

NURSES, SOLDIERS AND APHIDS

MYRMES

EVERYDAY LIFE IN AN ANT-HILL

When you take in your hand for the first time the box of MYRMES the weight tells you that it is well fed with materials: in effect you get one heavy cardboard map (400x570 mm) depicting a beautiful garden, four light cardboard players boards (290x165 mm), 16 Aphid Farm / Scavenging / Sub colony tiles, 20 objective tiles, 90 colored wooden cubes (larva, food, earth and stone), 18 round "Prey" tokens, an year token, a "First player" token and three colored dice (D6). Each player also receive 8 plastic "Ants" (to be used as workers or soldiers), 5 round tokens (4 tunnel exits and 1 score), 17 Pheromone tiles, 5 cubes, 8 "Nurses" and a marker disk.

A game of Myrmes is played in 3 years of 4 Seasons each: at the end of the third year the player with most points wins. To mark points you have to place on the board Pheromone tiles, acquire and place Aphid Farm and Sub Colony tiles and reach as many Objectives as you can.

At game's start all 18 Preys are placed on the board together with six randomly selected objectives: they will not change during the game. Then each player takes 3 Nurses, 1 Larva, 2 Ants and place them on his personal board (that depicts and ant-hill

and is divided in 6 sections: Nursery, Larvae, Warriors, Workers, Atelier and Storage). The Marker (colored disc) of each player is placed on the "Level 1" space of their personal boards and the Score token on case 10 of the score track on the main board. Then each player place an ant-hill exit of his color on the board.

We are now ready to start (see below the photo of the Personal Board):

MYRMES is a demanding game: you have to carefully look at the 6 objectives and to try since the beginning of the game to imagine a global strategy to be able to get most of them. Then you must do your best to follow that strategy all along the game, even if you must be prepared to "deviate" sometimes from it if your "beloved" opponents will attack you (and they will do for sure...). As Objectives are randomly selected at the start the above strategies will vary from game to game: some tiles ask for "resources" or "larvae" to be collected and paid, other need a certain number of "preys" or "soldiers" to be discarded, other will ask you to own a certain number of special tiles (Aphid/Scavenging/Sub colony), other finally need a certain number of your Pheromone tiles to place on the garden or to have X nurses in play inside

your ant-hill.

At the start of each of the three years players throw the three colored dice and place each of them on one season (the Green on Spring, the Yellow on Summer and the Red on Autumn: Winter is treated differently) paying attention at the number of pips obtained.

The game mechanics are easy to learn and easy to remember... after the first "test" game:

- FIRST PHASE: all players check the EVENT of the Season. The number of pips of the colored dice determine this event (for example: get 1 Victory Point (VP) extra for each score during this turn; get larvae or Worker/Soldier extra; benefit of 3 extra movement points or 3 extra resource cubes; etc.). You may modify this event paying larvae and changing the number of pips (each Larva

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A wonderful, complex game with lots of possibilities, strategies to try and decisions to make, all with an unusual and very well-suited topic.

spent allows you to increase or decrease 1 pip) in order to get a better (following your strategy) event.

- SECOND PHASE: you place now your Nurses inside your ant-hill. If you place one of them in the Larvae room you get ONE new larva, but if you place there 2/3 nurses you get 3/5 Larvae. If you place 2 Nurses on the Warriors room you get 1 Warrior; if you place 3 you get 2 Warriors. 2/4 Nurses on



the Workers room give you 1/2 Workers. 1 or more Nurses on the Atelier room will allow you to get one special action each paying the required number of resources (a new Nurse, a new exit in the garden, possibility to get an Objective or to advance one level on your ant-hill).

- THIRD PHASE: Now it is time to send your "workers" to their job: you may send them inside the ant-hill (they will come back at the end of the turn) or outside, in the garden (but those workers will not come back).
(a) - Internal job. You have FOUR possible levels in your ant-hill:

- At the start of the game only level "0" (Gestation Room) is available: if you send a worker there you get 1 Larva as a bonus;
- At level "I" (Larder) the bonus will be 1 Food;
- At level "II" (Quarry) you will get 1 Earth or 1 Stone (your choice);
- At level "III" (Queen's room) you may spend



1 Food to get 2 VP.

To be able to "open" a new level you have to send 1 Nurse to the Atelier and then pay the requested resources: for example, to pass from "0" to "I" you have to pay 2 Earth, to pass from "II" to "III" you must spend 3 Stones, etc.

(b) - External job. If you send a worker outside the ant-hill you have 3 Movement points and you may perform the following jobs:

- Hunt a prey: if your ant stops in a hex with a Prey you may capture it. If the Prey is a Ladybug you need only to discard a Soldier-ant (from your reserve inside the ant-hill) and you immediately get the prey and 2 Food; if it is a Termite you discard a Soldier and you get it together with 1 Food and 2 VP; if it is a Spider you must discard TWO Soldiers but you get the prey, 1 Food and 4 VP.

- Place a Pheromone: if your ant arrived in an empty hex (without Preys, special tiles or other pheromone tiles) you may place a pheromone tile on the garden. If your ant-hill is at level "0" you may only place a "2 hexes" tile, at level "I" a "3 hexes" tile and so on (your personal board depicts all the above information and it is very easy to use). Once your tile is laid on the garden you immediately place some resources on it: for each "green" hex that you covered you get 1 Food, for each "brown" tile you get 1 Earth and for each "grey" hex you get 1 Stone.

