

THE HIDDEN GARDEN

In the war torn landscape of Altland's history, few stood as stalwart amidst the chaos as the Kingdom of Alverk, known for its mastery in artifice and warcraft. Its undeterred armies of golems and warmachines continuously braved the constant assaults of its enemies. Tenaciously, the metal armies of Alverk would grind any foe into submission. Though, the Kingdom's success was not shouldered by its armies alone. If it was not for the tactical and inventive mind of the monarch King Alverk himself, the Kingdom would have long since fallen and be just a footnote of history.

King Alverk was a stoic monarch of keen intellect and above all else a masterful craftsman who had his hand in the construction and design of his warmachines that formed the backbone of his military might. Under his skillful guidance his realm saw unprecedented prosperity and growth. But as stoic as he presented himself to the world, the burden of the crown wore heavily on King Alverk. Each of his decisions had to be carefully contemplated, lest he would lead his kingdom to ruin. The ceaseless pressure upon his mind and soul was tremendous. To bring himself solace when his leadership was tested the most, he retreated again and again to a secret project of his: his hidden garden, the Verdant Sanctuary.

The Verdant Sanctuary was a hidden piece of green land that King Alverk, who usually found himself surrounded by blazing furnaces and roaring battlefields, tended to with great passion and love. Over years of work, he shaped this land into his very own place of comfort. It was by merit of the garden's tranquil beauty that allowed the King to remain composed and resolute.

As his Verdant Sanctuary grew in size, King Alverk found himself in a vexing position. With greater size the garden demanded a greater amount of tending and attention by the King. He found himself pulled between his monarch duties and his love for his garden. Fate smiled upon the monarch when a strange mineral was brought before him. The prospectors who presented the mineral had harvested it off a great tree's roots, found in the heart of an ancient forest. Intrigued, the King ordered that this mineral must be inspected. His court mages deciphered the mysteries of this mineral expediently; this mineral could store and release natural energies. Fascinating as it was, it was impractical to see use in the field of battle where one would only find fire and death, and was dismissed. King Alverk, though, saw the true potential of this mineral as the solution to his unknown predicament.

The King returned to his sanctuary once more, bringing material and inspiration for a new type of constructs. They would be powered by this new mineral he named primalite, and become the King's helping hands to tend to his beloved garden: his garden guardians.

MACHINES OF CARE

For the first time in his life, King Alverk would construct machines not for the purpose of warfare, but of preservation and protection. He created the tenders for his Verdant Sanctuary.

As a seasoned warsmith of unparalleled skill, the King was quick to create the first constructs with simple instructions: protect the garden and tend to its needs. The primalite within their construct bodies would supply their animus and the abundant life of the garden would power them. The King was pleased to see the success of his design. The reciprocity between the machine and the garden was ensured; as the machines kept the garden alive, so did the garden keep the machines empowered and working.

In the following years, the King refined and perfected his garden guardians, creating them with different forms and purposes. At last, the guardians performed their tasks completely without the King's directions and the King could indulge in the beauty of his garden fully and untroubled. And the King did: He would return to his garden in times of exhaustion or unease, the garden would remain his ever available sanctuary.

At the twilight of the monarch's life, the King, weary in spirit of a lifetime of responsibility and broken in body by the burden of a monarch, sought out the garden for the final time. To his kingdom, he vanished, leaving behind his throne and his crown, to be claimed by his capable children. His sanctuary was his new home and in time, his final rest. With peace of mind he left, knowing that not only his Kingdom would be cared for, but his garden that he loved so very much would remain forever. Of all of his constructs created by his hand, King Alverk cherished none more than his garden guardians, who would ensure that his garden would stand splendid and flourishing evermore.



LESSER GARDEN GUARDIAN

Medium construct

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 30 (4d8 + 12)

Speed 30 ft., 30 ft. flying (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)

Proficiency +2

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 12

Languages Understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

False Appearance. While the garden guardian remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from garden decoration, such as a potted plant, or a bush.

Sacrifice. The garden guardian can use an action and regain a use of its **Lesser Verdant Infusion** and use it as part of the same action. When the garden guardian uses this feature it is incapacitated for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guardian makes one melee weapon attack and three slam attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage.

