

Harvesters

* Please note that while this primer provides a guide for the originally intended use of the harvester style, you the user are in no way bound to use the template in that manner. If you find a new use for the template, do so, and feel free to share what you've done with it.

Basic Use

The harvester template is meant to produce a new style of card that allows the player to utilize them as a mana resource in place of lands, but at the cost of losing the normal effects and abilities of the card. Let's see an example.



The first thing to point out on a harvester card is the mana symbol in the upper left corner. This symbol can be colorless, monocolored, or a 2-color hybrid. The mana symbol can also support numbers. If you choose to use a number, the symbol will act in different ways:

- If you use any number on a colorless symbol, the number will be large and in the center.
- If you use any number on a hybrid symbol, the number will not show up.
- If you use a 0 or 1 on a monocolored circle, it will not show up.
- If you use a number greater than 1 on a monocolored circle, it will appear in the upper left corner of the circle and the mana symbol will shrink to the lower right corner. We'll examine this case more with the next sample render.

The intention of the symbol is that you indicate what color of mana the card can produce when played as a mana resource. If you do not indicate a number, it would normally be assumed to produce one mana of that color. So, if you indicate 1 as the number, it is the same as if you don't indicate a number at all, thus the symbol does not change in that case. If you indicate a 2 or 3 or a greater number, it is meant to imply that you would produce two or three or more of that color of mana. This symbol will look similar to a 2/C mana symbol from Shadowmoor block, but it is not meant to be the same thing. Unfortunately, I've not found a better way to indicate this information. The hybrid mana symbols are meant to be used to make duals. For example, you may use a W/G symbol. It is the intent that such a symbol would correspond to the ability "T: Add W or G to your mana pool." This lines up with the fact that if a W/G hybrid mana would be added to a mana pool, the player would choose whether they wanted to add white or green mana, but not W/G.

Moving down from there, we see the mana ability at the bottom of the textbox. Notably, the mana ability is upside down. This is due to the fact that ideally, when you choose to use Vinelash Wurm as a mana resource, you play it upside down, and perhaps with a counter on it to help further identify it from regular cards. When a harvester card is played as a mana resource, it is probably best to just consider it a land, and not a creature at all. In that case, instead of being a 6/6 trampling Wurm, it is a land that generates a green mana when tapped, just like a Forest.

There is also a divider to separate the mana ability from the card's regular abilities. This divider is optional and can be turned off in the styling menu of Magic Set Editor.

Let's look at another sample render.



In the case of Tidebringer Leviathan, we can see the mana symbol has a 3 and a blue mana symbol. That tells us that the card produces three blue mana in its mana resource form. Notice that the card does

not have a divider separating the mana ability from the card's normal abilities. Again, this is controlled in the styling menu. The card also has an upside down semi-transparent blue mana watermark. There is also a styling choice that allows you to turn watermarks upside down, so they would be viewed right side up if the card was upside down.

Design Implications

There are some important factors to remember when designing harvester cards.

1. A harvester card allows a player to play without mana. Normally, in constructed play, it is customary that a Magic deck consist of approximately 24 lands and 36 spells. Also, consistency is valued in competitive deck design, so often, four copies of each spell are used. If harvesters are used to design a constructed environment without lands, the consistency will either decrease, or you will need to make adjustments to maintain consistency:
 - a. You may want to consider decreasing the minimum deck size to 40 cards instead of 60. However, this will have a side effect of making game loss due to "decking" more likely, and making cards like Millstone far more dangerous.
 - b. Another option may be to increase the maximum number of copies of each spell from four to five, or even six. In a normal 60 card deck with 36 spell cards, if each different card appears four times, there are nine different spells. If you allowed six copies of each spell instead, and there were nine spells, that would come to a deck size of 54, which is very close to the same size as normal constructed decks, and therefore, very close in consistency.
 - c. Finally, some playgroups may find the decreased consistency makes for more interesting games, especially if those playgroups are such that they favor slower, more drawn out games, rather than quick competitive games. In these cases, it may be preferable to simply keep the maximum number of copies of a card at four and the deck size at 60, decreasing each deck's consistency.
2. Also, when designing harvester cards, remember it is the intent that a player is forced to make a choice between the card's regular abilities and uses, and the mana resource. In the case of Vinelash Wurm, the player may choose to use the wurm as a mana resource, which may be especially tempting early on when they cannot afford the wurm's 4GG mana cost. If they do so, they lose access to the wurm's 6/6 trampling body, which would be of more use later on. The same is also true of the Tidebringer Leviathan, in which case the player is forced to choose between a "triple Island" and a Leviathan that provides lots of power and toughness. Also notice the symmetry in the Leviathan, which gives your opponent three Island tokens if you play it normally.
3. On the topic of the Tidebringer Leviathan, the ability to generate three blue mana each turn when used as a mana resource is almost certainly too strong. So speaking from a balance point of view, you will probably want to normally only use single mana abilities, or rarely, abilities that produce two mana.