

Atlas Games Presents an *Occult Lore*™ Preview:

# DRAGON FLOWER

AN EXCERPT FROM *BAIRD'S BOTANICAL* BY CHRIS JONES

**Editor's Note:** *The following excerpt is one of twenty plants described in Appendix One of Occult Lore, "Byron B. Baird's Bountiful Botanical." As this example illustrates, these plants, whether rare or ubiquitous, are valued for their mundane and magical properties, which can be awakened by herbalists and their kin.*

A dragon flower is typically composed of 6 to 12 towering stalks capped at the top by broad, ovoid leaves. The woolly brown and white stalks, which resemble tree bark from a distance, reach heights of up to 35 feet and widths of 2 feet in diameter at their bases. Their thick, purple and red leaves grow up to 6 feet in length and 4 feet in width. Once every 12 weeks or so, the dragon flower produces clusters of reddish-orange pods, which cling to the undersides of the leaves and emit a rancid odor not unlike that of rotten flesh. A dragon flower's roots extend deep into the earth, as much as 50 or 60 feet, and attached to the base of the central root is the plant's "heart," a pulpy, indigo bulb filled with resin.

While most creatures go to great lengths to avoid the awful-smelling plant, a few species actually find it quite stimulating. In fact, young, inexperienced dragons love the plant, giving it the name. Rather than affecting them adversely as it would most creatures, the pod odor instead drives them absolutely wild, and the taste of its flesh intoxicates them. But as dragons become older, wiser, and less impetuous, they eventually come to detest the plant, knowing all too well that their reaction to it is a fatal weakness. Many a young dragon has died at the hands of enterprising dragon hunters because it was insensate beyond reason from the plant's malodorous pods. Older dragons will go to any extreme to destroy dragon flower, usually from a distance and with judicious use of their considerable breath weapons.

For many sentient races the lure of the plant lies buried far below ground: its heart, which is small when compared to the rest of the plant, contains an unusual resin created by the pods during their development. This heart resin can be distilled into a powerfully addictive drug and deadly poison known as *dragon tears*. Most cities and kingdoms aware of the drug mandate an instant death penalty for those caught selling it in any form. Notwithstanding the near-universal prohibition on *dragon tears*, an underground market for it continues to thrive. As a poison, it's especially popular among assassins who have forsaken subtlety in favor of style; as a drug, it (and its corresponding antitoxin) is highly popular among the aristocracy and nobility for whom price isn't an issue. Because of this, it's not uncommon for less-than-moral adventurers to eagerly risk life and limb for the opportunity to harvest it.

Another concoction that few people know about but for which daring, very informed adventurers seek the components is called *wyrm snare*. It is notable for its ability to lure dragons like so many bears to honey. As with *dragon tears*, though, it is extremely illegal. In many places, greedy herbalists actually grow the plant themselves or on behalf of a well-paying sponsor, using any number of methods to mask the plant's scent so that they might reap the profits from either *dragon tears* or *wyrm snare*.

In the Middle Kingdom, where the plant originates, only those herbalists specifically licensed by the Imperial Court's Esteemed Wildlife Monopolies Bureau are allowed access to known dragon flowers, which are called *long hua* in their language.

**Climate/Ter rain:** Any tropical or temperate forest  
**Bindings:** Conjunction 4, Illusion 9, Necromancy 4  
**Traits:** Blightpurge 6, Counterpoison 10, Dreamstyre (Poison) 20



Requires the use of the Dungeons & Dragons® Player's Handbook, Third Edition, published by Wizards of the Coast.



## Mundane Concoctions

**Blightpur ge:** The stench from the pods of a dragon flower is so awful that any creature within 60 feet of the plant must make a Fortitude save (DC 20). Success means that the stench is moderately resisted and the creature only suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to all actions (any 1d20 roll, such as skill checks, saves, attack rolls, etc.) while in the area. Failure means that the stench overcomes the creature, and it is struck by a bout of severe vomiting accompanied by gut-wrenching stomach cramps; the nauseated creature is incapable of taking any action other than a single move or move-equivalent action per turn. This effect lasts as long as the creature is within the radius of effect, plus an additional 1d6 rounds after moving out of it. A pod removed from the plant continues to produce the purgative stench for up to six days; if preserved by an herbalist, it can maintain the stench for 1d4 weeks. Healers sometimes use small doses of pod meat to homeopathically treat gastrointestinal disorders, although whether this works or not is debatable.