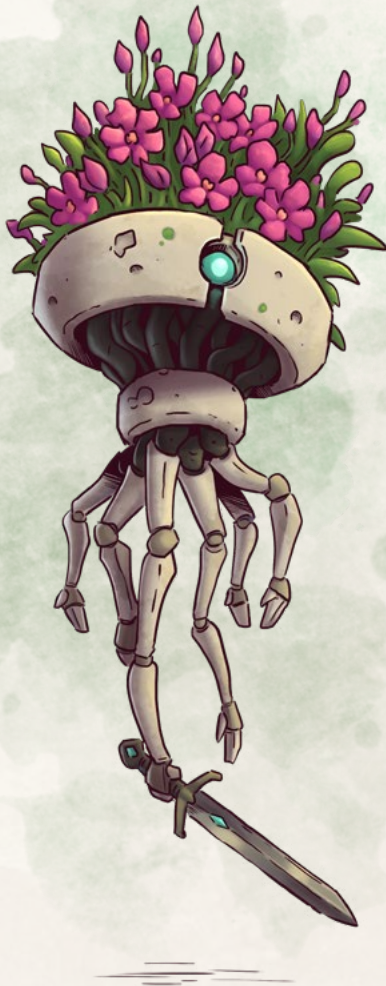
Lesser Verdant Infusion (1/day). The guardian touches a plant creature or point within its reach. If the guardian touches a plant creature, that creature regains 16 (4d6+2) hit points and is no longer poisoned. If the guardian touches a point, all normal plants within a 10-foot radius centered of the area flourish and grow. The area becomes difficult terrain until the plants are trimmed or destroyed.

Despite the abundance of the animating primal energy, the guardians will remain motionless outside of their regular rounds so as to not disturb the tranquility with gratuitous commotion. Even in rest, garden guardians add to the beauty of the garden thanks to the King's ingenious design.

VARIANT: SPELL STORING CONSTRUCTS

As an alternative flavor, you as the DM can choose the garden guardians to be created for a different purpose than the maintenance of a secret garden. To reflect this new purpose, you can exchange the effect of the lesser and greater guardian's **Verdant Infusion** action.

The effect of the **Lesser Verdant Infusion** is estimatedly equal to a 1st level spell, while **Greater Verdant Infusion** is equal to a 3rd level spell. Choose two or three of the appropriate spells for your guardians to cast with their Infusion action. With this easy adjustment you can veer off the presented flavor for whatever purpose you need.



Artwork by Ben Fleuter & DM Tuz

GARDEN GUARDIANS

Serving as the backbone of the garden guardians, these constructs are regularly patrolling the garden for lesser tasks of maintenance and care. Designed with different purposes in mind, the guardians were created in lesser and greater size. Where the lesser guardian is able to nimbly maneuver and reach the crowns of the garden's tallest trees, the greater guardian performed tasks of heavy labor. Both designs, complementing each other, ensure the garden's needs are tended to.

The primalite within their construct bodies does not only serve these guardians as a power source. Due to the close proximity to the garden's exuberant vitality, these guardians were created to not just absorb this energy, but to also hoard and release it if need be. Akin to a feat of primal magic, the garden guardians can dispense their energy and cause plants to sprout and flourish where they once withered before. As this feat is directly linked to the very power that animates these constructs, an overuse of this ability will cause them to fall into inactivity. The prime directive of the guardians is the Verdant Sanctuary's protection and maintenance, so they will not hesitate to give up their power for the garden. But the garden provides for these machines in reciprocity and they will be able to return to their duties in due time.

GARDEN WELLSPRING

During the garden's creation, the King became keen to the different phenomena of the natural world. He developed a thorough understanding of the circle of life and each role within the greater entity of the garden. One observation that captivated him was how small forms of life gathered around greater beings, such as mighty trees. Animals would find their homes in their branches, moss would grow upon their bark, and humble mushrooms would grow within their shadows. As so much life would flourish around the tree, so would the tree become a wellspring of primal energy. Though, effective as the trees' dispense of primal energies were, by their very nature they were immobile.

Garden wellsprings are mighty constructs created with the purpose to house these life giving trees. Upon their many sturdy legs, the wellspring slowly but surely transports trees and bring them where their life-giving energies are most needed. They were built with power and durability in mind, as each of the trees they transport is of great value for the garden.

With the use of these wandering bastions of vigor, the King was able to expand the magnitude of his garden greatly. Wherever these constructs would wander, a green path of flourishing plants would soon follow, and their very presence was able to turn even the most blighted ground into fertile soil.



