideas for ways to include Callianthe dragons in your game.

D4	MOTIVATION
1	A wounded adult callianthe dragon is too injured to take care of her egg, but she is snapping back aggressively at anyone who gets too close to try and help.
2	A group of prominent riders are hosting a day of callianthe dragon races to raise money for repairs in their village. Friendly bets and ways to buy treats for your favorite dragons are available, with all money going to the repairs.
3	Three callianthe dragons have escaped their paddock and need to be rounded up, but due to their speed they could be anywhere by now.
4	An elder callianthe dragon has lost its bonded mate and is despondent. It needs to be brought around other callianthe dragons to properly mourn their passing, but it refuses to budge.

Callianthe Dragon

Large dragon, any neutral alignment

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d10 + 5)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	7 (-2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +5

Senses Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages understands any one language but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Pack Tactics. The callianthe dragon has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of its allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon makes two peck attacks.

Peck. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

Leaping Kick. The dragon moves up to 20 feet towards one creature it can see without provoking opportunity attacks. If it ends this movement within 5 feet of the creature, that creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. If the creature fails the saving throw, the dragon can immediately make one peck attack against it.

This wild callianthe dragon did not see me as a threat. It seemed to sense my history with its species and looked at me with almost knowing eyes. This moment felt like it lasted forever, until the callianthe shook its head and dashed back into the darkness. I stood in awe for a moment, remembering the early days with these creatures and reminiscing on how far we have come.



Crocus Dragon

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| ☒ Tiny | ☐ Large |
| ☐ Small | ☐ Huge |
| ☐ Medium | ☐ Gargantuan |

THE TROUBLE WITH CROCUSES

A halfling farmer named Polo was working in his garden when he saw a strange sight. A patch of his garden was moving, and even more unusual was the flowers that were moving weren't ones he had planted. Cautiously, Polo reached down to investigate and accidentally startled the culprit—a small dragon, no bigger than a rabbit, with purple blooms and thin red stamen dangling from its tail. Before Polo could interact with the little creature, it flew off into the woods, leaving only nibbled plants in its wake.

The next day, when Polo returned to work in his garden, there were two of these creatures, each of them feasting on a different section of his plants. Frustrated, Polo shooed them away and began tending his damaged flowers. Over the next few days, more and more of these tiny dragons kept flooding Polo's garden, until one morning he woke up to seeing only a sea of purple blooms and twitching ears. Frustrated, Polo captured one of the dragons (risking the tips of his fingers) and brought it to a friend at a nearby college of sages, a dragonborn druid named Grignir, to see if they could help.



Grignir was surprised to see this floral dragon, a whole new species that seemed to share a lineage with the invasive crocus flower. It shared many similarities with the plant: its aggressiveness, the same deep purple coloring and red stamen. They insisted on seeing Polo's garden to understand more about these new little creatures.

What Grignir and Polo discovered was a network of burrows beneath the garden beds, where the crocus dragons were digging up under the flowers and planting their eggs (which Grignir called 'corms') in the rich soil amongst the roots of the plants in the garden. This earned the creatures the nickname of "Undergardeners," since that is where they made their homes and also how they tended to their young.

Over the next few days Grignir and Polo carefully dug up each of the eggs and transplanted them to a natural overgrowth in the deep woods, far away from Polo's (or anyone's) home. To this day Grignir travels the world, teaching people how to humanely and safely deal with these vibrant but pervasive little dragons.

PHYSIOLOGY

Crocus dragons are very small and rabbit-like with wings resembling those of a ladybug. The wings have a hard protective shell that they fold up underneath when the crocus dragon is burrowing. Their front paws hide thick claws that allow them to dig out tunnels and burrows. To aid in loosening the soil while they burrow, they flicker and vibrate their wings under the protective shell. Crocus dragons only live 1 or 2 years, but mature and propagate rapidly. A young crocus dragon is ready to lay eggs by the time they are one month old, and will have dozens of young in their lifetime.

The eggs (also known as corms) of the crocus dragon are more akin to a hard bulb that must be buried in rich soil near other plants to make sure the growing infant dragon within has all the nutrients it needs. The crocus dragon slowly grows from the corm, and the corm itself forms the hard casing that will eventually surround their wings. Young crocus dragons keep the same dull brown colour of their corms for a few weeks before their adult coloring comes in fully.

FROM THE CROCUS HANDLER'S HANDBOOK:

Because these creatures bear such a remarkable resemblance to the flowers they were named after, they are often hidden in plain sight. Worry not, for you have the tools required to uncover them already! Use all of your senses to find where they are hiding: **WATCH** for petals fluttering against the wind. **LISTEN** for the quiet sounds of nibbling. **SMELL** the air for hints of spoor on the breeze. Trust your senses and the crocus dragon will never be obscured from you!

Fig. 1 A field of swarming
crocus dragons, grazing



Fig. 2 A baby crocus dragon still bearing the pattern of its corm

FROM THE CROCUS HANDLER'S HANDBOOK:

One of our greatest challenges in the field is the transplanting of young crocus dragons who have not fully developed.

REMEMBER: When they are only a few days old, crocus dragon young are fragile, barely out of their corm. Handle them with care!

REMEMBER ALSO: Corms can only be moved in their first week of development. If you see the outside has turned from green to brown, then you know they can no longer be moved. This may upset the farmer or villager you are helping. This is fine! Make them understand that you have to wait for the crocus dragon to hatch before you can move them. Most people will be happy to oblige you.

