



By Benjamin Shulman
Jelly Bean Soup Games, Copyright 2013
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A blanket is spread out in the grass with a buffet of delicious food. The picnic was going great, until...

In Ants, players are rival species of ants that are battling for dominance. March your ants to picnic food, build your cavernous colony, produce powerful pheromones, fight off ravenous spiders, or just go on a warpath and destroy everything in your wake!

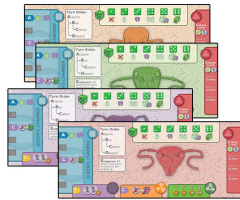
Overview

Ants is a two to four player Euro-style game that takes about an hour and a half to play. Players are ant colonies that use drone and soldier ants to buy and discard various types of cards. These cards can make their colonies more dominant or grant various powers that aid each player in achieving dominance.

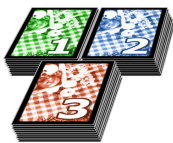
Game Contents:



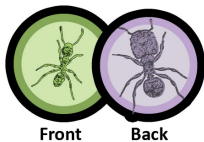
1 Game Board



4 Colony Mats



81 Picnic Cards
(3 Decks of 25 and
6 Rival Colony Cards)



32 Ant Tokens



4 Brood Dice



1 Queen Marker



6 Drone Cost Blockers



4 Scoring Pawns



1 Scorebook

Objective

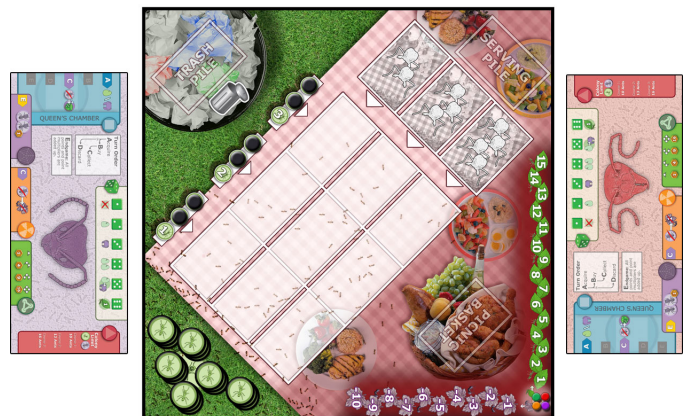
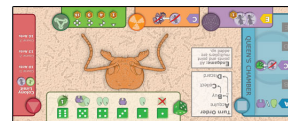
The object of *Ants* is to be the most dominant ant colony over a three-course picnic. “**Dominance**” is the point total added by each player at the end of the game. It is the gold hexagon numbers on each card in the colony plus the number of the scoring pawn on the board’s Brood Track.



I. Setting Up the Game

Place the game board in the center of the players. Each player chooses a species of ant by taking a colored Colony Mat and an equally colored scoring pawn.

Next, place each player’s Colony Mats around the game board, and place the each player’s scoring pawn at “0” in the Brood Point Track in the board’s corner. Place all the ant tokens in the corner of the board noted by the image of and ant token. Finally, place the 6 black Cost Chips on the numbers Drone Cost Column: In the first row on the “2” and “3”, in the second on the “3” and “4”, and in the third on the “4” and “5”.



Making the Picnic Basket

Gather all of the Picnic cards. To build the Picnic Basket, players must do three actions, and a fourth for a two-player game:



1.) Separate into Three Courses

Separate the Picnic cards into 3 decks called "Courses" with numbers printed on the cards' backs. They are:



**Course 1:
Snacks**



**Course 2:
Lunch**



**Course 3:
Dessert**

2.) Comb Cards for Number of Players

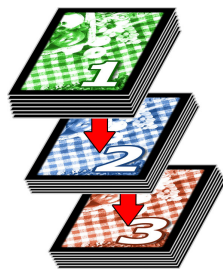
The number of cards that the game uses is based on the number of players, so some cards in the Picnic Basket may be in one game while others are not. On the bottom-left corner of each card's face is small number, "2", "3", or "4." Use only the cards the same number as the number of players or less than the than that. The rest are removed and left in the box. For instance, in a three-player game, the "2" and "3" cards remain in the Course decks but the "4" cards are removed.