Greater Garden Guardian
Artwork by Ben Fleuter
& DM Tuz

GREATER GARDEN GUARDIAN

Large construct

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (9d10 + 27)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	8 (-1)	17 (+3)	3 (-4)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)

Proficiency +3

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 12

Languages Understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

False Appearance. While the garden guardian remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from garden decoration, such as a fountain, a dais, or a flower bed.

Verdant Leak. When the guardian is reduced to 0 hit points and still has a use of its **Greater Verdant Infusion** for the day, it uses **Greater Verdant Infusion** without using an action or reaction before being destroyed or incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The guardian makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (2d10+5) bludgeoning damage.

Greater Verdant Infusion (1/day). The guardian emits a life giving wave in a 20-foot radius centered on itself. Each plant creature in the area gains 16 (4d6+2) hit points and is no longer poisoned. Each incapacitated lesser garden guardian in the area with more than 0 hit points is no longer incapacitated. Additionally plants in the area grow and flourish, causing the area to become difficult terrain until the plants are trimmed or destroyed.

Forgotten Foes: Garden Guardians

Garden Wellspring

Gargantuan construct

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 155 (10d20 + 50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	3 (-4)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)

Proficiency +4

Skills Perception +7

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses tremorsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft. passive Perception 17

Languages Understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Crawler. The garden wellspring has advantage on saving throws against being knocked prone and difficult terrain does not impede its movement.

False Appearance. While the garden wellspring remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from a ruined building.

Siege Monster. The garden wellspring deals double damage to objects and structures.

Verdant Overflow. A plant creature that starts its turn within 60 ft. of the garden wellspring regains 10 hit points and has resistance to necrotic damage until the beginning of its next turn. Additionally an incapacitated lesser garden guardian that starts its turn in the area with more than 0 hit points is no longer incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The garden wellspring makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 25 (4d8+7) bludgeoning damage.

Life Giving Pulse (1/day). The wellspring releases a pulse of life giving energies in a 60 ft. radius centered on itself. Each creature that is not a construct or undead in the area regains 23 (4d8+5) hit points and is no longer poisoned. Each creature that is not a construct or undead and died since the end of the wellspring's last turn in the area is returned to life with 1 remaining hit point.

Additionally, any lesser- or greater garden guardian in the area regains one use of their lesser- and greater verdant infusion.



Garden Wellspring
Artwork by Ben Fleuter
& DM Tuz

GARDEN GUARDIAN CARETAKER

Large construct

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 104 (11d10 + 44)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	13 (+1)	18 (+4)	10 (0)	17 (+3)	5 (-3)

Proficiency +3

Skills Nature +9, Perception +6

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with adamantite weapons

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities exhaustion, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft. passive Perception 16

Languages Understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Command Garden Guardians. The caretaker can share information with any garden guardian construct (greater or lesser) within 120 ft. of itself nonverbally, allowing them to be aware of any creature the caretaker is aware of.

Plant Awareness. The caretaker is aware of all plants and plant creatures within 60 ft. of itself as if it can see them. It is aware of the creature's hit point maximum and current hitpoints, as well as its nutritional needs.

Withering Weakness. When the caretaker takes fire or necrotic damage, it can't use its **Spellcasting** action until the end of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The caretaker makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) bludgeoning damage.

Spellcasting. The caretaker casts one of the following spells, using Wisdom as the spellcasting ability (Spell save DC 14) and using its plant growth as an implement and requiring no material or verbal components:

At will: *druidcraft*, *mending*, *mold earth*

1/day each: *detect poison and disease*, *plant growth*, *protection from poison*, *revivify* (can only target plant creatures)

