

The Hive

The FCW file requires CC3+, the "Caves & Caverns" Cartographer's Annual 7 package from 2007, assets from the DD3 and Token Treasury 1 packages, and the Windows 10 font MV Boli to be available to view correctly.

There are five levels to the map, descending from Level 1 nearest the surface to Level 5.

The whole has been designed as a giant ant nest, scaled for the creatures as described in D&D 3.5e, where most ants were around 6 feet long/tall, and the queens were at least 9 feet long.

The passages and most chambers are assumed to be around ten feet high, with floors and ceilings of similarly irregular character to the mapped walls, where not noted otherwise.

Each level is vertically separated from the next by an average of 50 feet, from the floor of the higher level to the ceiling of the lower.

Chambers on a given level are not always at the same depth as one another. Areas with pooled water tend to be somewhat lower (or the chamber floor may slope down towards such pools), while those with warmer air tend to be higher than the average, for instance.

The angles shown on the maps for tunnels that connect levels are approximate only. They are based on the general assumed level separation.

The basis for the maps was randomly generated using a variant of the Goblin's Henchman Pay-What-You-Want booklet "Carapace" - DriveThru RPG link:

<https://www.drivethrurpg.com/product/261079/Carapace> .

This contains three methods for randomly constructing complexes like The Hive on-the-fly. One of these, the "Point Crawl", produces essentially 2D layouts, either horizontally or vertically, so the variant here set up three vertical chamber layouts using this method, and then connected the chambers using the normal semi-random number of passages within and between them. Think three linked ant-farm panels, basically.

Activating the "Schematic Drawings" Layer in the FCW file brings up a panel with three simplified cross-section sketches to show more of how the complete connecting layout works.

Each level of the map has its own named Layer in the FCW file.

If the illustrative ants prove too distracting, they can be hidden using the Ants Sheet.

The nature of each chamber in the complex was randomly chosen using the Appendix 2 tables in "Carapace", with a few changes and additions. Although added to the map as notes, for clarity, these are listed again in the descriptions below.

"Carapace" has random encounter tables too, based on the AD&D Monster Manual, though they were not used for this map. The booklet has an AD&D scenario concerning a hive in a small wilderness area as well, which is designed to be run on-the-fly using the random systems provided there.

Hive Chamber Descriptions

Level 1

1.1) A vertical entrance tunnel down from the surface opens in the ceiling. Access tunnels run to Chambers 2.1 (west, 45° descent) and 2.2 (east, also 45°). Rainwater collects in a fairly deep pool in a hollow in the middle of the floor, from which a narrow channel flows north along the connecting passage to 1.3. A grating noise can be heard here at times.

1.2) The floor is very rough and uneven here. An intermittent hissing noise can be heard. The east passage connects to 1.3; the northwest tunnel leads down at 40° to 2.7.

1.3) The water channel running north from 1.1 ends in another quite deep pool here, off-centred towards the east wall of this chamber. The water seeps away into the earth from there, a small amount eventually staining the ceiling and walls in 2.15 below (there is no access-route that way). A sloping entrance tunnel descends from the surface, opening in the ceiling's northwest. A debris-pile forms a ramp of sorts below this entry area but away from the pool, around four feet high at most. Connecting tunnels run south to 1.1, west to 1.2, and northeast, descending at 40°, to 2.14. Lines of softly glowing fungus cross much of the ceiling, providing limited illumination.

1.4) A descending entrance tunnel from outside to the northeast opens in the western ceiling, leaving a five-foot drop to a debris pile "ramp" below. A vertical descent chute opens in the eastern floor, straight down to 2.11. A connecting passage runs east to 1.5. A creaking noise may be heard in here.

1.5) This has a very rugged, uneven floor, and the air is hot. The tunnel west links to 1.4. A steeply-descending passage south goes to 2.13 (65°), while a less steep northeast passage leads down to 2.18 (40°).

Level 2

2.1) There are some irritating floor obstacles and loose material in places. The chamber has a smell like festering wounds. The eastern passage ascends at 45° to 1.1, while descending tunnels, each angled at 55°, lead down to 3.2 to the southwest and 3.3 to the southeast.

2.2) A large, tri-lobed chamber, with some floor obstacles and loose material scattered about. A pack of rats has made its lair in the larger, southern, lobe. A 45°-angled passage descends from 1.1 entering through the ceiling of the northwestern lobe along a sloping ramp to the floor. Two passages lead east. The more northerly one connects to 2.3; the southerly descends steeply (65°) to 3.4.

2.3) The southern third of the chamber is flooded with a moderately deep pool that overflows in a shallow channel running west down the steeply descending passage (65°) to 3.4. The more northerly passage west connects with 2.2. The chamber has a scent of fresh sawdust.

2.4) The tunnel to the northwest connects to other hives in the range, while that to the east leads into 2.5. The chamber has been fairly smoothly constructed, and its walls are largely made up from prismatic rock crystals that catch, reflect and refract any light into rainbow bands.