After the sorting, each Course should have 13 cards in a two-player game (not counting *Rival Colony Cards*, see below), a three-player game has 19, and a four-player game has 25.

3.) Combining the Course Decks

Shuffle each Course deck and then with all 3 Course decks, layer them together into 1 total Picnic Basket, with Course 3 cards on the bottom, Course 2 cards in the middle, and Course 1 cards on top. Place this total deck onto the Picnic Basket's slot.



4.) Add Rival Colony Cards (For Two Players Only)

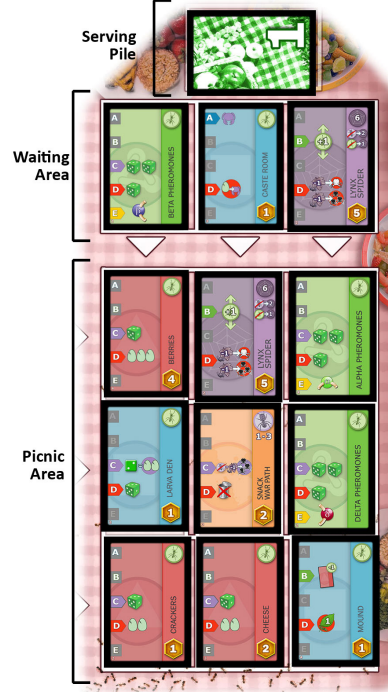
Two additional cards are shuffled into each Course called Rival Colony cards (see *Two Players and the Rival Colony*, pg 7).



II. Serving Course 1's Picnic Cards

The Picnic and Waiting Area

The Picnic area is comprised of 9 slots for served Picnic cards to be bought or discarded by players, and 3 slots above that are the Waiting Area are off limits from buying or discarding.



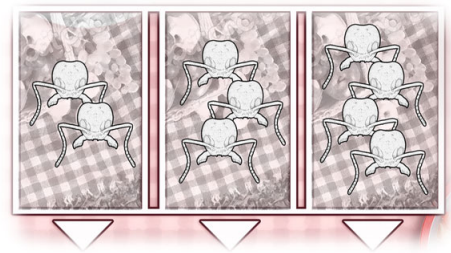
Making the Serving Pile

In the start of the game, remove all Course 1 Picnic cards from the Picnic Basket and place the Course 1 deck in card slot above the Waiting Area. This deck is the Serving Pile. Evenly "serve" these cards face up into slots in

the Picnic Area starting with the spaces furthest away near the Ant Pile (first take into account the number of players, see below). Start by filling the row from left to right, and then move up to the next row. Continue filling all the way up to the slots in the Waiting Area.

Number of Columns for Number of Players

In the Waiting Area slots, there are ant head images that mark the number of players in the game. What ever the number of players in the game, only place cards into that column and any column lower than that. For instance, in a three-player game use only the columns with two and three ant heads, not the four-ant head column.



Serving Rival Colony Cards in Initial Course 1 (For Two Players Only)

If in the initial serving of Course 1 cards a Rival Colony card appears, disregard it and replace it with another card. Shuffle the Rival Colony card back into the Course 1 deck. In Courses 2 and 3, any Rival Colony Cards in the initial serving are allowed.

Anatomy of Picnic Cards

Each card contains these elements:



- Turn Powers on the left side of the card, “A, B, C, and D” display the turn order power that the card gives the player. “E” refers powers granted only during scoring at “Endgame.”

- A cost in the upper-left corner, stating whether players would buy the card with Drones, Soldiers, or a mixture of both.

- Dominance in the bottom-right corner, which players would receive from the card at Endgame.

Types of Cards

The Picnic Cards are separated into 5 types: **Food (Red)**, **Colony (Blue)**, **Pheromone (Green)**, **Spider (Purple)**, and **Warpath (Orange)**.