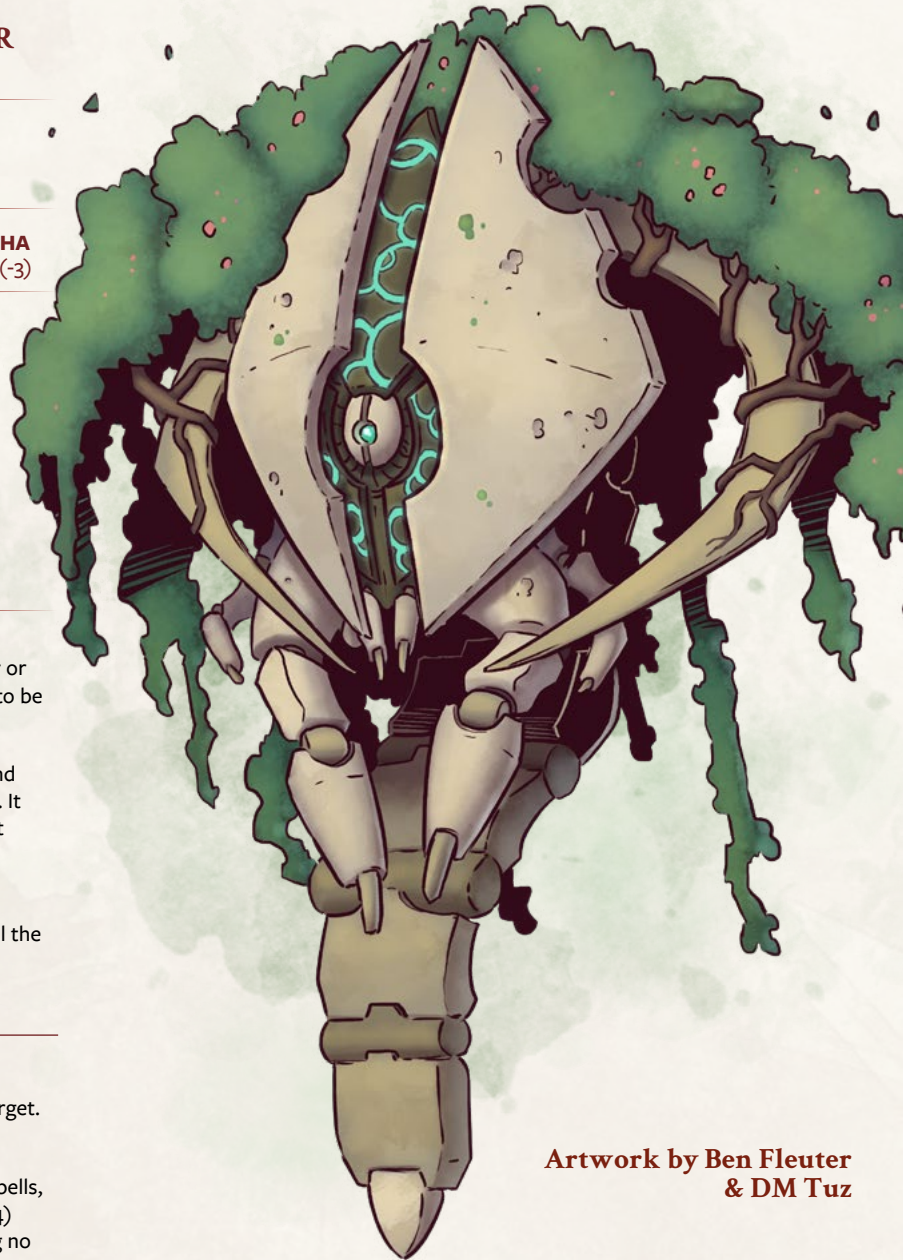
LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The garden guardian caretaker can take 2 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 garden guardian caretaker regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Detect. The caretaker makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

Garden Tangle. A creature within 120 ft. of the caretaker in contact with the ground must succeed a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be restrained by sprawling weeds until the end of the caretaker's next turn. The weeds can be attacked (AC 10, 5 HP, vulnerable to fire and slashing damage, immune to psychic damage) or broken if the restrained creature uses an action and makes a successful DC 14 Strength check.

Command Guardians (2 Actions). A lesser or greater garden guardian within 120 ft. of the caretaker moves up to half of its speed and makes a single melee weapon attack, or moves up to its speed without provoking opportunity attacks.



Artwork by Ben Fleuter
& DM Tuz

GARDEN GUARDIAN CARETAKER

Created to manage and direct the garden guardians, the caretakers are equipped with the greatest amount of autonomy among the King's secret creations. Where the other garden guardians can only conceive simple directions, the caretaker is capable of thought. While still basic in its intellect, a caretaker possesses a thorough understanding of nature and its balance.

The caretakers are tasked to monitor and observe the garden to ensure its health and growth. Once their watchful eyes identify an issue it will alert lesser constructs to move out and perform whatever task the caretaker deems necessary to rectify the issue.

The caretaker is the peak of King Alverk's garden guardians. To deepen its connection to the plants around it and to tap deep into the primal energies within, the caretakers each are endowed with rich plantlife upon their shells. Due to their close connection to nature, the caretakers can use the primal energy around them to the point of performing outright primal magic.

It is by the feat of the caretakers that the care of the garden has been ensured long since the death of King Alverk and will ensure the verdant sanctuary's continued existence.

