

# Botanists

## The Little Helper

An official solitaire variant by Alfred Das and Pedro Pereira.

Duration: approximately 25 minutes.

### Set-up:

For the solitaire variant you set up the game as you would usually do for the regular game: The main board goes onto the table and you randomly populate the market with flower tiles from the bag (optionally you can follow the official variant rules).

For yourself you can freely choose the player board you like best or just randomly deal yourself one. Put your character pawn to the side of the market, and place your score counter just off the track near the first VP box and deal yourself a personal order cards (or two if you play with the “blue” player board), reveal three open orders and then draw **three** (instead of just two) market cards, this is your hand of market cards.

Now deal yourself another player board randomly. We recommend that you slide this one underneath your own player board from left to right in a way that only the plots of lands with the coloured sign posts are showing (see image below). This will look like you have a total of 30 spaces. Furthermore you take the score counter of the character belonging to this board and place it on the flower in the middle of the market. This is your Little Helper.

*Example of how to arrange the two player boards:*



### **Objective:**

In the Little Helper variant, your aim is to score as high as possible. You will have to manage two boards; however the Little Helper's board will work somewhat different from what you're used to. The aim is to populate the Little Helper's board with all the correct flowers, if you do, you get the Little Helper's respective Bonus Points for correctly planting flowers. At the end of the game, you will however also suffer the penalties for withered flowers on the Little Helper's board on top of your own penalty points.

Note also that the Little Helper cannot ever fulfil any orders since, as will be explained below, they never collect more than a single flower per turn.

### **How to play:**

In this variant you will have to play 2 characters at the same time: your own and the Little Helper. During your turn you can choose whether to resolve your own move first, or that of the Little Helper. Regardless of who goes first, you fulfil orders after you have played both your own turn and that of the Little Helper. Also, to help you plan your movements, you will have a choice out of hand of three market cards instead of just two, so each turn you will have to decide what card to assign to yourself, and which for the Little Helper.

Once you move the Little Helper, the flower you move them onto, is the only one they collect. As per usual rules, if the colour matches the sign post on their board, you may place the flower face-up, you can also choose to place it face-down in order to benefit from the bonus. If the flower that the Little Helper collects does not match the current plot, then you must place it face-down. Please note that the Little Helper can never perform the action "Tend the marginal land" (see original rules).

Your own move is played as usual: move up to 2 spaces, play a market card, collect 3 or 4 flowers, allocate 1 and fulfil an order with the remaining if able; or you can also tend the marginal land if you need. Only after moving both your character and the Little Helper will you refill the market with fresh flowers. Also, just like in a two player game, you can use the Little Helper's location to avoid collecting 4 flowers all the time and collect only 3 instead.

Please note that as per original rules, you still can't move through the Little Helper, or stop your movement on the same space.

Also, keep in mind that you have to resolve the character's move you play with first in full, before continuing with the other character. That is to say that you move, collect flowers and resolve any bonus actions first, before you start the other character's move.

Once you finished the turn you draw your hand back up to 3 cards. Before you do though, you may choose to discard one (and only one) Market Card from your hand in order to improve chances of drawing convenient Market cards for your next turn.

### Special movement rules for the Little Helper:

Moving the Little Helper works different. First you choose the Market Card you want to use to move the Little Helper: the highlighted box on the card represents their current location, you now can choose any of the other three boxes to move the helper onto, so as you can imagine, movement is a lot more restricted (they are little after all). Make sure you keep that in mind and try to move them as close to the next needed flower type as possible. See the image on the next page for an example.

Also, unlike with your own market cards, the Little Helper's can be played in a way that the shape falls off the market limits. In the rare case that none of the cards in your hand can be used to move the Little Helper, you must discard all three cards and redraw three new ones.

**IMPORTANT:** unlike with your own market card, if the shape of the Little Helper's card falls partially off the market, it counts as a legal move. You can, however, never leave the Little Helper in the same location they were on at the start of the current turn. So you must move the Little Helper every turn and never outside the market.

### Movement example for the Little Helper



*This is a legal play with the Little Helper, but provides only two movement options*

### Scoring:

During scoring you score your own board as per original rules; additionally, if your Little Helper was successful in correctly filling out all the 5 plots in a round, you get their bonus points on top of your own.

At the end of the game, after you have scored VPs for the third time, you will have to check for penalties and suffer the negative VPs for withered flowers on both your own and your Little Helper's board.



### **Bonus Actions:**

There are a few minor modifications to the bonus actions. You can now also use the Little Helper's bonus actions whenever a flower they collect is placed face-down on their board. When this happens, whatever power is triggered, you are free to use it or not. Here are a few clarifications regarding the bonus actions:

- Red action: Exchange flowers with another player – You can now choose to exchange a flower from your marginal land with any already planted face-up flower on the Little Helper's board. The flower you give to the Little Helper remains face up in this case, despite the colours not matching. You cannot use this power to swap with a withered flower on the Little Helper's board.
- Purple action: There are no changes to this bonus action. If you trigger it on the Helper's board, you can still use it with your own board.
- Yellow action: You can choose to move either your own pawn, or the token of the Little Helper. This is true regardless of whether it is triggered on your board, or that of the Little Helper.
- Blue action: There are no changes to this bonus action.
- Green action: There are no changes to this bonus action when you trigger it on your own board. If triggered on the Little Helper's board, you then get to add (if you want to) a new card to your personal orders as per original rules.

*Let us know how you did and we'll publish the highest score obtained each month. You can send your results to [botanists@agiegames.com](mailto:botanists@agiegames.com)*

*We hope you enjoy playing Botanists with  
The Little Helper.*