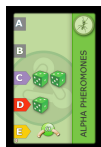


Food Cards – These cards are the “bread and butter” (literally) of the ant colony. They offer various amount Dominance if bought that steadily increases as the game progresses.

These cards have a “Drone Cost” to buy them (see pg. 4); however, with one Brood Die roll they grant players a chance to collect Drones, Soldiers, or Brood Points if bought.



Colony Cards- These cards represent the labyrinthian structures inside of the colony. They have a Drone Cost, and buying these cards long-lasting abilities to players in either the Acquire, Buy, or Collect phases. In Course 3, Colony cards have powerful Endgame powers.



Pheromone Cards- Colonies prosper they produce these powerful chemical compounds. They have a Drone Cost and buying them grants the player 2 Brood Dice to roll! In the Endgame, the number of different Pheromones bought yield increasing amounts of Dominance (see *Pheromone Card Scoring*, pg. 7).



Spider Cards- Every ant’s nightmare, these arachnid abominations will make a feast out of a colony! In the Buy phase for all players, all red, blue, and green cards in the same column as a Spider cost 1 Drone more. They have a “Spider Cost”

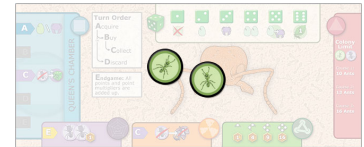
to buy (see pg 4.), and doing so awards a lot of Dominance in for a player.



Warpath Cards- Destroying everything in its wake, the army of marching Soldier is near unstoppable. These cards may only be bought with Soldiers, but maliciously give negative Death Points on the Brood Track to all other players based on the number of Soldiers paid (see *Soldier Cost for Warpath Cards*, pg 6).

III. Starting the game

Each player starts the game with 2 Drones on their mats, which are 2 Ant Tokens flipped to their Drone sides.



It is important throughout the game that players do not flip these tokens to the opposite Soldier side unless their actions in the game allow them to do so. The number of Drones and Soldiers for each player must always be accounted for.

Determining Starting Player

Each player rolls 2 Brood Dice, and the highest roller is the Starting Player. If there are ties between the highest rollers, continue rolling until a victor is determined. Once this is done, the player order is clockwise from the starting player. He gets the Queen Ant Marker.



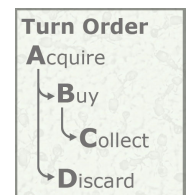
Additional Drone for Last Player

In a three-player or four-player game, the “last” player receives and extra Drone in addition to the two given at the beginning.



IV. Turn Order

A player’s turn is broken into four phases, “A”, “B”, “C”, and “D”:



- **(A) Acquire:** Players can “hatch” **Drones** (add new Ant Tokens to their colony, Drone side up) or “promote” **Soldiers** (flip Drones to the Soldier side).
- Players can then do **one of two things**:
 - **(B) Buy:** Pay Drones or Soldiers (depending on cost) to buy **ONE** card for their colony. As soon as the player buys, he then **(C) Collects:** receive any marked benefit on the card, such as rolling Brood Dice or bonus Colony powers.

- **(D) Discard-** Remove any **ONE** card from the board, put in the Trash pile, AND receive any marked benefit from discarding.

Acquire Phase

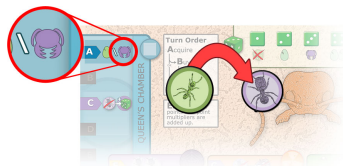
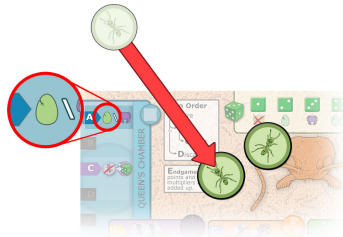
In the first phase of the turn, players may hatch new Drones, promote them into soldiers, or pay Drones or Soldiers to gain points on the Brood Track. Acquire powers are dictated by the types of symbols that a player processes on in "A" section of his Colony cards and on the Queen's Chamber on his Colony Mat.