- Place a special tile: this action is possible only if you are at the right ant-hill level: at level "I" you pay 1 Stone and you may place a Aphid Farm (that grant you 2 VP immediately and then 1 Food each turn) or, at Level II, a Scavenging tile (Cost 1 Food and grant 2 VP immediately and 1 Earth or Stone per turn). At level "III" you may also place a Sub-Colony: it cost 1 Earth+1 Stone+ 1 Food but it gives you 4 VP immediately and 2 VP extra per turn.

- Clear a pheromone tile: if your Worker-ant arrives in a pheromone tile that is completely empty (no resources cubes) you may decide to pay 1 Earth and remove and discard it forever: if the tile is of one of your opponent you also get the VP printed on it (if it is one of yours you do not get VP).

FOURTH PHASE: It is finally time to harvest your properties and accumulate some resources! You simply take ONE resource from each "non-empty" pheromone tile (your choice if you have more than one), plus 1 Food from each Aphid Farm, 1 Stone/Earth from your Scavenging tile and/or 2 VP from each Sub Colony.

FIFTH PHASE: If you placed some Nurses on the Atelier it is time to use them to do one of the following possibilities:

- Increase your ant-hill level (paying the resources specified on your Personal Board)
- Add one of your tunnel exits to the garden

(this will give you also 1 Earth)

- Add one new Nurse to your ant-hill (Cost 2 Food and 2 Larvae)

- Reach an Objective. (See below)

SIXTH PHASE: End of the turn: discard the used Larvae and the extra resources (Level 0 and I allow you to maintain 4 Resources, while levels II and III increase this maximum to 6); take back all the Nurses and the Workers used inside the ant-hill; pass the FIRST PLAYER token one place on the left. If the next turn is Summer or Autumn you start the same procedure again but if it is WINTER you must have enough FOOD to feed your ants: 4 cubes at the end of the first year, 5 in the second and 6 in the third. Each missing food cost you 3 VP.

To really have a possibility to win you must get some OBJECTIVES: at the start of the game 6 tiles are showed: two at level 1, two at level 2 and 2 at level 3. You may proceed on levels 2 only if you already placed a Nurse on level 1, and you are allowed to take a level 3 objective only if you already have a Nurse on level 2. Each Nurse used to get an Objective cannot be taken back to the ant-hill and remain on the objective area until the end of the game: never forget this, as with just 1 or 2 nurses only inside your ant-hill you are sure to lose the game. For your information I usually send my first Nurse to an Objective when I already have FIVE in my ant-hill, but my friends try also with 4 nurses only, in order to arrive earlier on the objective and thus get extra points.

To get an Objective you must usually pay (discard) some resources, preys, soldiers, etc.: then you may place your Nurse near the selected tile. You receive 6 VP (at level 1) or 9 VP (level 2) or 12 VP (level 3). You may get BOTH objectives on each level, if you wish, but you cannot score the same objective more than once. If you place your Nurse in a case where there are already other nurses you grant 3 VP to each of them. Usually players run to get 1 Objective on each level as soon as possible, but on the last two turns it is common to see players doing also the second objective of level III (and/or II) to get some extra points.

As you understand (if I was clear enough until now, of course...) it is possible to make VP in many ways but mainly with Objectives (they may grant you up to 64 VP) and with the biggest pheromone tiles (if you lay all of them, almost impossible, you will get up to 44 VP, thus the importance of the objectives). Initially you cannot race for the Objectives because you do not have the necessary resources and a sufficient number of Nurses, so you have to try to quickly increase your Ant-hill level and get some extra Nurse and workers/soldiers. To do that you have to lay pheromone tiles and harvest the Resources from the garden, with which

you may pay your improvements. Initially competition will not be very hard as there is plenty of space for everybody, but during the mid-game (usually after the first year) players could be blocked by the opponent's pheromones and must start to destroy them and build their own. Preys are important because they grant you extra food and some VP, but becomes absolutely necessities if some Objectives should be paid with captured Preys. I started my review saying that the first operation of your game is... look with high attention to the Objective tiles: now you know why!

MYRMES is not for all: there are too many possibilities and decisions to take at every turn that only expert players will be able to appreciate the game. When we started playing MYRMES at our club it was a looooooong session (a little more than three hours) and we needed to check the rules quite often. The second game was much better and we did not check the rules again: after playing a dozen games it takes about 2 hours to finish and ... we are always keen to play it because there is always a new strategy to try and... A bitter revenge against the other ant-hills to take.

Probably you already understood that I like MYRMES very much. ☑

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INFORMATION

Designer: Yoann Levat

Artist: Arnaud Demaegd

Price: ca. 33 Euro

Publisher: Ystari Games 2012

www.asmodee.de

PLAYERS:
2-4

AGE:
13+

TIME:
150+

EVALUATION

Development Users: For experts
Version: multi
Rules: de en
In-game text: no

Comments:

Lots of good components * Easy to learn rules * A plethora of possibilities and decisions

Compares to:

Complex development and worker placement games

Other editions:

Rio Grande Games, Asterion Press

