

Insectum

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Introduction

Welcome to Insectum, the fantasy roleplaying game about Bugs. Actually, Bugpeople.

A Roleplaying Game is a game in which a group of friends (usually 4 or more) gather to play a game where they imagine they're taking on a role, such as that of a great hero, a nefarious villain, or even just an average blue collar worker. Such games can play out on boards of tiles, or just in your own heads, or even be played in forums and chat rooms over the internet.

The games are usually decided by their rules and by rolls of the dice. The dice add a random element to the rules that together comprise the "game" part of roleplaying game. Your success depends on how you roll. While you control your own character's actions and motivation, whether they are successful or not is dependant on luck.

Such games have one player as the Game Master. This player "referees" the game, sets the events and controls the world that the players are interacting with. Without a Game Master to arbitrate disputes, make rulings and control the events and non-player characters, there would be no game for the players to interact with.

So for example, your character is going to a party. You declare that you will enter the room, walking confidently and smiling at anyone passing. Your Game Master describes the room, the people around you, the entertainment, where the drinks and food are (and what they are). You tell him you want a scone and will go pick one up. And so on. Both you and your Game Master should work together to have fun – the Game Master handles what's in the world, and you should focus on what your character is doing in the world and what he or she *wants* to do.

This game provides rules to create a character for play that can fit easily on both sides of an average sheet of paper and uses only six sided dice (raid your Monopoly box for some). You need at least 3 dice, though having 3 dice for each player and for the Game Master would be ideal. The object of the

game is to play a member of a make-believe society of bug-people and engage in fantasy stories short or long, while partaking in adventures, performing stunts and fighting or influencing others.

Bug-People?

This game assumes that the character you're playing is basically a human with some insect traits, rather than an actual insect or an "anthro" insect walking around on two legs.

This is done to simplify the game's rules – while you can probably accept that a human with insect wings and clawed feet can stand on two legs, see like humans do, smell, taste and so forth, it is probably much more of a stretch to believe a bulky rhino beetle can do so, whimsical as that might be. It is also much easier for a Game Master to apply his common sense and logic in a game of humans with bug traits, than it is in a game of talking bugs. Rather than complicating its rules, the game assumes you're playing bug-people. So you're not really playing a butterfly – you're playing a human being with butterfly wings and antennae.

These Bug-People (referred to from here on out as just Insects) wear clothes, have two eyes, stand on two legs, and have mouths, talk, and act like humans would, even living in a fantasy style society. How you visualize your character, however, is up to you, and the society your insects live in is up to your Game Master's story. There is a section below that talks about such concerns, primarily to Game Masters.

Insect Society has many types of Insects and 4 Castes: Warrior, Servitor, Scout, Noble. All insects can be a member of any Caste, with some prerequisites. All Insects have two special powers, pheromones and hormones. These act as the magic of the game. Hormones are focused on helping or healing a creature, and Pheromones harm or influence a creature. Some creatures learn more of these powers, or are focused more on them, depending on their Caste.

Basic Rules

Basic Interaction:

- A roll to interact with the environment or to do something creative with your attributes is called a Skill or a Stunt. Both these terms are interchangeable.
- Declare an action you want to take. For example, you want to weave

through a number of obstacles in your way while flying through a dangerous tunnel. Sometimes, your GM (Game Master) will declare that something happened *to you* and you have to roll *in reaction*.

- Select an attribute of yours that best meshes with what you want to do. Explain why it does ("my character is using Clarity for this stunt because she's focusing and calculating her trajectory"). Your GM can accept your reasoning or have you use a different attribute. Sometimes, if conditions are not in your favor, you may be unable to choose the attribute.

- Roll 3d6. (Three 6-sided dice.) Add your modifier from your Attribute.

- Your GM compares your roll to a target number from a range, chosen by him or her based on the perceived difficult of the stunt you want to do or of whatever you are reacting to:

16+: Very Difficult
13-15: Difficult
8-12: Average
4-7: Easy

- The consequences of your success or failure are then narrated by your Game Master.

Note On Interaction: Depending on how you describe your intentions, explain your choice of attribute, and the current conditions, your GM may assign bonuses or penalties to your attempt. For example, if you are rolling your Presence to try to lie to somebody and your lie is utterly ridiculous and unbelievable by any standard, you will either fail outright or take a massive penalty to your roll – regardless of how good your Presence is or how high you roll.

Basic Combat:

- A roll to hit somebody else with a weapon in combat is called an Attack.

- Declare an attack, usually with a weapon of yours, against an enemy. Each turn in combat, you can always move and take one action you want, and this action can be an attack.

- Roll 3d6. Add your modifiers. (Usually Aggression bonus + Type bonus).

- Compare to the opponent's Dodge. If you are attacking from Range and your opponent has a shield or heavy armor, it can roll +1d6 and add it to its attack.

- If you hit, you will usually deal 1 Hit to your opponent. Around 5-6 hits will take a starting character out of the fight.

Note On Attacks: Depending on how you describe your attack and the current battle conditions, your GM may assign bonuses or penalties to your attack. For example, you might ask to roll Clarity to see an enemy in the dark before attacking – depending on your roll for both your Clarity and your Attack, your GM may choose to assign you a bonus.

Pheromonal Combat:

- A Pheromone is an ability which can debilitate or harm a single opponent.
- Declare a Pheromone you want to impose on an opponent.
- The opponent is then stricken by an initial effect that is unavoidable.
- At the end of each of its turns the opponent rolls Pheromonal Recovery. This is 3d6 + its modifiers (Presence bonus, Type bonus) against a target number depending on Caste.
- If the opponent fails a number of Pheromonal Recoveries described in your Pheromone's text, it suffers the prolonged effect instead of the initial effect.
- If it succeeds that same amount of times instead, it throws off the entire effect.
- It must roll one Pheromonal recovery per effect currently affecting it each turn until it has thrown all of them off or failed all of them.
- If the target fails all of the required rolls, it suffers the prolonged pheromonal effect for a number of scenes equal to your pheromone modifier unless cured.
- If a combat ends and a player is still rolling for those effects, and you've defeated the enemies, your GM can make you stop rolling to save time. You've already won, after all.
- Some Pheromones are Subtle – others can't tell you're using the Pheromone on them right away, and may require numerous cues and hints to be able to tell. They still roll recovery.