Queen's Chamber



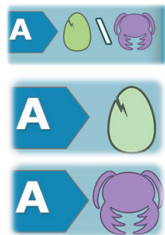
On each player's Colony Mat, there is already one Colony Card on the left side called the Queen's Chamber. This card grants players one Hatch symbol OR one Promote symbol in the Acquire phase, meaning a player may:

- **Hatch a Drone** by adding an Ant Token from the Ant Pile to his Colony Mat, Drone side up.
- **OR Promote a Soldier** by flipping a Drone already on his Colony Mat to its Soldier side.



Additional Hatching and Promoting Powers

Having cards like the Caste Room and the Hatchery can grant a player additional options in hatching Drones and promoting Soldiers during the Acquire phase. For instance, because a player has a Hatch, Promote, and Hatch/Promote symbol in the "A" section of his cards, he may choose to hatch 2 Drones and promote a Soldier, or hatch a Drone and promote 2 Soldiers. However, players are not required to use all of the card symbols in a phase. Players may not save Hatch or Promote symbols for subsequent turns.



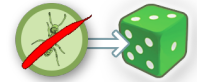
Acquiring Brood Point Powers

Cards like the Scullery and the Royal Chamber grant the power of paying Drones or Soldiers to gain points on the Brood Track. These powers may only be used once per turn in the Acquire phase and may be used after the player has "acquired" new Drones or Soldiers.



Galleria's Brood Die Roll

Once per turn, the Galleria grants its owner the ability to pay one Drone in the Acquire phase to receive one Brood Die roll. The outcome of the roll is given to the player.



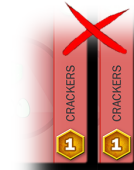
Buy Phase

After a player "acquires," he has the option of paying Drones or Soldiers to buy **ONE** Picnic card from the Picnic Area. Cards in the Waiting Area are off limits from buying. The amount of ants a card costs is dictated by the symbol in the upper-right corner, and to buy the player places the necessary amount of Ant Tokens from his Colony Mat back into the Ant Pile.



No Duplicate Cards may be Bought

Players may not buy a card that they already own in their colony. For instance, a player owning Crackers may not buy another Crackers, nor can players own multiple of the same type of Pheromone.



Drone Costs



Food, Colony, and Pheromones all have Drone Costs, as noted by the Drone symbol in the upper-right corner. The number of Drones required to buy it is determined by the row it is in in the Picnic Area. In Course 1, for instance, any red, blue, and green card in the first row cost 1 Drone, as dictated by the "1 Drone" symbol in the Drone Cost Column on the board.



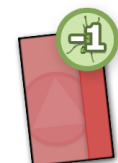
Spiders Can Increase Drone Cost

If there is a Spider Card in the Picnic or Waiting Area then all red, blue, and green that column cost 1 additional Drone. This effect is active only when the Spider Card is on the board, as noted by the "+1 Drone" symbol in its "B" section. If two Spiders are in the same column, only one "+1" power is active. If one of these Spiders are bought or discarded, the other Spider's power would then be activate.



Colony Cards Can Decrease Drone Cost

Owning certain cards like Mounds, Scent Trails, and Catacombs make buying certain Drone Cost cards easier. Based on the symbol present in the "B" section of these cards, Food Cards for a Mound and Pheromone Cards for Scent Trails



cost 1 less Drone. Having Catacombs in your colony negates the “+1 Drone” power of Spider for that player.



Spider Costs

Spider Cards have a cost that can be paid with Soldiers or Drones. In the upper-right corner, they have a spider-web symbol with a number. This represents the Spider Cost, in which Soldiers paid give the player 2 Spider Points and Drones give players 1 Spider Point.

In Course 1, for instance, the "Lynx Spider" has a cost of 6 and can be bought with any combination of Soldiers and Drones: 3 Soldiers, 2 Soldiers and 2 Drones, 1 Soldier and 4 Drones, or just 6 Drones. The Warpath cards are not affected by the Drone Cost on the board or by another Spider card in its own column.