LAIR: THE VERDANT SANCTUARY

The verdant sanctuary was the secret escape from King Alverk's royal duties. It was built over the centuries of his reign, hidden away from sight of even his closest confidants. This masterpiece is a garden of unparalleled beauty and tranquility spans over hundreds of acres, featuring plots of breathtaking flower fields, mighty trees that house delightful singing birds, and elegant structures of kingly design. A well needed haven of peace for the monarch who grew ever so tired of war and destruction.

LAIR ACTIONS

When fighting a garden guardian caretaker (or another powerful fey or plant creature) in the verdant sanctuary, the caretaker can take lair actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), a caretaker takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects:

Pulling Vine. A vine lashes out at a creature from the ground. A creature not higher than 20 ft. off the ground must succeed a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be pulled up to 20 ft. into a direction of the caretaker's choice. A creature that fails the saving throw by 5 or more also falls prone.

Reciprocity. As the tender protects the garden, the garden envisions the tender. The caretaker regains the use of one spell and can use spells even if its Withering Weakness trait was triggered (if the creature using the lair action is a fey or plant creature, the creature regains 4d8+8 hit points instead).

Thorn Path. Sprawling thorns grow in a 60 ft. line that is 10 ft. wide within the garden. The area becomes difficult terrain and when a creature moves into or within the area, it takes 2d4 piercing damage for every 5 feet it travels. The area remains until the caretaker uses another lair action.

Tranquil Beauty. A creature in the garden must succeed a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save a creature is mesmerised by the tranquility of the garden and is unable to do harm until the end of its next turn, meaning that it cannot make attacks, cast spells that target hostile creatures, or ready actions. A creature that is immune to being charmed succeeds the saving throw automatically.

Once a caretaker (or another creature) takes a lair action, no other creature can take lair actions until the beginning of the next round.

EFFECTS

The verdant sanctuary is a great garden of abundant beauty. Due to the monarch's great efforts, the garden is a self contained realm hidden away from the world at large, but those that intrude upon this majestic landscape may be faced with unique effects:

- Beast and plant creatures that take a short rest in this area regain any lost hit points at the end of their rest, without having to expend hit dice.
- Any spell cast by a druid or ranger in this area is treated as if it were cast at one level higher.
- Creatures that traverse the garden take twice as much time to do so as the overwhelming beauty of the garden slows them down. Creatures that are immune to being charmed are not affected.

Forgotten Foes: Garden Guardians

- Plants grow at an accelerated rate in this area, roughly at thrice the normal amount.

Once all garden guardian caretakers in charge of the verdant sanctuary are destroyed, the verdant sanctuary will descend into a chaotic overgrowth that will ultimately culminate in the collapse of the carefully constructed garden over the course of one year. All that will remain of the once tended garden will be a rampant monster infested wilderness.

ASSOCIATED CREATURES

The garden guardians are not the only creatures that can be found in the Verdant Sanctuary. As well as the garden has been tended to by its construct protectors, other creatures may have very well become part of the hidden garden, such as beast or plant type creatures. Plant type creatures in particular could have been introduced by the monarch himself and are now just as tended to as the surrounding flowers and plants.

Because of its secretive and wondrous nature, the verdant sanctuary can also be an ideal spot for fey to manifest. Perhaps a dryad or a chamrosh^{UM} found their way from the Far'way* into the sanctuary and became enchanted by its tranquility and beauty.

On the contrary, not all creatures that arrived in this garden are welcome. Perhaps part of the verdant sanctuary have become infested with outside creatures, such as goblins, kobolds, or similar troublemakers. Of course the garden guardians do not tolerate their presence and players traversing the area could encounter an ongoing territorial conflict between the invaders and the guardians.

As mentioned in the Lair Actions section, not only caretakers can make use of the Verdant Sanctuary's lair actions. A powerful fey or plant monster can become the new master of the verdant sanctuary, and by default, also become the new master of the garden guardians.

Far'way: The Far'way is the plane of ideas and home of the fey.
UM: Unbound Monsters

KING ALVERK'S FATE

It is kept vague as to what happened to the King after he retired and disappeared into the garden. Perhaps he spent his final years surrounded by the beauty of his beloved garden and adventurers might find his remains at the center of a quiet grove. Or the King might be still alive due to the garden keeping him invigorated in return for his years of care and love.

In case you want to feature the King as an entity to be encountered in the Verdant Sanctuary, consider using the Ancient Monarch^{UM} monster to represent him.