

The hives of the Tlaxti

Those who choose to seek perfection

The Tlaxti are the most favoured of the Gods.

Many queens ago war began. A hive attacked the Illini. The Illini countered. They attacked all hives.

The weakest hive was destroyed first. It was not enough.

More hives were destroyed. It was not enough.

The weak hives grovelled to the Gods for aid. Beseched and pleaded for strength. Strength is given to the strongest.

The strong hives defeated the Illini. The threat was destroyed. Too soon. The weakest hives were not purged.

The weak hives grovelled to the Ant. They beseched Her to douse the fire before they were consumed. The weakest agreed. Like fleshed ones they were hollowed by fear. They sought to stop war.

The strongest hives refused to end the fire. The Tlaxti continue war. The Illini are destroyed, so the strongest hives move against the weakest hives. War continues.

Many become queens and die but the Tlaxti do not change.

The Tlaxti remain true to the teachings of the Ant. The weak are exposed to the fire of purgation. War continues.

The Tlaxti remain true to the teachings of the Serpent. Their enemies are attacked without remorse. War continues.

The Tlaxti remain true to the teachings of the Basilisk. Every tribe strives to grow stronger through conquest. War continues.

The Tlaxti remain true to the teachings of the Jaguar. The strong delight in eviscerating the weak. War continues.

The Tlaxti remain true to the teachings of the Coyote. They grow strong from the hosts ripped from the weak. Balance is preserved. War continues.

Tlaxti attack Tlaxti. Weak hives must be purged.

Tlaxti attack Azarch. Weak hives must be purged.

Tlaxti attack fleshed ones. Weak tribes must be purged.

War continues.

Strong hives grow stronger.

The Lives of the Tlaxti

When the most ambitious and determined of the hives had grown strong enough, they attacked the Illini. The Illini responded by attacking all hives as well as the hives of the fleshed ones. The fleshed ones fled their hives and the weakest hives were destroyed. But after many years the strongest tribes were triumphant and the Illini were forced to flee.

But the Illini were defeated too early, before the war with them could serve its true purpose, to eliminate the weak from amongst the hives. Thus many weak hives survived the vanquishing of the Illini and these hives eagerly clutched at the chance to try to end the war before it could run its true course. Some claimed to be concerned that the fire would eventually purge every hive, but most were simply too scared to accept the judgement of the Gods and submit themselves to the fires of purgation.

A mere handful of hives chose to continue the war; determined to see weakness banished, they worked to expose every hive, every tribe to conflict. Each hive hoped to grow stronger, using the territory and warriors gained from the battles that they won. Thus they served the Basilisk well. That they did the work of the Ant was obvious, weak hives were destroyed as the war continued. They were ruthless as the Serpent demanded. They revelled in the carnage as the Jaguar demanded and, by their nature, they gained new life with every warrior they struck down as the Coyote required.

As the years passed, those hives who had denounced the Gods gained names for themselves. The hives that sought to work with the fleshed ones, creating alliances and friendships, were called the Azarch. The hives that had fled, denouncing violence entirely, were the Solarians. There were others too. Ultimately, none of them are important because some hives stayed loyal to the wishes of the Gods, some hives preserved the vision of a perfect world, one without weakness. These were the Tlaxti, the ones who choose to seek perfection.

In the time of the first queens, every hive was ruled by a queen. But some Tlaxti found this impractical since the queen is too valuable to risk in war, and a strong hive can benefit if it is led by someone who can take command in battle. Consequently, some Tlaxti hives are now led by ambitious and powerful warriors rather than queens.

Rightly are the Tlaxti feared by the weak hives and tribes of fleshed ones, for the Tlaxti war with them. War, the war that began thousands of years ago against the Illini, continues to this day as the Tlaxti seek to eradicate weakness from the hives and tribes of the world.

The Tlaxti are far stronger than the other hives which are small and weak in comparison, but they are few in number. Very few warriors, very few queens, have the strength to urge their hive in ceaseless war. As such, the Tlaxti drive to bring perfection moves slowly, more like the wind eating at exposed stone than a fire raging in a forest.

All the Tlaxti are driven. The war has never ended, it can never end until the world that the Ant demands is delivered. A world in which the weak are no more. A perfect world.

Of course, the Tlaxti do not war all the time; every hive must go through cycles of growth and purgation to ensure that its strength continually replenishes. But it does not matter how often or how long a hive pauses to draw its breath, to replenish its drones, to gather its strength. If the hive is Tlaxti then they choose to seek perfection. War continues.

Recent Developments

The most significant development since the flight of the Illini is the arrival of the colonists. These people have built vast settlements along the coast. Each one is clearly a massive hive of its own, but it is impossible to tell if they really are separate hives or the same hive. They all look the same, but then all fleshed ones look the same and they have different tribes.

The single most important question facing every Tlaxti is whether these colonists are a single hive or many hives. The colonists themselves claim to have no knowledge of each other, no kinship with each other and fight often. This suggests that they are all different hives.

If the colonists are one hive, if they think and react as one, then they would wield strength and power on a scale unimaginable to most hives. Within the space of a few years they have cleared areas of land large enough to support two or three hives, something even the most powerful hive might take the lifetime of two queens to achieve.

The servants of the Ant are watching the colonists to see what must be done with them. If the hives are separate, if each colony can be attacked and defeated individually like fighting one hive then another, then they will be easy pickings for the Tlaxti who will grow yet more powerful with so many hosts for their breeding chambers.