Some Pheromones act "Weaponlike". This means that you roll for Strike just like in Basic Combat. However, you add your Pheromone modifiers to this

attack alongside your Strike modifiers before comparing to the opponent's Dodge. Your opponent cannot add the +1d6 against ranged to your Weaponlike pheromones.

Activating Hormones:

- A Hormone is an ability that can bolster or heal an ally (or yourself).
- Choose a Hormone you want to use.
- Select a target. Some Hormones work on yourself, some allow you to select a target. You can select yourself as a target of any Hormone unless it explicitly tells you you can't.
- Hormones give bonuses or benefits. If a hormone lasts for whole combat turns, it lasts extra turns equal to your Hormone modifier.

Greater Roll

- Your GM may decide to rule a roll of 18 as an automatic success, or even greater than that, in some circumstances.

Tokens:

Players have two kinds of tokens (these need not be physical tokens, they can just be points you tally up) that they can use in the game. Plot Tokens and Luck Tokens.

A player can use a plot token once each Story Arc. You do not get a Plot Token right away – you get it when your Game Master decides you've earned it. You can use your Plot Token either to go up in level, or to enact a suitable event, such as discovering a person you've been seeking or purchasing an item at a lower price. You can also use it to get a +1 bonus to all rolls made during the remainder of that Story Arc.

A Game Master can hand out as many plot tokens as he or she wants during a Story Arc, but he or she can set conditions to their use – for example, decreeing that you cannot use it to go up in level or to enact a certain event (such as instantly solving a mystery).

A player has a Luck Token each Day. You are entitled to this token, rather than having to earn it. You can use a Luck Token either to reroll a poor roll or to add a +1 bonus to all your rolls and to your Dodge during a Scene or Combat. You can also use a Luck Token to force an opponent to reroll a successful roll of theirs, and pick whichever of the two rolls is worse.

Storytelling:

Insectum stories are divided into basic units of time – Story Arcs, Days, Scenes.

A scene can be anything from a meeting, to breakfast, to getting fresh air. It is the smallest, most flexible unit of time in the game, and quite open to interpretation. The words "scene" and "combat" are for the most part interchangeable. Combats can end sooner than scenes, since they end when all enemy combatants are defeated, while a Scene is up to your GM's story.

A Day is just that. A 24 hour block of time inside the world of the game. Day and 24 Hours are practically interchangeable terms as well.

A Story Arc is usually a series of days that lead to and resolve a goal. For example, a Story Arc could be "explore the dreaded swamp", "defeat the bandit king" or "get the nobility to agree on a war plan." Story Arcs could end much sooner, but they are typically at least one or two days.

Notes On Dice:

If you have a d20 (20-sided dice) or 2d10 (two 10-sided dice) you can substitute these for 3d6. Without going into heavy math, all of these methods more or less yield the same average results the game uses, but some roll less dice than others. This changes the math a bit though.

Changes: The 1d20 and 2d10 have a higher chance of rolling numbers above or below 10, while 3d6 has a much higher chance of an "average" roll such as 9-11. Unless you change all the numbers, it means the game could be quite mathematically different with a d20 or 2d10 than it is with a 3d6, but the dice don't always act as math suggests, so feel free to try.

The D6 Decision: A d20 or a d10 based game would have probably been cleaner from a design standpoint. However, these dice are specialty RPG dice – the nice thing about the 6-sided dice is that it is very basic dice for pretty much any game, so it is very easy to find some in your own house right now. So this game works around the d6 instead, because those are easier to find.

Character Creation

Insect Types

Here are some of the main types of Insects you can play as as well as their basic statistics.

Strike represents their basic bonus to attacking; Dodge their basic bonus to defending; Hits is their basic combat endurance (if you have 0 hits, you're either dead or unconscious); Pheromone is the bonus to affecting others with Pheromones and for resisting Pheromone attacks; Hormone is a bonus to the effects of your hormones.

Note that all Insects can fly to some extent. Movement is the overall movement of the creature while inside a combat round. Combat rounds can be 10-20 seconds long. Movement is calculated in whatever unit you feel like using; but the base is in feet. To calculate in meters or yards, divide by 3 and round down.

Each particular insect has a Feat, which is a special innate ability. These abilities do not count against the limit of Pheromonal or Hormonal abilities used each Scene or Combat. These are not usages of the actual Pheromones or Hormones – they are abilities that use the same mechanics as those others, and refer to them for simplicity.

- Butterfly
- 21 feet
- Strike +0
- Dodge +1
- Hits +1
- Pheromone +0
- Hormone +1

Feat:

A butterfly has an innate Pheromonal ability. It can calm down a creature and make it unable to do battle for a moment. This works as the "Debilitating Fungus" pheromone.

- Hornet
- 24 feet
- Strike +1
- Dodge +0
- Hits +1
- Pheromone +1 (+0 to Resist)
- Hormone +0

Feat:

A Hornet has an innate Pheromonal ability that can poison an enemy. If it successfully strikes, it leaves a lingering poison on the target. This works as the "Blind Dart" pheromone, but works in Close Combat instead of at range.

- Bee

- 27 feet
- Strike +1
- Dodge +1
- Hits +0
- Pheromone +0
- Hormone +1

Feat:

A bee has an innate Pheromonal ability that can poison an enemy. If it successfully strikes, it leaves a lingering poison on the target. This works as the "Blind Dart" pheromone, but works in Close Combat instead of at range.

- Beetle

- 21 feet (18 in Flight)
- Strike +1
- Dodge +1
- Hits +1
- Pheromone +0
- Hormone +0

Feat:

A beetle has an innate Hormonal ability that increases its defense against Pheromones. It can use "Strongheart" once per combat.