The various purples that form the majority of the dragon's blooms are accented by two red stamen that extend out from their hind quarters on either side of their long thin tail. These stamen can be safely harvested and turned into a sweet saffron-like spice. Their faces have several whiskers made from highly sensitive petals that allow them to sense vibrations in the soil, as well as help guide how narrow of a space they can fit through.

In flight, their protective shell opens up and their delicate wings flap rapidly to keep their round bodies in the air. They are slow flyers, moving much faster when burrowing beneath the ground.

HABITAT

Due to the needs of their young, crocus dragons make their homes in fields of wild flowers, taking advantage of tall grass to stay hidden from predators. They make large networks of burrows beneath the roots of the flowers, often connecting multiple fields together with extensive tunnels. Directly under flower patches are larger burrows where the crocus dragons plant and tend their corms in the earth above them.

Their slow flight and sheer numbers make them a popular meal for larger omnivorous predators like larkspur or magnolia dragons, and entire crocus fields have appeared to evaporate as the crocus dragons hidden amongst them burrow underground to avoid an approaching hungry creature. Crocus dragons also have regular territorial battles with vespon, fighting over access to fields and the flowers in them.

BEHAVIOR

The diet of the crocus dragon consists of petals and small insects, as well as eating away at the roots of plants while in their burrows. Too many dragons living in one field can deplete the resources very quickly, and crocus dragons have an instinctive understanding when one of their swarms is getting too large. The youngest dragons will split off from the group and find a new field to occupy, though they will often connect that new burrow back to the original with tunnels.

Crocus dragon corms are guarded and tended to by the entire swarm, maintained communally by all the adult dragons, whether or not they were the actual parents. Corms start as a bulb that grows under a female's wings, eventually falling off naturally when it's ready to plant in the soil. It takes about two weeks for a corm to fully hatch, after which the new crocus dragon burrows up from the dirt to the surface. If necessary, a corm can be moved to a new location, but only in the first week of being buried, after which it must be left alone.

Though individual crocus dragons can be vicious when cornered, they are most dangerous when attacking as a group. Their primary tactic is for a few to flutter their wings rapidly in the face of their attackers while others claw and bite at weak or soft spots.

Humanoid communities, especially ones centered around gardening and agriculture, consider the crocus dragon a pest. Their disruptive burrows and the speed at which they breed means they can get out of hand very, very quickly—destroying crops and gardens as their swarm expands. There is no easy way to domesticate crocus dragons, but traveling “crocus herders” offer their services to farmers to help relocate the dragons and their corms, while also harvesting their tasty stamen.

Figure 3. The careful harvest of a crocus dragon's saffron threads



FROM THE CROCUS HANDLER'S HANDBOOK:

The trimming of a crocus dragon's saffron threads is a delicate art. **REMEMBER** the three Ds:

DISTRACT the crocus dragon with a sweet treat.

DETACH the saffron threads at their base, using your official Crocus Handler's Curved Clippers, being careful to not harm the dragon.

DISMISS the crocus dragon back into the wild, thanking them for their delicious bounty.

REMEMBER ALSO: We are not entitled to the gifts of the crocus dragons. If one resists or does not wish to comply, thank it for its time and bid it farewell. We are not their keepers!

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Use the Crocus Dragon Personality Traits and Crocus Dragon Motivations tables to create original Crocus dragons.

Crocus Dragon Personality Traits

D8	TRAIT
1	I make sure the corms are perfectly spaced in each burrow.
2	My tunnels are the straightest and fastest to travel down.
3	I prefer the flowers kept by humanoids to the ones I find in the wild.
4	I like to fly as fast as I possibly can.
5	I hide petals in the burrow to snack on when no one is looking.
6	I like to wander off on my own, away from my swarm.
7	Getting dirt on my wings is uncomfortable, I stop a lot to shake it off.
8	I like to nibble on the tasty sweet stamens growing from my fellow swarm-mates.

MOTIVATIONS

Crocus Dragon Motivations

D6	MOTIVATION
1	I want to see inside a humanoid's home.
2	The most important thing to me is keeping the corms safe until they hatch.
3	I will be the one who guides the young crocus dragons to a new field.
4	I want to see how high I can fly.
5	They scare me, but I want to nibble on the petals of a bigger floral dragon.
6	I want to burrow somewhere no one has seen before.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Here are some ideas for ways to include Crocus dragons in your game.

D4	ADVENTURE HOOK
1	A burrow of crocus dragons have moved under a farmer's corn field, and he wants them removed safely before they spread.
2	The local village's hedge-witch keeps a crocus dragon as a familiar, but it has escaped into town. She wants it returned to her before it causes too much damage in the village's gardens and someone causes it harm.
3	A wandering druid has reported finding dozens of crocus dragons living up in the branches of trees on the edge of a forest, instead of in their usual subterranean burrow. Something underground has scared them out of their home, and the druid wants help restoring the natural order and getting the crocus dragons back to their burrow.
4	Industrious poachers have captured a swarm of crocus dragons to harvest their stamen in bulk. They are keeping them all in cramped cages in an abandoned barn on the outskirts of town. The townsfolk don't love the crocus dragons, but they also don't want to see them harmed, so they start looking for help to free them from the clutches of the poachers.

Crocus Dragon Swarm

Medium swarm of Tiny dragons, unaligned

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 30 ft., Burrow 30 ft., Fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)	14 (+2)	0 (+0)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing and slashing

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages –

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Floral Appearance. While the dragon remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary patch of crocuses. It has advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide in areas covered in similar plants.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny bat. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) piercing damage, or 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

Flutter Fluster. A creature within 5 feet of the swarm must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or have disadvantage on their next attack roll.

