

# Monster Geographica: Hill & Mountain



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## Expeditions Retreat Press

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**(Lawful):** Hephaestan (9)

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**Plant:** Attrition Creeper (3), Jack-o-Lantern (3), Spidernut (3), Cobra Flower (4), Gallows Tree Zombie (4), Quickgrass (4), Witherweed (4), Picaroon (5), Tangleweed (5), Blessed Ring (6), Quickwood (8), Forest Mimic (9), Gallows Tree (13)

**(Psionic):** Argent Cougar (4), Phantom Argent Cougar (9), Crelith (10)

**(Shapechanger):** Sync (6), Forest Mimic (9)

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**Vermin:** Cruel Guest (1/8), Giant Flea (1/2), Barbed Beetle (2), Ice Scarab (2), Xanthonychos (3), Scytheclaw (4), Palanquin Beetle (5), Crimson Moth (11)

**(Water):** Rime Scourge (5)

## Introduction

*Monster Geographica: Hill & Mountain* is our fourth offering to the Monster Geographica Line. As we near the end of the line, (expect Plain & Desert in March 2006), its humble beginnings are rather humorous: Joe waking me up at three in the morning with his idea for a product line, combing through endless sources, the biggest excel spreadsheet ever, and the serendipitous aid and editors from Enworld's Creature Catalog Forum.

I think a customer at Gen Con said it best when we explained how the books and the line worked. "So you've basically set up an alternate monster manual that easier to use." We did not enter the line with that goal, but it appears to have blossomed into its own creation.

And now a word about hills, mountains, and the critters they engender. There is something captivating about mountains. Weather is more drastic, thunder claps louder, and the views are majestic. Keeping you footing is the difference between staying your course and ending up in a different pressurized zone, and you never sure what's on the other side of the curve ahead. There is little doubt why creatures of the mountains bear a particular majesty (and lethality) in our collective conscience.

We spent last winter in the foothills of the Himalayas (7,500 ft. up), at the first ridge of mountains off the plains. I'll never forget the ride up: an endless array of switchbacks, the drop in temperature as we drove up the side of the mountain, the rolling hills below us growing Basmati rice, and the spires that awaited us. Fog rolled in so fast that you could start cooking dinner with clear skies but by the time it was ready to eat, your entire view was covered in thick fog. In the mountains, you are at cloud-formation level.

So here they are, the 200 monsters of hills and mountains. As always, look for Fiery Dragon's complementary Counter Collection: Perilous Heights. A big thanks to the guys at Fiery Dragon who produce high-quality color counters, offering our customers usable art and allowing us to offer you an inexpensive monster resource.

Come visit us at our on-line store to pick up more XRP books, and the complementary Fiery Dragon products at [www.XRPshop.citymax.com](http://www.XRPshop.citymax.com).

Good gaming,  
Joe and Suzi

P.S. Kevin Baase gives special thanks to Nicholas Herold for his help with this batch of critters.

# Witch Grass

## Hazard (CR 1/10)

Witch grass is a summer blooming broadleaved plant that stands 1 to 2 feet tall at maturity. It is very bushy, and its leaves and branches have a purplish hue. Its base and roots are thick and likewise have the same purplish hue. A typical patch of witch grass covers a 10-foot area, though it often covers an area as large as 50 feet or more. It is only found in temperate or warm climates and in areas of naturally occurring grass such as forests, plains, and hills.

Witch grass, while harmless, has a detrimental effect on arcane spellcasters attempting to use magic in the area. Any arcane spellcaster attempting to cast a spell within 20 feet of a patch of witch grass suffers an additional +10% chance of arcane spell failure so long as it remains in the area. Divine spells or magic are not affected.

In addition, any creature approaching within 10 feet of a patch of witch grass is sprayed with seedlings. This spray is unnoticeable to all but the keenest of observers (Spot check DC 20). The seedlings disrupt arcane magic cast within 10 feet of them just as the witch grass does. So, a creature carrying the seedlings on its person disrupts arcane spells cast within 10 feet of it (as above). Seedlings typically remain on their "host" for 1 day before dropping off and taking root. If detected, the seedlings are easily washed away. Fire or cold destroys a patch of witch grass.

# Cruel Guest

## Fine Vermin

**Hit Dice:** 1/8d8 (1 hp)

**Initiative:** +0

**Speed:** 5 ft. (1 square)

**Armor Class:** 18 (+8 size), touch 18, flat-footed 18

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +0/-21

**Attack:** Embed +3 melee touch

**Full Attack:** Embed +3 melee touch

**Space/Reach:** 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Embed

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft.