- Roach

- 21 feet
- Strike +0
- Dodge +2
- Hits +2
- Pheromone +0
- Hormone +0

Feat:

A roach has an innate Hormonal ability for survival. It can use "Neverdie" once per combat.

- Mantis

- 21 feet
- Strike +0
- Dodge +1
- Hits +1
- Pheromone +1

-Hormone +0

Feat:

A Mantis has an innate Hormonal ability to attack. It can use "Grand Strike" once per combat.

•Spider

-21 feet (18 feet Flight)

-Strike +1

-Dodge +0

-Hits +1

-Pheromone +1

-Hormone +1

Feat:

A Spider has an innate Pheromonal ability. It can immobilize prey with strands of Pheromonal silk. This works as the "Steal Flight" pheromone once per combat.

•Scorpion

-21 feet (18 feet Flight)

-Strike +0

-Dodge +1

-Hits +1

-Pheromone +1

-Hormone +0

Feat:

A Scorpion has an innate Hormonal ability. It can use "Adrenaline Buzz" once per combat.

•Fly

-24 feet

-Strike +0

-Dodge +2

-Hits +1

-Pheromone +0

-Hormone +1

Feat:

A Fly has an innate Hormonal ability that allows it to maneuver around faster. It can use "Keepaway" once per combat.

•Moth

-21 feet

-Strike +1

-Dodge +0

-Hits +1

-Pheromone +1

-Hormone +0

Feat:

A Moth has an innate Pheromonal ability that can put an enemy to sleep. It can use "Drowsiness" once per combat.

Attributes

Insects have a set of 5 important attributes to their lives which range from 1 through 6. You can generate these attributes by rolling 8d6 and selecting six numbers from there to put into your attributes, or by starting all attributes at 1 and spending 10 points among them.

This could yield a balanced character (3, 3, 3, 3, 3), or a character skewed towards some things more than others (5, 4, 4, 1, 1) or a character with one great weakness but good overall ability (4, 4, 3, 3, 1). Or even a character weak overall but with one great ability (6, 4, 3, 1, 1). 12 or 13 points to spend can make for higher-powered characters.

Characters can be made with attributes distributed in any way the player wishes, but some might bring story questions to mind. For example, a Hornet with a very low aggression is strange, but with roleplay, can be explained. Perhaps the hornet was poisoned or sickened, or something happened during its childhood.

All Attributes have two uses. First, they add extra bonuses to certain things. Each of them adds such a bonus to something. Secondly and most importantly, when rolling against a challenge or performing a stunt, you roll 3d6 and add a bonus or penalty based on your attribute:

1-2: -1

3: +0

4-5: +1

6: +2

Aggression: Some insects are more docile and kind, while others are more powerful and aggressive. Aggression is not necessarily how large or how imposing a creature is, but is instead its overall efficacy in physical activity. Aggression-based stunts and skills are usually daring feats of athleticism or strength.

Aggression adds a bonus or penalty to your Strike rolls with weapons or weapon-like attack effects depending on your score.

1-2: -1 Strike

3: +0 Strike

5-4: +1 Strike
6: +2 Strike

Endurance: For most insects, Health is not much the question as it is Endurance. Insects can endure many blows and last long even through great agony. Endurance stunts and skills are about survival and tolerance, usually against ill effects.

An Insect's Endurance adds bonus Hits to its Hit Count or slightly lessens the amount of Hits they have.

1-2: -1 Hit
3: +0 Hit
4-5: +1 Hit
6: +2 Hit

Agility: Not all insects are fast, but some have good reflexes and others are just built altogether better for escaping attack or controlling movement. Agility stunts and skills are about speed, reflexes and control. While an Aggressive creature can jump higher, you can jump quieter and have more control over your landing.

Agility is added to an Insect's Dodge against weapons or weapon-like attack effects.

1-2: -1 Dodge
3: +0 Dodge
4-5: +1 Dodge
6: +2 Dodge

Presence: Some insects are beautiful to behold, while others are imposing and frightening. The exact appearance does not matter, but these insects have Presence. They can influence people, positively or negatively, but they can. Presence stunts and skills are about intimidation, persuasion or seduction, or calmness and throwing off other's perception.

Presence gives bonuses or penalties to Pheromonal Effects.

1-2: -1 Pheromone Penalty
3: +0 Pheromone Bonus
4-5: +1 Pheromone Bonus
6: +2 Pheromone Bonus

Clarity: Some insects are very dumb or distracted while others are smarter or more focused. This is based on their clarity – some insect's minds are too

burdened by lower instincts to function well. Clarity stunts and skills are about intelligence and reasoning, perception, deciphering information or investigating clues.

Clarity gives bonuses or penalties to Hormonal Effects.

1-2: -1 Hormone Penalty
3: +0 Hormone Bonus
4-5: +1 Hormone Bonus
6: +2 Hormone Bonus

Castes

All Insects have a Caste, which decides how many pheromonal and Hormonal abilities they know as well as deciding how they advance in Strike, Dodge, Hits, Hormones and Pheromones. Their castes also suggest a position in society, but not always. A servant could be serving in a noble house and thus have protection and status, while a Soldier could have defected from another colony or escaped its duties and works as a mercenary – or could have been laid off due to injury. A noble needn't be a pampered creature in a palace. It could be an Insect with powerful pheromonal ability that was thought dead after a coup or attack on a noble house, and grew up as a normal Insect not knowing its true origin.

Simply put, all Castes can be explained and played around with.

A character's Caste has levels. You can gain levels by spending Plot Tokens with your GM's permission. Each class also has certain small benefits over other classes at certain levels. At 9th level, a feature is added that can explain the future of that character (or help the plot of that final story arc). The game does not advance beyond 9th level – you can begin anew as your character's children, or family members, apprentices or wards. Thus, speeding to 9th level might not be a wise course of action as it will reduce the length of the game.

You can use each of your Hormones or Pheromones once, and only up to a maximum shown on the table. For example, you can't use Neverdie twice even if you have 2 Hormones per combat. You can, however, use Neverdie once and Armor Skin once.