Soldier Cost for Warpath Cards

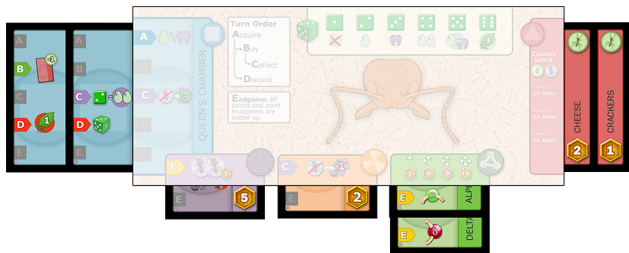


Soldiers are the only ants that can be paid to buy Warpath Cards. The amount of Soldiers that can be paid is dictated by the range of numbers underneath the Soldier symbol in the upper-right corner. For instance, the Snack Warpath requires 1-3

Soldiers to buy, meaning player can pay 1, 2, or 3 Soldiers. The higher the amount of Soldiers paid yields a higher “collection” benefit (see *Warpath Collection*, pg 6). The Spider Card is not affected by the Drone Cost on the board, or by a Spider in its own column.

Adding Bought Cards to the Colony Mat

Once a player has bought a card in the Buy phase the card is slid under his Colony Mat in the matching color area, it is important the main focus of the card is revealed. For Food, Spider, and Warpath Cards, slide the card in enough so that only the number of Dominance for the card is visible. For the Pheromone Cards, show only the image of the pheromone in the “E” section of the card. For Colony Cards, slide under the name and Dominance of the card so that the Turn Powers are visible.



Collect Phase



Only when a player buys certain cards can he “collect” a specific benefit, as noted by the “C” on the card. Some benefits are an

immediate effect for them or on other players and some grant the player a power for the duration of game. After a player “collects,” then his turn is over and the next player’s turn begins.

Food and Pheromone Collection

When a player buys either a Food or Pheromone Card, he immediately rolls Brood Dice. This is noted in the “C” section by the single Brood Die Roll symbol on Food and the double Brood Dice Roll symbol on the Pheromones. Food therefore grants one Brood Die roll and Pheromones grant two as soon as they are bought.

Brood Dice Roll Powers



The number that the player rolls on a Brood Die corresponds to an immediate action he must perform, as noted by the Brood Dice section on the Colony Mat.



If the die rolled is a:

- “1” then nothing happens
- “2” then hatch 1 Drone
- “3” then the player promotes 1 Soldier. The player must perform this action even if he does not wish to. If the player has no Drones to promote then nothing happens.
- “4” then hatch 2 Drones
- “5” then hatch 1 Drone and immediately promote it into a Soldier
- “6” then move the scoring pawn up one space on the Brood Track

Colony Card Collect Powers

When “buying” certain Colony Cards, players do not collect an immediate benefit. Instead, some cards like the Larva Den and the Arena change the outcome of different numbers rolled on Brood Dice for that player. For instance, after buying a Food Card, a player rolls a “2” on a Brood Die. Since he possesses a Larva Den, he hatches 2 Drones instead of normally hatching just 1.




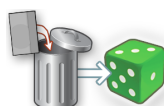


Other Collect Powers:

- **Queen’s Chamber**- Whenever a player is rolling Brood Dice in the Collect phase or Discard phase, he



may pay 1 Soldier to add an additional Brood Die to the roll. This is usable once per turn and only when the player is granted a Brood Die Roll symbol.

- Catacombs-** In the event that a player receives Death Points on the Brood Track, he would immediately hatch 1 Drone for every -2 Death Points. He must, however, receive the Death Points and not negate any of them with Soldiers (see *Negating Death with Soldiers*, below). This power applies to all subsequent turns and is not retroactive.
 