A dragon flower pod can be awakened by an herbalist as a *fragrant egg*; the pod's stench is suppressed until its outer surface breaks, at which time it releases the odor as a debilitating, toxic cloud.

**Counterpoison:** Despite its incredibly noxious scent, the plant's pod sap possesses natural antitoxic characteristics. Consuming it raw gives a creature a temporary +5 saving throw bonus against all poisons for ten rounds. Sap removed from the plant remains viable for ten days, but if treated by an herbalist it can stay good for 2d4 weeks. Another concoction derived from the trait has the same effect on a creature as the *delay poison* spell. Pod sap is pale-purple in color with a heavy, coppery taste like fresh blood.

When awakened by an herbalist, the sap becomes a more effective antitoxin known as *dragon milk*. Approximately 18 pods of sap from a full-grown plant produce one dose of antitoxin after processing.

**Dreamstyre (Poison):** The dragon flower's heart resin is very toxic to most creatures; it also contains an addictive, mind-influencing chemical. Anyone consuming it must make a Fortitude save (DC 25) or experience euphoria and hallucinations for approximately 12 hours, 1d6 points of temporary Con damage, and 1d6 days of intense fever, projectile vomiting, wracking stomach cramps, and blinding headaches. A full-grown dragon flower contains approximately 2,000 ounces of raw resin, or 130 ounces of the drug after refinement. The plant requires approximately three months to produce one ounce of raw heart resin. If 30% or more of its resin is removed at one time, the plant dies. In its natural state, heart resin is a deep indigo color with a pungent, skunky odor and taste. Freshly harvested resin remains viable for up to twenty days, unless treated by an herbalist, in which case it is good for up to 4d4 weeks.

A skilled herbalist can awaken this trait through an arduous distillation process, requiring 15 ounces of raw resin to produce a single dose of the drug *dragon tears*.

**Special:** Dragon flowers do not affect dragons the same way they affect other creatures. As mentioned earlier, dragons find the pod scent incredibly stimulating. In fact, a dragon can detect it from two miles away for every age category it has experienced, up to its current one; for example, an adult black dragon can smell dragon flower from 12 miles away. Once it comes within the plant's normal radius of effect, the dragon must make a Will save (DC 30) or succumb to a debilitating euphoria for the next 4 hours. When it recovers, it is overcome by ravenous hunger and invariably eats the



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plant's stems, leaves and pods, suffering only from a blinding, weeklong headache from doing so.

A rare recipe for making a compound concoction from both the plant's blightpurge and dreamstyre (poison) traits allows an herbalist to create a foul-smelling dragon-only aphrodisiac called *wyrm snare*.

## New Grenade-like Weapon:

### Fragrant Egg

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**Type:** Special  
**Trait:** Blightpurge DC 21  
**Direct Hit Damage:** Incapacitating gas attack  
**Splash Damage:** —  
**Range Increment :** 10 ft.  
**Weight :** 1 1/4 lb.  
**Cost:** 480 gp

A *fragrant egg* is a dried dragon flower pod treated with odor-suppressing herbs, other arcane chemicals, and then awakened. When the "egg" is thrown with a ranged touch attack roll (no proficiency required), it bursts into a cloud of noxious vapor 15 feet in diameter upon impact. Anyone caught in the cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or succumb to nausea, stomach cramps, and light-headedness. Affected creatures are incapacitated, and cannot take any action while inside the cloud or for an additional 1d6 rounds once outside of it.

The name for this weapon is a literal translation of the colloquial name given to it by Middle Kingdom soldiers: *xiang dan*.

## New Magical Concoction:

### Dragon Milk

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**Type:** Potable  
**Trait:** Counterpoison DC 25  
**Cost:** 1,300 gp

The foul-smelling sap from dragon flower pods can be used to make a highly effective antitoxin capable of countering virtually any poison. One ounce of *dragon milk* functions as the spell *neutralize poison*. After it has been ingested, the imbiber also becomes immune to all poisons for the next 24 hours.

*Dragon milk* is thick and milky, has an acrid, medicinal taste, and gives off very little odor.