Soldier

Prerequisite: 4 Aggression

Level	Strike	Dodge	Hits	Horm. Known	Horm. Per Combat	Ph. Known	Ph. Per Combat	Ph. Recovery
1	+1	10	3	1	1	1	1	13
2	+2	11	3	1	1	1	1	13
3	+3	12	3	2	1	1	1	13
4	+4	13	4	2	2	2	2	12
5	+5	13	4	3	2	2	2	12
6	+6	14	4	3	2	2	2	12
7	+7	15	5	4	3	3	3	11
8	+8	16	5	4	3	3	3	11
9	+9	16	5	4	3	3	3	11

Features:

1st level: +1 bonus to rolls made to perform feats of strength and athleticism.

6th level: +1 bonus to Strike Rolls while under a Pheromonal effect.

9th level: The 1st level bonus improves to +2. You become a general in an army.

Hormone List:

- Adrenaline Buzz
- Strongheart
- Neverdie
- Grand Strike
- Greatspeed
- Armor Skin
- Steel Wings
- Vorpall Blade

Pheromone List:

- Steal Flight
- Confuse Shot
- Dragspore
- Debilitating Fungus

- Fire Flower
- Paperskin

Servant

Prerequisite: 4 Clarity

Level	Strike	Dodge	Hits	Horm. Known	Horm. Per Combat	Ph. Known	Ph. Per Combat	Ph. Recovery
1	+0	10	2	3	3	1	1	12
2	+1	11	2	3	3	1	1	12
3	+2	12	3	4	3	1	1	12
4	+3	13	3	4	4	1	1	11
5	+3	13	3	5	4	2	2	11
6	+4	14	4	5	4	2	2	10
7	+5	15	4	6	5	2	2	10
8	+6	16	4	6	5	2	2	10
9	+6	16	5	7	5	3	3	9

Features:

1st Level: Your hormones that last rounds, last 1 round longer than they normally would.

3rd Level: +1 bonus to rolls using Endurance or Clarity.

9th level: 3rd level bonus improves to +2. You become the Head of Household for a Noble, Manager of a labor group, or become an advisor to a dignified and important person.

Hormone List:

- Can pick any hormone.

Pheromone List:

- Steal Flight
- Confuse Shot
- Dragspore
- Debilitating Fungus
- Fire Flower
- Paperskin

- Frostbite
- Alluring Sight

Scout

Prerequisite: 4 Agility

Level	Strike	Dodge	Hits	Horm. Known	Horm. Per Combat	Ph. Known	Ph. Per Combat	Ph. Recovery
1	+0	12	2	1	1	1	1	12
2	+1	13	2	1	1	1	1	12
3	+2	14	3	1	1	2	1	12
4	+3	15	3	2	2	2	2	12
5	+3	16	4	2	2	3	2	11
6	+4	17	4	2	2	3	2	11
7	+5	18	4	3	3	4	3	11
8	+6	19	5	3	3	4	3	11
9	+6	20	5	3	3	4	3	10

Features:

1st level: You gain a +1 bonus to rolls made to hide from foes, and to spot or track others.

3rd level: You gain a +2 bonus to strike rolls in range vs creatures with heavy armor or shields.

9th level: Your 1st level bonus improves to +2. You become leader of an elite squad of Scouts.

Hormone List:

- Adrenaline Buzz
- Strongheart
- Keepaway
- Subterfuge
- Greatspeed
- Strongparry
- Steel Wings
- Lightarrow
- Greateye

- Pheromone Cure

Pheromone List:

- Steal Flight
- Alluring Sight
- Blind Dart
- Debilitating Fungus
- Fire Flower
- Paperskin

Noble

Prerequisite: 5 Presence

Level	Strike	Dodge	Hits	Horm. Known	Horm. Per Combat	Ph. Known	Ph. Per Combat	Ph. Recovery
1	+0	11	3	1	1	3	3	12
2	+1	11	3	1	1	3	3	12
3	+2	12	3	1	1	4	4	11
4	+3	13	3	2	1	4	4	11
5	+3	13	4	2	2	5	5	11
6	+4	14	4	2	2	5	5	10
7	+5	15	4	3	2	6	6	10
8	+6	16	4	3	2	6	6	10
9	+6	16	5	3	3	7	7	9

Features:

1st Level: Creatures take a -1 penalty to Pheromonal Recovery rolls against your Pheromones.

3rd level: +1 bonus to rolls using Presence or Agility.

9th level: 3rd level bonus improves to +2. You become a high noble or perhaps even King or Queen of your homeland (or of a land).

Hormone List:

- Adrenaline Buzz
- Strongheart

- Keepaway
- Soothe Wounds
- Greatspeed
- Neverdie
- Steel Wings
- Grand Strike
- Greateye
- Pheromone Cure

Pheromone List:

- Can pick any Pheromone.

Pheromones And Hormones

Here are all 15 Pheromones and 15 Hormones known and usable, along with their effects. Pheromones and Hormones are drawn from an Insect's body (or flared from it) and depend upon their inherent Caste to function. As such, all Insects of different Castes have different, set lists of Pheromones and Hormones they can learn to use, and some are beyond their reach.

It is possible to interpret these effects based on stunts and skills used with them – for example, a Fire Flower pheromone being used to burn down a wooden door during a scene, though that would probably take some more time (and be more dangerous) than kicking down said door. Or you could use an Armor Chitin Pheromone and say that the increased armor can help you in breaking down the door physically. Just because it pertains to a combat statistic does not mean it cannot be used creatively. As well, some Pheromones or Hormones may be more effective on certain targets – such as Drowsiness on a target already sleepy or used very late at night – depending on other circumstances.

Hormones and Pheromones that require no action can be "chained" – you can stack as many as you can use per encounter on a single attack. This is generally unwise but can be done if you so choose to do it. Hormones and Pheromones can be used outside your own turn, if they require no action, but you can't "chain" reactions. The "Close" range for a Hormone or Pheromone is 3-9 feet instead of 3-5 feet as it is for a Strike.