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -4

**Abilities:** Str 1, Dex 10, Con 11, Int -, Wis 2, Cha 1

**Skills:** Hide +16, Jump -17

**Feats:** -

**Environment:** Warm hills

**Organization:** Solitary or nest (10-60)

**Challenge Rating:** ½

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** -

**Level Adjustment:** -

The aptly named cruel guest is a foul and despised parasite commonly found in slovenly inns, crude hospitals, rotting meat, and bawdy houses, the cruel guest resembles a tiny pale millipede. The cruel guest burrows into warm flesh and consumes all of the muscle, connective tissue, and skin of its host, causing extreme pain.

The cruel guest has been a health concern for centuries, but only recently has it been employed as a torture device. A few cruel guests can be collected and placed onto the body of a victim to be interrogated. The cruel guests keep their host in constant, ever-increasing pain, but leave him alive for weeks. Most jailers find that information begins to flow quite freely by the second day of infestation. Cruel guests often teach heroes a painful lesson about cleanliness or about the dangers of visiting houses of ill repute. They can also be used as a weapon when dropped into a party's bedroll for a nocturnal surprise attack.

A cruel guest is only about two inches long and weighs less than a pound.

## Combat

Direct combat with the cruel guest isn't likely. When a possible host comes in contact with the nest of the guest, a number of the creatures jump onto it and burrow into its flesh. Directly attacking the creatures is only possible while guests remain at a distance. Armor or clothing may slow the creatures an additional round, although typically it just provides the guests a layer of cover to squirm under so that they can attack the body unmolested.

**Embed (Ex):** Once a cruel guest comes into contact with a living creature, it clings to the creature's body and begins to dig its way below the skin. A creature afflicted by the cruel guest suffers 1d4 points of Constitution damage per day, and suffers a cumulative -1 penalty per day on attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws due to pain. A cruel guest infestation can be purged by a *remove disease* spell or by imbibing a quart of dragon blood.

# Creeping Fiend

## Tiny Magical Beast

**Hit Dice:** 1/2d10 (2 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares), climb 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armor Class:** 17 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 13

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/-11

**Attack:** Claw +7 melee (1d3-4)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +7 melee (1d3-4) and bite +2 melee (1d3-4)

**Space/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Sneak attack +1d6

**Special Qualities:** Darkvision 60 ft., improved evasion, low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +4, Hide +12, Listen +2, Move Silently +4, Spot +2

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse

**Environment:** Temperate forest, hills, and mountains

**Organization:** Gang (2-5), swarm (5-20), mob (20-40), or plague (40-60)

**Challenge Rating:** ¼

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Always chaotic evil

**Advancement:** –

**Level Adjustment:** –

Creeping fiends are tiny creatures often mistaken for vermin. They are feline in build, with retractable claws for climbing and hunting. A single creeping fiend is not much of a threat, but when they move in numbers, they eat all flesh in their path.

## Combat

Creeping fiends are masters of striking from hiding. The nimbleness of a creeping fiend allows it to get out of harm's way with incredible speed.

**Sneak Attack (Ex):** Any time a creeping fiend's opponent is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC, or if a creeping fiend flanks its opponent, it deals an extra 1d6 points of damage. This ability is just like the rogue's sneak attack and subject to the same limitations.

**Improved Evasion (Ex):** With a successful Reflex save against an attack that allows a Reflex save for half damage, a creeping fiend takes no damage. On a failed Reflex save against an attack that allows a Reflex save for half damage, a creeping fiend takes only half damage. A helpless creeping fiend does not gain the benefit of improved evasion.

**Skills:** Creeping fiends have a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks. A creeping fiend can always choose to take 10 on Climb checks, even if rushed or threatened.

# Flora and Fauna

Mountains are the most variable of terrain. Within them you may find alpine conditions, boreal or deciduous forests, grasslands, wetlands, and scrublands. Mountains are most influenced by latitude. If two mountains are of the same height, the mountain in the higher latitudes has fewer climate zones than the mountain found closer to the equator. The next factor is mountain elevation; for every 200 ft. (roughly) the average temperature drops 0.7°F. Another main influencer on ecosystems is rain; a mountain usually has a "wet" side and a "dry" side depending on the general direction of the wind. The difference may be slight, but rainfall differentials increase with tall mountains and wind that consistently flow from one direction. The last factor is sunlight. Many mountains have a sunny and a shady side that greatly influences what plants flourish.

Mountains act as islands on an earthy sea. Their creatures develop in sheltered environments that tend to favor specialization and speciation. This is not to say that mountains only have unique species; many mountain species live both on the slopes and the flatlands. However, mountains facilitate small and specialized ecosystems when compared with the surrounding terrain. Some mountain ranges are home to dozens of different species of the same creature, and some creatures are only found on particular mountains. This effect is most noticeable on tropical mountains, as the cool temperatures found on their slopes are to be found nowhere else for hundreds, perhaps thousands, of miles.