But if the colonists are one hive, if they act in unison, if they unite to fight a hive as some fleshed one tribes do, then their might would dwarf anything that one individual hive might dream of. The implications of the threat posed by the colonists are enormous.

Opinions are split, some servants of the Ant argue that the power that the colonists wield is so great that they may be able to help the Tlaxti achieve what they desire; a perfect world, one where the weak have been eliminated.

Others, especially the servants of the Serpent, argue that the power of the colonists is weak; like a piece of wood before it is chipped, it will break if bent against its grain. They claim that the colonists are not one hive but many, pretending to be one. This pretence makes them weak, and it makes them vulnerable.

The Ant demands that his servants expose weakness to the fire of conflict. The weakness of the colonists is in their differences. If the differences between the colonists' hives can be exacerbated, if the conflict between them can be fanned, then their hive will split from inside and each smaller hive can then be easily destroyed.

The colonists have many strange things; magic, pistols and muskets, wagons of wood which float on water, and other things besides. These things will belong to the Tlaxti when

the colonists are destroyed. Magic has already been stolen from them; other secrets must also be taken.

Ultimately, it does not matter if the colonists are one hive or many. If they are powerful then they will endure. If they prove to be weak then the hives of the Tlaxti will grow new warriors from the hosts of their fallen.

Rules

Reave — If a force includes Tlaxti warriors then you will receive an option to reave an area during downtime. The more Tlaxti warriors and drones in the force, the more effective the reave action will be. Non-Tlaxti forces are unable to contribute to the action even if they are in the force.

A reaving force attempts to maximize the number of hosts obtained by attacking weakly defended areas. If an area is weakly defended then the Tlaxti will fall on it and destroy anyone living there, but the force will abandon the attack and retreat from any strong defenders.

Sacrifice — The Gods have granted the Tlaxti the ability to send a soul to them. If a Tlaxti priest uses the sacrifice skill while ritually murdering his target then the soul will be sent straight to the priest's deity. The Tlaxti know from long experience that the Gods soon grow angry if they are not propitiated with sacrifice.

Hive size — A group of players starting a Tlaxti hive receive land, buildings, and hive members for free, determined by the size of the hive. The hive size is the maximum number of players who have booked to attend a Profound Decisions event with a Tlaxti primary character. You receive all the advantages listed in the table below with all values rounded up.

Hive Advantage	Amount received
Tlaxti warriors	Hive size X 5
Tlaxti drones	Hive size X 10
Breeding chamber and storage chamber	Hive size / 5
Land	Hive size X 100 sq. miles

The storage chambers you receive will begin play full of food. The hive will gain additional warriors, drones, and buildings after any event where the hive size increases. You do not gain additional land if the hive size increases after the first event.

Tlaxti characters may purchase additional slaves and buildings as normal.

Cultural skills — A Tlaxti character that purchases craft building or mastercraft building will receive the ability to craft a range of buildings from the Tlaxti starting buildings listed below. The following skills taken at character creation will result in their Tlaxti equivalent.

Rulebook skill	Tlaxti skill
Craft <i>weapon</i>	Fashion chist weapons
Mastercraft <i>weapon</i>	Fashion improved chist weapons
Work wood	Work chist
Lay-to-rest	Sacrifice

Cultural buildings — The Tlaxti use different buildings to the ones available to the colonists that are listed in the *Character Creation* guide. Any starting Tlaxti that spends points on the building advantage may choose an appropriate building from the list below.

1pt Tlaxti building	2pt Tlaxti building
Breeding chamber	Gold smelting flue
Chist defences	Gold tunnel
Drone observatory	Improved chist defences
Holding pen	Sacrificial temple
Sacrificial altar	Trading pit
Silver tunnel	
Storage chamber	

Breeding Chambers — The basic myrmidon building is the breeding chamber. A breeding chamber holds up to fifty hosts, allowing the queen to produce fifty drones, or warriors if they have sentient hosts, each winter.

Chist Defences — Myrmidons build thick defenses from chist to defend their hives from attack.

Drone Observatory — This is a large column of hardened chist with one or more drones stationed on it to warn of approaching dangers.

Gold Smelting Flue — This structure is a tall chist chimney that allows precious metals to be heated and worked.

Holding Pens — The myrmidon diet depends on a regular intake of fresh meat. Some hives build vast structures of chist where animals are reared and fed. To maximize the amount of food produced, each animal is kept in a pen, a little larger than the size of the beast when fully grown. If a myrmidon character purchases a farm then they will receive a holding pen. It is laborious and difficult to keep sentient hosts in holding pens.

Sacrificial Altar — A sacrificial altar is a large dais or altar constructed of chist and decorated with appropriate symbols. It includes channels to allow the blood of sacrificial victims to run freely and is usually kept near the breeding chambers to allow the body to be put in the breeding chambers later.

Sacrificial Temple — A sacrificial temple is a large chamber constructed of chist that includes a sacrificial altar decorated with appropriate symbols. It is usually built near the breeding chambers to allow the body to be put in the breeding chambers later.

Storage Chamber — This chamber is used for the storage of trading goods and the long term storage of foodstuffs and

other perishable goods. A storage chamber can hold up to 40 tons of food.

Trading Pits — Often some distance from the main hive (although not always), trading pits are holding pens designed to allow swift and easy exchange of livestock. Hives meet at trading pits to exchange hosts and other items.