The specific effect of a Hormone or Pheromone cannot be discerned just by eye, but you are aware if somebody is using one, and you can deduce what they've done from their new capabilities (usually by a no-action roll). Hormones and Pheromones have tell-tale signs of use – veins throb visibly, skin might change color or even texture, eyes might flare, scents in the

surroundings may change, or more obvious effects such as fire coming out or temperature changes, depending on the specific ability.

Subtle Pheromones and Hormones show no such displays.

Hormones

- Grand Strike

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use During: During Strike, single-round aftereffect
- Grants a +3 bonus to that Strike and a +1 bonus to Strikes next turn.

- Adrenaline Buzz

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: No action, rounds based.
- +1 bonus to Strike and physical skills for 1 + Hormone modifier rounds.

- Strongheart

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: No action, rounds based
- You ignore the initial effects of a single pheromone and do not have to roll Pheromonal Recovery for it for 1 + Hormone modifier rounds. You can gain a bonus to resist true poisons.

- Keepaway

- Target: You Or Ally close
- Use: No Action
- You gain a sudden burst of speed, and can instantly break-away from a target that moved to attack you in close range; or you can move 9 feet with no action during your own turn instead.

- Soothe Wounds

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: Action
- Recovers 1 hit from an ally, 2 hits if you have a positive Hormone modifier.

- Neverdie

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: No Action when stricken
- If the strike would reduce you to 0 hits, you are left with 1 hit remaining. If you have more than one hit remaining, you can ignore the hit received instead until the end of the combat.

- Steel Wings

- Target: You

- Use: No action when stricken, single-round aftereffect
- You gain a +3 bonus to Dodge against that Strike, and a +1 bonus to Dodge next round.

- Armor Chitin

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: No action, rounds based
- Grants a +1 bonus to Dodge for 1 + Hormone modifier rounds.

- Pheromone Cure

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: Action
- End the entire effect of a pheromone on the target, or two if you have a Clarity 5 or higher.

- Greatspeed

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: No Action, rounds based
- Grants a +9 bonus to Speed for 1 + Hormone modifier rounds.

- Greateye

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: No Action, Scene, Subtle
- Grants the ability to see in darkness for the duration of combat or scene.

- Strongparry

- Target: You or Ally close
- Use: During Close Combat Strike Against Target
- Grants a +1 bonus to Dodge against that Strike. If the target manages to dodge the Strike, then the attacker suffers 1 hit.

- Lightarrow

- Target: You
- Use: During Ranged Strike, No Chain, Single-Round Aftereffect, Subtle
- Grants a +1 bonus to Strike with that Ranged attack and if attacking heavy armored foe or one wielding a shield, it adds only half the 1d6 roll bonus against ranged attacks against you. The second effect lasts until the end of the next turn.

- Vorpall Blade

- Target: You
- Use: Before Knowing Outcome of Close Strike, No Chain, Subtle
- The attack, if successful, deals 2 hits instead of 1.

- Subterfuge

- Target: You
- Use: No Action, Subtle, rounds base
- You become invisible to the eyes for 1 + Hormone modifier rounds. You can still give yourself away if you attack obviously, depending on circumstances (if it rains or you're covered in mud after you use this), or be found by a smart opponent.

Pheromones

•Steal Flight

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: Action
- Initial: Target moves at half speed.
- Recoveries: 3
- Prolonged: Target is immobilized.

•Alluring Sight

- Target: Enemy close
- Use: No Action, Subtle, Scene-Long
- Initial: The target has a -2 penalty to checks made to resist your attempts to persuade him by beauty, eloquence or sex appeal for the duration of the Scene.
- Recoveries: 3
- Prolonged: The target falls entirely in love with you, and will do practically anything you ask for the prolonged duration. You must still roll to persuade the target (based on beauty, eloquence or sex appeal as before) and particularly ludicrous requests can still fail, but it views things much more favorably than normal.

•Blind Dart

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: Action
- Initial: Enemy has trouble seeing, and takes a -2 penalty to strike rolls unless it succeeds on a clarity stunt alongside them.
- Recoveries: 3
- Prolonged: Enemy becomes blinded.

•Debilitating Fungus

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: No action
- Initial: -1 penalty to Strike Rolls
- Recoveries: 3
- Prolonged: -3 penalty to all rolls, target moves at half speed and takes a hit each scene.

- Fire Flower

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: Action, Weaponlike (3d6 + Strike Bonuses + Presence modifier).
- Initial: Enemy takes 1 hit.
- Recoveries: 2
- Prolonged: Enemy takes 1 hit.

- Frostbite

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: Action
- Initial: Enemy takes a -1 penalty to Strike and Dodge.
- Recoveries: 2
- Prolonged: Enemy takes 1 hit, retains the penalty, and must keep rolling Pheromonal Recovery against this ability until it succeeds, taking 1 hit per 2 failures.

- Paperskin

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: No Action
- Initial: Enemy takes a -1 penalty to Dodge.
- Recoveries: 2
- Prolonged: Enemy takes a -2 penalty to Dodge.

- Confuse Shot

- Target: None (See below)
- Use: No action when stricken with ranged attack, Subtle
- Effect: You can divert the ranged attack to any one creature you can see. If the strike roll against you is good enough to strike this other creature, it strikes it and scores a hit as normal.

- Dragspore

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: Action
- Effect: You force the target to move up to 15 feet in any direction of your choice.

- Loveliness

- Target: Enemy in range
- Use: No Action, Subtle
- Initial: You have a +1 bonus to rolls to Persuade the target with beauty, eloquence or sex appeal.
- Recoveries: 2
- Prolonged: You have a +3 bonus to rolls to Persuade the target with beauty, eloquence or sex appeal.
- Special: If the target makes all recoveries, you still have the initial bonus

against it for the duration of the story arc.