- Nursery-** Like the Queen's Chamber, players can gain an additional Brood Die, but only if they pay 1 Drone. This is also usable once per turn and only when the player is granted a Brood Die Roll symbol. It may be used in addition to the Queen's Chamber collect power.
 
- Royal Chamber-** As soon as the player buys the Royal Chamber and adds it to his colony, he goes into the Trash Pile, picks any red, blue, or green card. He then adds that card to his colony for free. The player does not receive any immediate Collect benefit from this Trash card, but if it is a Colony Card he is granted any "A, B, C, or E" powers in subsequent turns.
 
- Scorched Earth-** Whenever the player discards a card in the Discard phase, he rolls a Brood Die in addition to any discard benefit that he would receive. The player may also use the Queen's Chamber and Nursery powers to pay for additional Brood Dice.
 

Warpath Collection

Upon buying a Warpath Card with Soldiers, every other player receives that many Death Points (negative points on the Brood Track) as the number of Soldiers that the player has paid.



Negating Death with Soldiers

As soon as a player receives Death Points, he may pay 1 Soldier to negate 1 Death Point. Note the Warpath section on the Colony Mat. The player does not have to pay Soldiers for every Death Point received but instead may mitigate the cost with some or no Soldiers. For example, a player receiving -3 Death Points may pay 2 Soldiers and only receive -1. This ability may only be used in the event of



receiving Death Points and may not be retroactively used.

Discard Phase



If a player decides not to buy a card on his turn, he instead may discard any **ONE** card in the Picnic Area. This is a free action and when "discarding," the player removes the card from the Picnic Area and places it in the Trash pile. The cards in the Waiting Area may not be discarded. The player then receives any benefit shown in the "D" section of that card. After the player discards and gets his benefit, his turn is over.



Discarding Food, Colony, and Pheromone Cards

These "drone cards" grant the player various benefits when discarded, such as:

- Hatching Drones
- Hatching and then promoting Soldiers
- Rolling Brood Dice
- Gaining points on the Brood Track
- Dealing Death Points to other players

Discarding Spiders



When a Spider is discarded, the player discarding it and every other player receives Death Points. In the "D" section of the Spider card, the "discarding player" Death Point number is noted by the single, white ant head symbol and the 3 black ant heads are the other players' number. Players may pay Soldiers to negate these Death Points.



Warpaths Cannot be Discarded

Warpaths are the only cards that may not be discarded, as noted by the "ex'ed out" trash symbol in its "D" section.

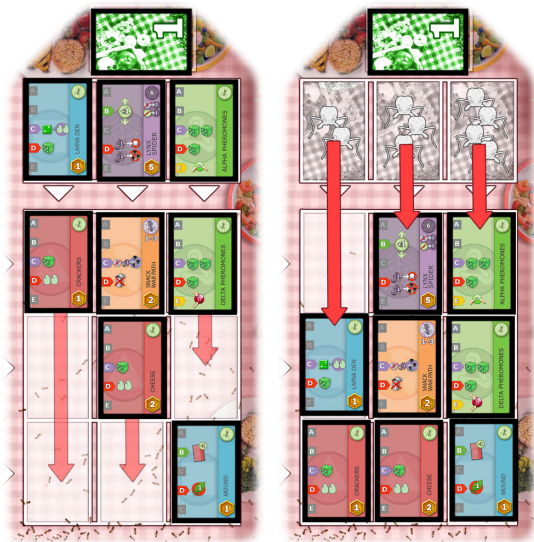
V. Serving New Picnic Cards

Once everyone has taken a turn and it is again the turn of the starting player with the Queen Marker then the round is over. Three steps in changing to the next round must happen:

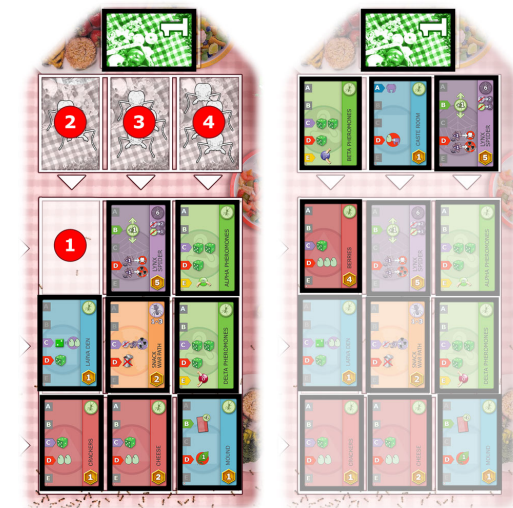
- The Queen Ant Marker** is passed to the next player in the sequential order. He is now the starting player and may go first in the next round.



- 2.) All of the cards in the Picnic and Waiting Areas shift down toward the Ant Pile, filling the spaces of the cards previously bought or discarded.



- 3.) New Picnic Cards are served from the Serving Pile to fill in the open slots in the Picnic and Waiting Areas. The slots closest to the bottom are filled first in order from left to right.



Play then resumes into the next round with the new starting player taking the first turn. At the end of the round (when it is his turn again), he repeats the steps above.

VI. Changing to the Next Course

As the game progresses and all of a Course's cards are served to the point where there are no more cards in the Serving Area, the Course is nearing its end.

The final round is marked when the number of cards in



the Picnic Area is one more than the number of players (in a four-player game It is 5 cards). Then players:

- **Discard the Course's last card.** In a Course's final round, after the last player's turn, the remaining single Picnic Card is sent to the Trash.
- **If the last card is a Spider,** all players receive the "other players'" Death Point number in the "D" section of the card (see *Discarding Spiders*, page 6). All players individually may pay Soldiers to negate these Death Points.
- **If the last card is a Warpath,** do not place it in the Trash pile and instead remove it from the game.
- **Increase Drone Costs with the Course.** Move the Blocker Tokens in each row to cover up the previous costs and show the next higher number in each Drone Cost. For example, after Course 1, move the blocker covering "2" to "1" and keep the blocker covering "3."



- **Serve the Cards for the next Course.** Place all of the next Course's cards into the Serving Pile and proceed to "serve" them.



VII. Two Players and the Rival Colony

In a two-player game, there are no Warpath Cards. Instead there is a rival ant colony that is represented by the Rival Colony cards. These cards give Death Points when they are revealed in the Picnic or Waiting Area. At the end of the round, both players are dealt the amount of Death Points present on the card(s).

However, both players may then negate Death Points with Soldiers if they wish. After the round, the Rival Colony card(s) is then removed from the game and the players continue serving for the next round.



Rival Colony cards cannot be in the Picnic or Waiting Area in the initial Course 1 serving. If one or two cards appear then replace them with another served Course 1 Card, and shuffle the Rival Colony card(s) back into the Serving Deck.

VIII. Endgame



The game ends when the all Course 3 cards are bought or discarded and the last card in the Picnic Area is sent to the trash. Players then begin totaling their

Dominance in the scorebook.

Food, Colony, Spider, and Warpath Cards
are added Dominance values on their cards.



Pheromone Card Scoring

Of the four different types of Pheromones in the game, the number that the player possesses is squared equaling the Dominance. This is shown in the Pheromone section on the Colony Mat.




Colony “Endgame” Scoring



Certain Course 3 Colony cards give bonus Dominance according to what cards are in a player's colony, and are displayed in the "E" section of the cards. Cards like the Galleria, for instance, grant an additional point for every Food card in the colony at the game's end.

Soldier “Endgame” Scoring



 In the Spider section on the Colony Mat, there is an Endgame power that gives a player 1 point for every 2 Soldiers in his colony at game's end. If the player possesses the Arena, he would gain an additional point for every Soldier, instead of the 2 Soldiers offered by the Colony Mat, or both.

Brood Track Scoring

Finally, the number marked by a player's scoring pawn on the Brood Track is added to the score sheet. If a player's pawn is in the negative, he will receive negative points that will ultimately subtract from his total score.



Notes

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