2.5) Passages lead west into 2.4 and northeast into 2.6. The floor is extremely uneven and the air is very hot.

2.6) A large, fairly smooth, very dry chamber, commonly used as a nursery for egg-storing and looking after larvae. Its eastern wall is pierced by short tunnels to 2.5 (south), 2.7 (east), 2.9 and 2.10 (north).

2.7) Shifting regions of hotter and cooler air fill this large chamber. Short link passages join its north end to 2.6 (west), 2.8 (east) and 2.10 (north). Much of its southern third is flooded by a deep pool. In the northern half, a ramp descends through the ceiling from the tunnel leading up at 40° to 1.2.

2·8) A steeply-descending floor-opening tunnel leads east at 65° to 3·7. More level passages lead west to 2·7, north to 2·11 and east to 2·12. Another smoothed chamber, this is very dry. Its southern half is often used as a nursery for eggs and larvae.

2·9) A fairly smooth, hexagonal chamber, whose floor is dominated by the large, low mound of a splattermite on the floor, continually added-to by the slow drip of mineralised water from above, seeping through the ceiling. One passage leads out south to 2·6, which also links to 2·10.

2·10) A long, regularly-formed chamber with three main parts. The two northerly hexagons contain many shallow wall alcoves, earth-sealed, each holding a pupating warrior ant. The more open southerly segment allows freshly-emerged ants to stretch and get their bearings. The whole chamber has a smell of potato peelings. Tunnels lead southwest, linking with the passage between 2·6 and 2·9, south into 2·7 and northeast to 2·11.

2·11) Another regularly-formed, large chamber, whose angled walls and some floor areas are dotted with many sealed, shallow alcoves containing pupating worker ants. The chamber has a not-unpleasant perfumed taste to the air. A vertical chute opens in the southwestern ceiling leading up to 1·4. A low-angled four-foot high debris mound has formed beneath the opening, as a sort of ramp. Alongside this mound, passages lead southwest to 2·10, south to 2·8 and northwest, descending at 55°, to 3·5.

2·12) The very rough floor here extends along the tunnel north to 2·13, and into that chamber as well. The air here alternates from hot to cold in erratic swirls. Other passages lead east to 2·14 and west to 2·8.

2·13) The hard-going, rough, floor from the south passage to 2·12 continues across this chamber, although not into the descending passages to 3·7 (southwest, 55°) or 3·8 (east; 65°), while it affects only the lower end of the ascending northern tunnel up to 1·5 (65°). There is a local downdraught from the latter tunnel.

2·14) A smoother chamber with passages west into 2·12 and up at about 40° southwest to 1·3. The air is unpleasantly humid.

2·15) A long chamber with quite regularly-angled walls which contain numerous shallow, earth-sealed alcoves, longer than those found elsewhere, each of which holds a pupating royal ant. These will emerge winged, ready to fly off to start new colonies elsewhere. The chamber walls have metal veins running through them, creating areas both colourful and light-reflective in places. This is especially so where the slow seeping of water through the ceiling and over the indicated areas of wall from 1·3 has occurred. A single tunnel leads out to 2·16 to the northeast.

2·16) A large, double-lobed chamber. Batches of newly-emerged winged ants come here to dry, stretch out and test their wing membranes when they all emerge together. At other times, it is used as a nursery for eggs and larvae. It is very dry. A tunnel leads northeast to other hives beyond this one, with internal passages connecting to 2·15 (southwest) and 2·17 (northwest).

2·17) This long, very roughly-floored, chamber is scattered with patches of honey fungus across floor, walls and ceiling, food for the colony. A sweet dew oozes from each patch of fungus that the ants regularly collect. A curious jingling noise here seems to be associated with the fungus. One passage leads southeast into 2·16, while others lead down to 3·9 (west; 45°) and 3·10 (north; 65°).

2·18) One tunnel leads down into here from the southwest from 1·5 (40°), and a second connects with 2·19 to the southeast. The floor has a number of natural lumps and obstacles scattered over it, and the air has a scent of potato peelings.

2·19) This small chamber is very hot. A passage from 2·18 enters to the northwest, while a second descends to 3·10 at about 55° to the southwest.

Level 3

3·1) A smoothly-rounded chamber with a vertical chute in its eastern floor that drops down around 20 feet into an angled tunnel running east at a 20° downslope, to 4·1. An eastern passage on this Level leads to 3·2. There is a dry summer scent in the air.

3·2) A current of dry air runs through here from roughly south to north. The southern exit leads to other complexes in the range, while that to the west leads to 3·1. A descending passage (55°) enters on the chamber's northeastern end from 2·1. The chamber is commonly used as a nursery for eggs and larvae.