- Mind Altering

- Target: Enemy in range

- Use: Action

- Initial: None

- Recoveries: 3

- Prolonged: The enemy obeys your every command for the prolonged duration.

- Many Of Me

- Target: Enemy in range

- Use: No Action

- Initial: The enemy sees you as displaced, and has a -2 penalty to strike rolls against you.

- Recoveries: 2

- Prolonged: The enemy sees three of you, and has a -2 penalty to strike rolls against you. The first two times it successfully strikes you after this effect, it does not score Hits.

- Acid Air

- Target: Enemy in range

- Use: Weaponlike

- Initial: Target takes 1 hit.

- Recoveries: 4

- Prolonged: The target is stunned.

- Drowsiness

- Target: Enemy in range.

- Use: No Action

- Initial: The target takes a -1 penalty to dodge and moves at half speed.

- Recoveries: 4

- Prolonged: The target falls asleep (is helpless).

Combat And Damage

Combat in Insectum is supposed to be a simple, fast and fun affair involving both creative usage of stunts and predefined abilities to fall back on if creativity isn't working out (or that can be used to bolster your creative efforts). Game Masters have a lot of power in deciding the outcomes of Combats, power they should not abuse nor summon casually.

Combat begins when an enemy is in sight and can be combated. Some

things might seem like a combat – being shot by a sniper for example – but they are actually still In-Scene. It is difficult and time-consuming for a character to fight an enemy that is very far away or that has not revealed itself within the confines of combat, because characters are stuck moving in turns or moving set amount of distances per set amount of seconds. So until the enemy can be engaged – it is sight and the character could conceivably attack it – combat is not declared.

When combat is declared, all characters roll 3d6 + Agility or Clarity (whichever is highest). They compare their results and set up an initiative order to keep things from being too messy. Keep in mind that these things are happening more or less concurrently from a story perspective – each 20-30 second combat round is not composed of characters taking turns to attack each other. This is merely a convenient mechanic for arranging the fight.

A Round is over when all characters have taken their turns within it. Then the next Round starts. A Turn is an individual's place within the larger Round.

Within their turns, characters can take an action – this is anything that requires a roll, or effects that explicitly talk about taking up an action. For example, quickly rummaging through your stuff is not an action, neither is talking. Such minor things, within reasonable boundary, can be done without actions. However, attacking, using pheromones and certain hormones, or pulling off a Stunt or Skill (an Interaction requiring a 3d6 roll), requires an action.

All characters can move on their turn, up to their speed. This does not take an action, but the character can move again at half speed using an action.

However, a character in Close Combat (combat within 3 feet of an enemy) cannot just move away from its enemy. It must Break-Away – this is a movement that can be no more than half speed (round down). If it tries to move away from Close Combat at full speed, the opponent can get a Strike Roll against the character at a +3 bonus that can either score a Hit, or interrupt the movement and keep the character from breaking off (attacker's choice).

Characters have Hits. Each attack will take a Hit off a character. A hit is not an accurate measure of damage, it is an abstraction. A hit can be anything dramatically appropriate, from a scratch in the face, to a stab in the shoulder, to a sword through the heart (if you are killed then). A character recovers 1 hit each scene without additional help, and can recover two hits in one scene with successful Endurance usage. This does not mean that the

character's wounds are sealing up on their own – just that in spite of them the character can still go on. However, the Game Master can suspend this regeneration if very serious injury is described. For example, a character could need to spend a few days or a story arc recovering from broken limbs.

This can be good to slow down a game that has too much combat for your taste and add some roleplaying situations, but it has to be done carefully considering the kind of game players want. Also, some hormones can recover hits, but the Game Master can suspend this again. Hormones are not meant to recover every single condition that can be incurred by characters, only abstract units of combat damage. So a broken limb may not be recovered easily.

Combat Ranges

- Close: A character is within 3-5 feet of another character. Characters need to Break-Away in order to escape from close combat safely.
- Range: Characters can see the enemy but are not in close combat with it. Ranges from 6 feet to 40-50 feet depending on visibility and other factors.
- Sniping: Sniping range is adjudicated by the GM. You are not considered to be in combat with a character you are sniping, but you may be able to kill it outright if everything goes your way. To Snipe, you must be hidden and in range, preferably more than 50 feet away, but still able to see and attack your target. Clarity, Agility and Aggression play a key part in sniping. Pheromones cannot be used to Snipe, only weapons.

Special Circumstances

- The GM determines if players are allowed a free turn or attack due to surprising the enemy. Sometimes he or she might decide this by having the players roll some skills or stunts.
- Characters who go first in the combat (they get to act against characters that have not yet acted at least once in that combat) have a +1 bonus to Strike and Dodge against characters that got a lower initiative and didn't get to act yet until the next round.
- Sometimes a non-player character may be in a situation where he or she will probably die outright. A player may have snuck up on it and grappled it with a dagger to the throat, or have it helpless on the ground and with weapons pointed at its head. In such instances, the GM can let the players kill the character outright without rolling a strike or counting hits, unless you have a plot solution in mind to save the character, such as diplomacy or

strange circumstance.

- If two players are teaming up to attack one target in Close combat, or if they are both harrying a target in Ranged combat, they get a +1 or +2 bonus to their Strike rolls. A Player that manages to get behind or maneuver around an enemy may also get a bonus.
- If a character is knocked to the ground, it becomes easier to attack in close combat and harder to attack from range. Getting up, if in close combat, might be tricky for it. As well, disarming a character or attacking to break its weapons or armor is possible.
- Good hiding skills (usually Agility) or an ability to cloud vision or obsfuscate the self can lead to fighting invisibly. An Invisible Opponent is in combat with you (it is nearby and not sniping). You take a -3 penalty to attacking such an opponent, and a -1 penalty to Pheromonal Recovery, since it is quite demoralizing to not know the source of such attacks.
- A character blocks an area about 3-5 feet around itself. In order to maneuver around a character to attack another character it is trying to protect or block you from, you need to use your full speed to move around it – thus, you cannot break away from one character to attack somebody it is intending to guard, unless you are attacking in range.
- You can choose not to kill a character, when delivering the attack that could take that character's last Hit. In a friendly spar, you can also choose not to deal Hits to each other even if you strike successfully.
- You can fight with two weapons. However, your off-hand weapon must be a Small weapon. You gain a +1 bonus to Strike rolls if you wield two weapons, but this prevents you from using Pheromones or wielding a Shield to protect yourself from Ranged attacks. You normally cannot attack with both weapons in succession. You still score only one hit.