# Dover

## 1st-Level Warrior

### Medium Humanoid (Canine)

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares)

**Armor Class:** 15 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather armor), touch 12, flat-footed 13

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +1/+2

**Attack:** Longsword +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20) or bite +2 melee (1d6+1) or longbow +3 ranged (1d8/x3)

**Full Attack:** Longsword +0 melee (1d8+1/19-20) and short sword +0 melee (1d6/19-20) and bite -3 melee (1d6); or bite +2 melee (1d6+1); or longbow +3 ranged (1d8/x3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** –

The dover are a race of noble canine humanoids. A dover resembles a large, bipedal German shepherd with humanoid hands and a regal countenance. Its coat is silky black, except for a white patch on its neck and upper chest. When spotted, they are often wearing studded leather armor with a longbow and quiver are slung over the back and a longsword and shortsword are sheathed on the belt.

The dover are lawful, honest, organized, and refined. Creatures who harm the land or otherwise commit crimes against the earth under dover law may be arrested by dover patrols and taken to stand trial. Although the crimes may not be intentional (such as burning down a forest with a fireball, damming up a river and flooding a plain, or wiping out a species with an errant disease), regardless of the crime, the dover judge is always fair, and usually requests that the offender go on a quest as penance for their actions. This quest may involve traveling to another continent or plane in order to retrieve and repopulate an extinct local species, or rescuing the dover's high poet or a member of the royal family that has been kidnapped by an evil race, for example.

A dover stands around 5-1/2 to 6 feet tall and weighs between 175 and 225 pounds. Dover speak their own language, which is beautiful, but rather guttural and growling. They also speak common, elven, and sylvan.

The dover warrior presented here had the following ability scores before racial adjustments: Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision, scent

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8

**Skills:** Listen +4, Spot +1, Survival +1

**Feats:** Track, Two Weapon Fighting<sup>B</sup>

**Environment:** Temperate hills and mountains

**Organization:** Solitary, party (2-5 plus 1 3rd-level sergeant), or battalion (10-100 plus 1 3rd-level sergeant per 10 troops, 2 5th-level lieutenants, and 1 7th-level priestess)

**Challenge Rating:** ½

**Treasure:** Standard

**Alignment:** Usually lawful good

**Advancement:** By character class

**Level Adjustment:** +1

## Combat

Dover do not favor one hand over another, so in combat they prefer to use two weapons. Dover have an affinity for swords, and most dover warriors fight with two swords, one in each hand. Dover also employ longbows for both hunting and warfare. If disarmed, a dover can deliver a powerful bite to an opponent; its claws, however, do no more damage than that of a human.

Dover prefer to fight in organized open battle and are experts at infantry tactics. Dover battalions are always led by a priestess, who is reputedly inspired directly by Kerala, the dover goddess of war. Dover use terrain to their advantage in battle, taking the higher ground and using cover to force their opponents to fight only their most experienced warriors. Dover typically have their swordsmen man the front lines, while their archers stand at the rear, launching volleys of arrows over the ranks into the depths of the enemy troops. The priestess typically uses her spells to bolster her own troops, rather than to hamper the enemy.

**Skills:** Dover have a +4 racial bonus on all Listen checks due to their sensitive ears.

## Dover as Characters

Dover characters favor ranger over all other classes. Clerics are also common, but are always female, although male dover sometimes take the path of the paladin. The lawful nature of the dover makes them unlikely to choose the druid class, but many dover find the way of the monk fulfilling. Dover rogues are possible, but are always exiles from dover lands, usually for criminal behavior.

# Giant Flea

## Tiny Vermin

**Hit Dice:** 1d8+1 (5 hp)

**Initiative:** +4

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armor Class:** 17 (+2 size, +4 Dex, +1 natural), touch 16, flat-footed 13

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +0/-10 (+2 when attached)

**Attack:** Touch +6 melee (1d2-2 plus blood drain)

**Full Attack:** Touch +6 melee (1d2-2 plus blood drain)

**Space/Reach:** 2-1/2 ft./0 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Attach, blood drain, disease

**Special Qualities:** Crowd, darkvision 60 ft., leap, vermin traits

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 18, Con 12, Int –, Wis 11, Cha 2

**Skills:** Hide +12, Jump +18

**Feats:** Weapon Finesse<sup>B</sup>

**Environment:** Any temperate and warm and underground

**Organization:** Cluster (6-10) or swarm (20-40)

**Challenge Rating:** ½

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 2 HD (Tiny); 3 HD (Small)

**Level Adjustment:** –

Giant fleas are blood-sucking parasites that prey on warm-blooded animals. They have a flattened oval body colored dark brownish-black and strong hind legs with powerful tendons that allow them to leap incredible distances with ease. Its shape makes it easy for a giant flea to move in and among the hairs of large mammals.