3·3) This large chamber's floor is half-covered by a substantial, deep, pool of freshwater, filled by dripping water from the ceiling, forming numerous stalagmite-stalactite pairs over the whole area, including a few curtains, although none of the pairs meet as yet. A palely-glowing sweet fungus grows across the ceiling, walls and stalactite-stalagmites above the water level, which the ants harvest for food. A narrow outflow channel runs from the pool's western side down the vertical chute in the northwestern floor to 4·1. A separate tunnel runs down into here in the same northwestern corner at 55° from 2·1.

3·4) Another large, partly flooded chamber, with a mostly shallow pool along its eastern and southeastern walls. This is fed by a channel running down the 65° tunnel from 2·3

that enters on the east side of the chamber's northern end. A second 65° descending passage enters opposite this on the western side of the chamber, from 2·2, while a third passage drops towards the northwest at 40° to 4·4. A grating sound can be heard here, though its source is not obvious.

3·5) A small, rounded chamber, this is usually filled with a pearlescent mist, reducing visibility considerably. A tunnel leads north out of The Hive to other parts of the range. The chamber can be entered on its southeastern side by a descending passage (55°) from 2·11.

3·6) The floor is extremely rough and difficult to cross for bipeds, while swirling patches of hotter and colder air make it doubly uncomfortable to be in for long. A tunnel to the north descends at 45° to 4·5, and a passage south connects with 3·7.

3·7) Four passageways meet in the northwestern part of this chamber. One descends from the west from 2·8 (65°), another from the northeast from 2·13 (55°). A third leads north into 3·6, while the fourth leads down southwards at roughly 45° to 4·3. Much of the chamber extends to the southeast from this junction, and is stickily humid. Thin curtains of fungus hang down, often from ceiling to floor, across much of this area, secreting a sweet dew the ants collect for food.

3·8) A large, hot, chamber, often used as a nursery for eggs and larvae. A tunnel runs south from here to 3·9, with a second tunnel ascending steeply (65°) to 2·13 to the west from the chamber's southern end.

3·9) An irregular chamber whose floor is covered with large, low-growing, mushrooms that emit chiefly ultraviolet light. It is not clear what purpose these serve, as the ants do not use them for food, though they will protect them viciously, and seem to revere them, as if this was a temple. Passages from here lead north to 3·8 and up at 45° east to 2·17.

3·10) Most of this chamber lies offset to the southeast by a narrow section from the passage junction on its northwestern side, through which junction a downdraught of air is apparent. From the junction, tunnels run west down to 4·6 (65°), northeast up to 2·19 (55°) and south up to 2·17 (65°). The chamber floor has a number of irregular, blocky, low obstructions scattered across it.

Level 4

4·1) The western passage into here from 3·1 drops vertically for its first 20 feet out of the higher chamber, then slopes down at about 20° for the remainder of its length. A strong air current flows west to east along the passageway, an unpleasant headwind for

those moving west into it. A second entry tunnel drops vertically from 3.3, with water trickling, or sometimes running, down its southern side. A debris heap forms a ramp reaching up about six feet from the floor directly below the tunnel's lower exit. The water runs off the southern slopes of this heap to form a fairly shallow pond by the chamber's southeastern walls.

4.2) A bi-lobed chamber, whose larger southern lobe is part-filled by a pool. A mass of fossilized tree roots project from the walls and ceiling by the pool and below its water level, along the marked area. These sparkle with crystalline minerals in any artificial light here. A single passage leads southeast to 4.3.

4.3) A descending passage from 3.7 approaches at 45° from the north, with connecting tunnels leading northwest to 4.2 and east to 4.4. The air in this chamber swirls hot and cold unpredictably.

4.4) The shallow pond along its eastern wall helps keep the humidity here unpleasantly high. One tunnel leads west to 4.3, another ascends southeast to 3.4 (40°).

4.5) This is the Guard Chamber. It lies directly above the Queen's Chamber, 5.1, to which it connects vertically by a chute a little off-centred to this chamber's south. A pond partly floods the northern part. Several warrior ants are always present to prevent unwanted intrusions to 5.1. A single entryway ascends at 45° to the south, to 3.6. The air here has a fishy taste.

4.6) A rambling, four-armed chamber, the southeastern one of which is flooded - right to the ceiling by its descending, northeastern, end. The rest of the chamber is filled with profuse growths of honey fungus, like that in 2.17, a major source of food for the colony. A cross-breeze flows from the southern to northern chamber arms, albeit from an unidentifiable source. A single passage enters from 3.10 to the east, descending steeply at about 65°.

Level 5

5.1) The only chamber on this Level is that housing the colony's Queen, her guards and attendants, who bring in food and remove new-laid eggs to be hatched, and the emergent young cared-for, elsewhere. A single vertical entry chute is in the northern end of the chamber, leading up to 4.5. A local updraught can be noticed by its base, where a debris-pile ramp reaches up around seven feet from the floor below the middle of the accessway.