Special Conditions

- Being immobilized means you can't move of your own will, but you can still attack or take other actions from your position.
- Being stunned means you can't move or attack, but you're not helpless as you're still conscious of what is going on around you.
- Being asleep, unconscious, tied up, or other circumstances at the GM's discretion can make you helpless. You can't attack or move if you are

helpless, and you are also unable to defend yourself. Strikes against a helpless character always succeed.

Equipment

The most common pieces of equipment are some form of armor or a shield, and a weapon. Other equipment is available, such as ropes, hooks, tools, which give at best a +1 bonus or reduce the difficulty chance of certain actions.

Weapons all deal 1 hit if they strike. The main difference between them are what other factors they bring to help you in battle. To start with, using any weapon gives you a +1 bonus to Strike rolls. Different weapons add another bonus in certain circumstances.

- Slashing Weapons have a +1 bonus to Strike rolls against Light Armored foes.
- Bludgeoning Weapons have a +1 bonus to Strike rolls against Heavy Armored foes.
- Polearms have a close range of 6-8 feet for the attacker. They are also treated as Shields.
- Ranged Weapons have a +1 bonus to Strike rolls if the target is 30 feet away or more.
- Darts, Spears, Javelins have a +1 bonus to Strike Rolls if thrown at under 30 feet distance.

There are also 3 kinds of weapons:

- Large Weapons must be held in two hands, so you cannot use a small off-hand weapon or a shield. Polearms the only common Large weapon.
- Medium weapons can be held in one hand. Most weapons are medium.
- A Small Weapon is a close combat weapon that can be held off-hand when fighting with two weapons. This precludes the use of a shield.

Armor all grant +1 Dodge. The main difference between them is that Light Armor facilitates movement, and Heavy Armor has a bonus against Ranged strike rolls.

- Light Armor has no penalties to movement.
- Heavy Armor can make maneuvering and physical skills and stunts more difficult. However, it adds a +1d6 bonus (rolled before the Strike either by the GM in secret if the player is being sniped, or by the player if in Combat) to Dodge against ranged attacks.

A shield adds the bonus against Ranged Attacks to Light Armored characters, but also makes movement somewhat slightly awkward (a -1 or -2 penalty) and precludes the use of your other hand, which is holding the shield.

Equipment of shoddy quality can be break or be broken in certain circumstances. This is up to the GM and the rolls involved, and is unlikely to happen to Equipment of good quality.

Treasure and Pherochemy

The players (and certainly their characters) like a little material wealth every now and then. Success rewards them with luxuries that can make your character's wildest dreams and fantasies become reality – or that might attract negative attention.

The wealth you acquire cannot, in itself, guarantee success, nor does it instantly cause you to gain levels in your Caste or gain bonuses to attributes or combat statistics. Rather, it is like monopoly money, and is simply acquired for fun and to trade for imaginary goods.

Characters trade in shells, small coins the rough shape of the back of an insect, complete with elytra (wing-covers). There are 3 kinds of shells – Tin Shells are the lowest unit of currency, then come the very common Silver Shells, which are 10 tin shells, and then Gold Shells, which are worth 10 Silver Shells or 100 Tin Shells. Most items will trade in Tin or Silver shells unless it's something extremely luxurious, and therefore most services will too.

Character wealth can buy them a better meal, a better home, luxuries such as wonderful clothing, decadent jewelry, beautiful mates and servants, mercenaries for hire or better transportation, or be used for bribes or deals.

How much characters are paid and what they can buy is up to the Game Master and the Players. Here is a very, very simplified list of things that could conceivably be bought and sold, in three categories of value: Common, Exotic, Luxurious. It is not meant to be completely accurate, but instead an inspiration for your own tables.

Good or Service	Common	Exotic	Luxurious
Common Weapon	3-5 TS	8-10 SS	5 GS
Alcohol	1-5 TS	12 SS	4 GS
Accessories	4-6 TS	7-8 SS	6 GS

Clothing	1 TS	2 SS	2 GS
Company (Per Night)	4-5 TS	4 SS	5 GS
Mercenaries	15 TS	5 SS	-
Property	300 TS	200 SS	100 GS
Health Care	9 TS	17 SS	7 GS
Custom Weapon/ Armor	6-8 TS	16-20 SS	10 GS
Training/ Apprenticeship	25 TS	20 SS	-
Temporary Residence	3 TS	10 SS	-
Food (Whole Meal)	1-2 TS (5 TS)	4-5 SS (6 SS)	1 GS (3 GS)
Domestic Servants	12 TS	4 SS	2 GS
Transportation	25 TS	20 SS	15 GS

Pherochemistry

Pherochemistry is the act drawing out the pheromones and hormones from your body, either in a liquid form to put in a Pherochemic Vial, or to imbue an object with it. Such objects are called Pherochemistry Relics and they are extraordinarily difficult to make and even more so to purchase. Often they can only be stolen from others or found in ruins, forgotten places, or in the most secret of secret markets. It can take months to make a Relic and the process is imperfect, so relics that are actually complete and functional are almost priceless and worth many favors. Such relics can have varied, rather magical effects with nary an explanation, or may simply mimic Pheromone and Hormone effects. It tends to vary.

Pherochemic Vials are much, much more common. It only takes a few hours of drawing out hormones or pheromones, followed (hopefully) by rest, as the character would be very tired from what he or she is doing to his or her body to create the vial. Thus only a few vials can be made by a person each day. For Scouts and Soldiers, who have less hormonal or pheromonic ability than Servants or Nobles, the process is almost agonizing and may require even more day's worth of rest, as such they never do so unless there's no other option.