Lacking mammals large enough for them to feed on, giant fleas live in swarms of up to twenty individuals. These swarms wander at random, seeking prey large enough to sate their appetites.

Female giant fleas lay a clutch of 2d10 eggs in warm areas (usually nestled in the fur of some giant animal) and leave them to hatch (half of which never do). The larvae hatch in two weeks, and resemble hairy maggots; they are effectively helpless (AC 10, 1 hp). They mature into adult giant fleas in 1d6 months, and leap away to join or form a colony.

A giant flea is about a foot long and weighs around one pound.

## Combat

Giant fleas attack in a swarm, leaping onto the largest obvious food source; they would attack a horse before a human, and a human before a halfling. If attacked, a giant flea jumps away, only to return the next round to continue the attack.

**Attach (Ex):** If a giant flea hits with a touch attack, it uses its many legs to attach itself to the opponent's body. An attached flea is effectively

grappling its foe. The giant flea loses its Dexterity bonus to AC and has an AC of 13. It gains a +12 racial bonus to grapple checks while attached (already figured into the Base Attack/Grapple).

An attached flea can be struck with a weapon or grappled itself. To remove an attached giant flea through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the giant flea.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** A giant flea drains blood, dealing 1d3 points of Constitution damage in any round it begins its turn attached to a victim. Once it has dealt 4 points of Constitution damage, it detaches and leaps away to digest the meal. At Constitution 0 the host dies and the giant flea detaches. If it has yet to deal 4 points of Constitution damage, it seeks a new host.

**Disease (Ex):** About one in twenty giant fleas is a disease carrier. Giant fleas can transmit any non-supernatural disease, though most carry filth fever. The Fortitude save against a giant flea's disease has a DC of 11 and is Constitution-based.

**Crowd (Ex):** Because of their size and tactics, up to four giant fleas can occupy the same 5-foot square.

**Leap (Ex):** Giant fleas are natural jumpers and gain a +20 competence bonus on Jump checks.

**Skills:** Giant fleas can use their Strength or Dexterity modifier on Jump checks, whichever is higher.

# Hexachela

## Small Animal

**Hit Dice:** 1d8 (4 hp)

**Initiative:** +2

**Speed:** 20 ft. (4 squares)

**Armor Class:** 17 (+1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 15

**Base Attack/Grapple:** +0/-3

**Attack:** Claw +2 melee (1d4+1)

**Full Attack:** 2 claws +2 melee (1d4+1) and bite -3 melee (1d3)

**Space/Reach:** 5 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Attach

**Special Qualities:** Low-light vision

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +0

**Abilities:** Str 12, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 11, Cha 6

**Skills:** Climb +3, Jump -4, Spot +1

**Feats:** Endurance

**Environment:** Any mountains

**Organization:** Solitary

**Challenge Rating:** ½

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always neutral

**Advancement:** 2-3 HD (Small)

**Level Adjustment:** –

Hexachelas are hard-shelled crustaceans that thrive in mountainous reaches and attack with hooked claws. Six-legged carnivores that resemble large crabs, hexachelas average 2 feet high, and weigh between 30 and 45 pounds. A hexachela's carapace is burnt-orange, and its six eyes give it wide peripheral vision, but very poor depth perception. Because of this, hexachelas tend to live and hunt in wide-open spaces, where they can easily flee from danger without backing into corners.

Hexachelas primarily feed on small mammals, reptiles, and birds, but they have been known to act as scavengers and even attack their own kind. They are deceptively strong for their size, able to grapple with human-sized prey when necessary for survival.

## Combat

A hexachela attacks with its claws, slashing before grabbing onto its opponent to feed. A hexachela's mouth is relatively small, forcing it to

bite off small chunks of its meal. In short, creatures caught by hexachelas remain alive throughout most of the feeding.

**Attach (Ex):** If a hexachela hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto its opponent's body and automatically deals bite damage each round it remains attached. An attached hexachela loses its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class and thus has an AC of 15. An attached hexachela can be struck with a weapon or grappled. To remove an attached hexachela through grappling, the opponent must achieve a pin against the creature.

## Hexachela Shells

While hexachelas can be eaten (and are even considered a delicacy in places), a hexachela's real value comes from its carapace. The tough shell can be crafted into armor equivalent to a chain shirt, but with an armor check penalty of -3. A hexachela breastplate is worth 80 gp, and has a Craft (armorsmithing) DC of 14. As hexachela shells are simple to convert into armor, many smiths will buy them for 15 gp apiece.