The original name for this antitoxin in the Middle Kingdom is *long nai*. *Dragon tears* addicts must consume this antidote before taking the poison if they don't want to suffer damage from it.

## New Poison:

### Dragon Tears

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**Type:** Contact DC 25  
**Trait:** Dreamstyre (Poison) DC 35  
**Primary Damage:** 3d6 Con over an equal number of minutes  
**Secondary Damage:** 1 permanent Con and 1 permanent Wis; addiction  
**Cost:** 5,200 gp

This poison is awakened heart resin from the fetid dragon flower. The inky black substance smells like skunk musk and tastes almost as bad. However, if ingested orally the poison has no effect other than to induce severe stomach cramps and vomiting. For it to be effective, at least 3 drops must be placed in each of the victim's eyes. If he fails his saving throw, an overwhelming sense of bliss pervades his entire being and he hallucinates wildly as the toxin attacks his nervous system. If this doesn't kill him immediately, then the victim remains under the poison's psychoactive influence for up to 12 hours, unaware of the damage that has been done to his body. Anyone that survives a bout with *dragon tears* will suddenly find that he craves it more than ever after coming down off the high. For every day that the person goes without it, he suffers a cumulative -1 circumstance penalty to all actions (any 1d20 roll, such as skill checks, saves, attack rolls, etc.), up to a maximum of -12. This addiction can only be broken by high-powered magic, such as a *wish* or *greater restoration* spell.

A victim's sclera and iris become permanently black after the poison is administered. Addicts must always drink *dragon milk*, a potent antitoxin, before infusing themselves with *dragon tears*. This prevents the poison from harming them as they indulge in the psychoactive effects. Nonetheless, their eyes remain forever stained. Because this is a dead giveaway to their illegal habit, addicts often

cover their eyes with the black veil normally reserved for adherents to the faith of pacifism.

Primary ability damage caused by this poison is temporary, while the secondary damage is permanent. In the Middle Kingdom, the poison is known as *long lei*.

## NEW MAGICAL CONCOCTION:

### WYRM SNARE

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**Type:** Inhalant

**Trait:** Blightpurge, Dreamstyre (Poison) DC 40

**Cost:** 5,980 gp

This is, perhaps, the foulest-smelling substance in the known world. It is extremely expensive, requiring rare alchemical solutions from remote, exotic lands in order to successfully awaken the dragon flower pods from which it is made, as well as at least 1,000 ounces of inky resin taken from the dragon flower's heart. The end result is five ounces of a liquid that looks like turgid urine and smells exactly like the musk from a dragon in heat, only amplified a hundred fold. One five-ounce vial contains enough wyrm snare scent and pheromones to attract any dragon within 100 miles.

To use it, one simply finds a suitable location, places the bottle on the ground, uncorks it, and then runs like hell. (Unless, of course, the intent is

to ambush the dragon or dragons that are almost guaranteed to respond.) Any dragon that picks up the scent from this concoction must make a Will save (DC 30) or become immediately drawn to it. Once within 60 feet of the chemical, it must make a second Will save (DC 40) or go into a mad mating frenzy, looking for anything even remotely dragon-like with which to, well, mate. Experienced, wealthy, and knowledgeable dragon hunters, needless to say, sometimes use *wyrm snare* to bring their prey to them, but in all honesty the chemical is probably as dangerous to them as it is to the dragon: a psychotic, raving mad dragon is more of a threat than one that has its wits about it, generally.

*Wyrm snare* loses its odor after a week and its pheromones after a month. (That means even though a regular creature can't smell it, dragons are still able to pick up on it for a full month.)

In the Middle Kingdom, where it was first cooked up, it is called *long he*, which translates loosely as "dragon-nip." There is a story that once, long ago, the rival of the evil emperor Liu Xiao poured *wyrm snare* on the roof of the imperial residence in an act of vengeance and as a way to rid the country of a despotic tyrant. Unfortunately, the nine dragons that came not only killed the wicked sovereign, but also wiped out the entire city and most of the population in the surrounding countryside. Because of such incidents, in most civilized kingdoms *wyrm snare* tends to be even more illegal than *dragon tears*.

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Atlas Games  
PO Box 131233  
Roseville, MN 55113  
USA

web [www.atlas-games.com](http://www.atlas-games.com)  
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