A Pherochemic Vial is a one-use portion of the hormone or pheromone. It can be used only during your own turn, cannot be chained, but otherwise

uses the same action and has the same effect as the Hormone or pheromone were being used by you. You can only use Hormones or Pheromones you could normally use (the ones on your list) – doing otherwise could grievously harm you. These tend to cost anywhere between 5 silver to 2 gold depending on who's selling.

There is no real market for them, only a lot of bargaining and haggling, but they are nonetheless very common. Some unscrupulous people may give away these vials hoping their power will tempt weaker individuals to reckless or evil actions, or Benefactors may give some vials for free along with other equipment to people they are sending on labors. It is usually taboo to give away vials for very cheap, and the hormones or pheromones of a very weak creature are thought of as worthless.

A rarer and illegal use of Pherochemistry is the manufacturing of True Poisons. Doing so requires some specific understanding which is only taught in rare, closed circles. A True Poison is a Pheromonal attack that harries a character each scene in a day. Each scene, the character rolls and records the result of a Pheromonal Recovery. If the character fails half of its Pheromonal Recoveries against a True Poison (which ignore your Caste Pheromonal Recovery and are permanently set, usually at 12 or 13) during the first day (or 24 hour period) after it was exposed, it will incur a lasting malignant effect. True poisons can sicken or kill characters and are difficult to cure. An Insect cannot manufacture many true poisons, because doing so is one of the most agonizing things that an Insect can put itself through, no matter how adept it is.

Setting And Antagonists

Insectum is a fantasy roleplaying game. It is made with swords, magic and classic-style fantasy in mind. As such, settings and monsters from games like Dungeons and Dragons could easily work, but you might want to add some whimsical twists for fun. For example, since characters are Bug People, they might live in villages or kingdoms built in gigantic trees or plants. They might have normal (non-people) giant insects as pets or transportation. Mammals would be scarce among them, because non-vermin animals would be extremely rare.

The players may fight off giant rats, "dragons" (which are actually big lizards), "giants" (which are humans about 4-5 times larger than them with no bug traits) or enemies such as evil Ogre Beetles and Roach Ghouls and so forth. They will also, more than likely, fight other insects that use the exact same rules for everything that players do. Be creative and imaginative! Divide the bugs into heirarchies, develop kingdoms or villages. Perhaps even

lay out an old-school hex map of the surrounding area, including a few spooky unexplored places.

To build enemies other than Insects with Castes, use the tables from either the Servant (for very weak enemies) or for the Scout or Soldier for Strike and Dodge (or the best of both at once for a very nasty enemy), write some general Recovery and how much their Hormones last them (in rounds) and give a few Pheromonal or Hormonal abilities, 4 or 5 total between the two of them should suffice. These abilities are not because the creature necessarily uses hormones like Insects do, but because it has effects which mimic such abilities. For stunts and skills, just write some general things like "mental bonus, physical bonus, persuasion" and so on. You can also add some special abilities to taste.

1 Hit is good enough for mooks, 2-3 hits for major enemies and for really, really imposing baddies, have 5-6 hits. A group can typically fight as many mooks as themselves, as many major enemies as themselves, or one or two really imposing enemies, but this all depends on player ingenuity, circumstances and so forth. Here's a sample:

Dread Bombardier Beetle

Size: Larger than Insect

Movement: 18

Strike: +5

Dodge: 13

Hits: 3

Recovery: 12

Horm. Rounds: 3

Pheromones:

-Fire Flower (native)

-Fire Flower

Hormones:

-Neverdie

-Strongheart

-Grand Strike

Stunts/Skills:

-Toughness +2

-Aiming +1

Special:

-Each round, roll a d6, and if 6, can use a Fire Flower again.

Minor Dragon

Size: 3 Times Larger Than Insect

Movement: 18

Strike +5
Dodge: 11
Hits: 8
Recovery: 11
Horm Rounds: 4
Pheromones:
-None
Hormones:
-Adrenaline Buzz
-Vorpal Blade
Stunts/Skills:
Maneuvering +3
Physical +5
Special:
-As a weaponlike (3d6+7 strike) effect targetting all creatures in a 30 x 30 space in front of the dragon, it can breathe fire to deal 1 or 2 hits to all creatures there. It can do this every couple of turns.

Bird
Size: 2 Times Larger Than Insect
Strike: +3
Dodge: 13
Hits: 4
Recovery: 11
Horm Rounds: 3
Pheromones:
-None
Hormones:
-Adrenaline Buzz
-Vorpal Blade
Stunts/Skills:
Maneuvering +5
Physical +3
Special:
-Can outfly any but the best of Insect fliers, gaining a +1 bonus to Strike while flying in combat.

You can either be lenient as a Game Master or let the dice roll as they will. Try to give the players, at least, the ability to acquire Pherochemic Vials and other tools that might enhance their chances, but also remember that the game is not entirely about fighting, though fighting is a major component.

Not all creatures have to be bound by Pheromonal and Hormonal abilities

either. Would a ghost use pheromones? Probably not, but it might levitate a jar and drop it on your head. How about an ability that could turn a player to stone for some time? Can happen. Likewise, there are no rules for dragon breaths, but you can easily deduce some if you wanted to. You should allow your players to get some advance warning of these abilities, or to be able to research countermeasures, however, rather than just springing them in surprise all the time.

Likewise, you can give players strange abilities of their own to make for an interesting game. How about a player that IS a ghost (ghost bugperson)? Or a player that can control the minds of lesser individuals with some conditions? Or a player that can inflict True Poison as a pheromone, or players that own pherochemic relics with rare and powerful abilities, trying to protect themselves against those who'd want to steal their treasures? The skies the limit and the rules here are only very basic. You can make up for any of these changes by handing less plot tokens out – this way players' great power can be offset by low level and less ability to enact random changes to save their own lives.

The golden rule, however, is to discuss among yourselves what you want to play and how.



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