Tangle

A strategy game for 2-4 players. Approximately 45 min per player.

The earth shall rise again from the waters, fair and green. Streams shall sing. In the fields, the seeds shall sprout unsown. -Poetic Edda, ca 1200 AD

Tangle is set in a desolated wasteland, where the roots of your great trees strive to restore and shape the land to their liking. It is a competetive and highly interactive mid/heavy euro game.

Components

One big board. 300 cubes (4 resource types, 75 of each). 20 "seeds" (2 types)
20 flat wooden cylinders (roots), 100 hexagon tiles. (5 resp 25 for each player.)
71 cards in total, of 2 types. (victory conditions and enchantments)

The goal of the game

The goal of the game is to fulfill one of your *victory condition cards*, which is mainly done by placing *tiles* at the *game board* and playing *enchantment* cards.

Example: these conditions will be completed once you have 4 trees, 2 meadows, 2 bushes and 2 lakes of your colour on the board, and 7 enchantment cards in front of you.

**Tiles** – Clean earth,   Bushes, Meadows,   Lakes,   Saplings,   Trees.
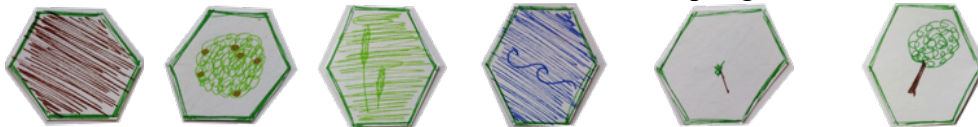
Setup

Each player chooses a colour and puts all components of that colour in their private *stash*. This is where each player will keep their *resources, seeds, tiles* and *roots* outside the board.

Shuffle the pile of victory condition cards, and deal 3 to each player. Remaining victory condition cards are put back in the box.You don't need to choose from the start which card to go for, they are kept secret until end of the game.

Shuffle the Enchantment cards and deal 3 to each player. These are also kept secret in your hand until you play them. Put the remaining cards in a face-down pile beside the board, put 3 cards face up beside this pile.

Place the board in the center of the table.
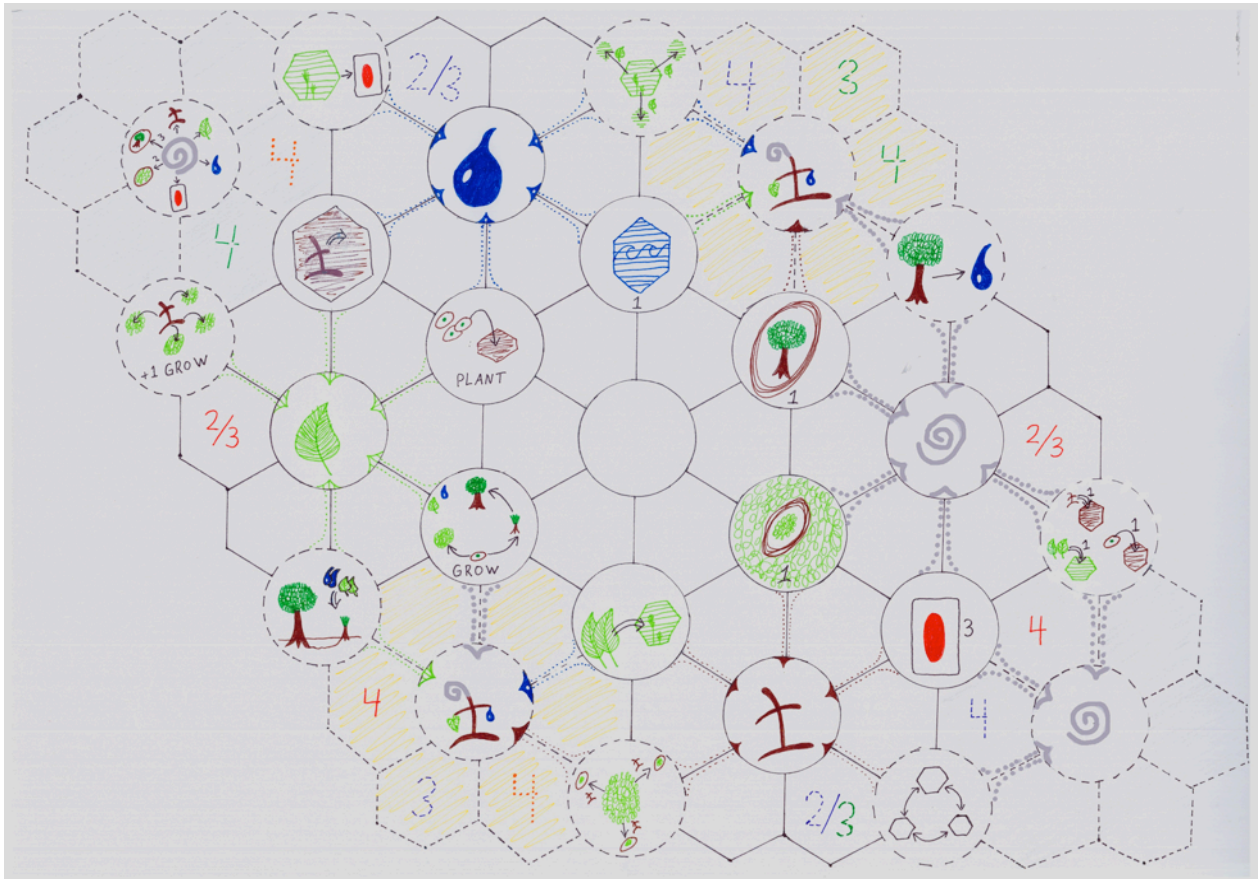
Place 2 tree-tiles at your starting positions. These positions are marked with your colour and the number of players. Then place your roots on those trees. (Note that only red and purple are marked for 2 players, green added for 3, and orange for 4.) Example for 3 players:
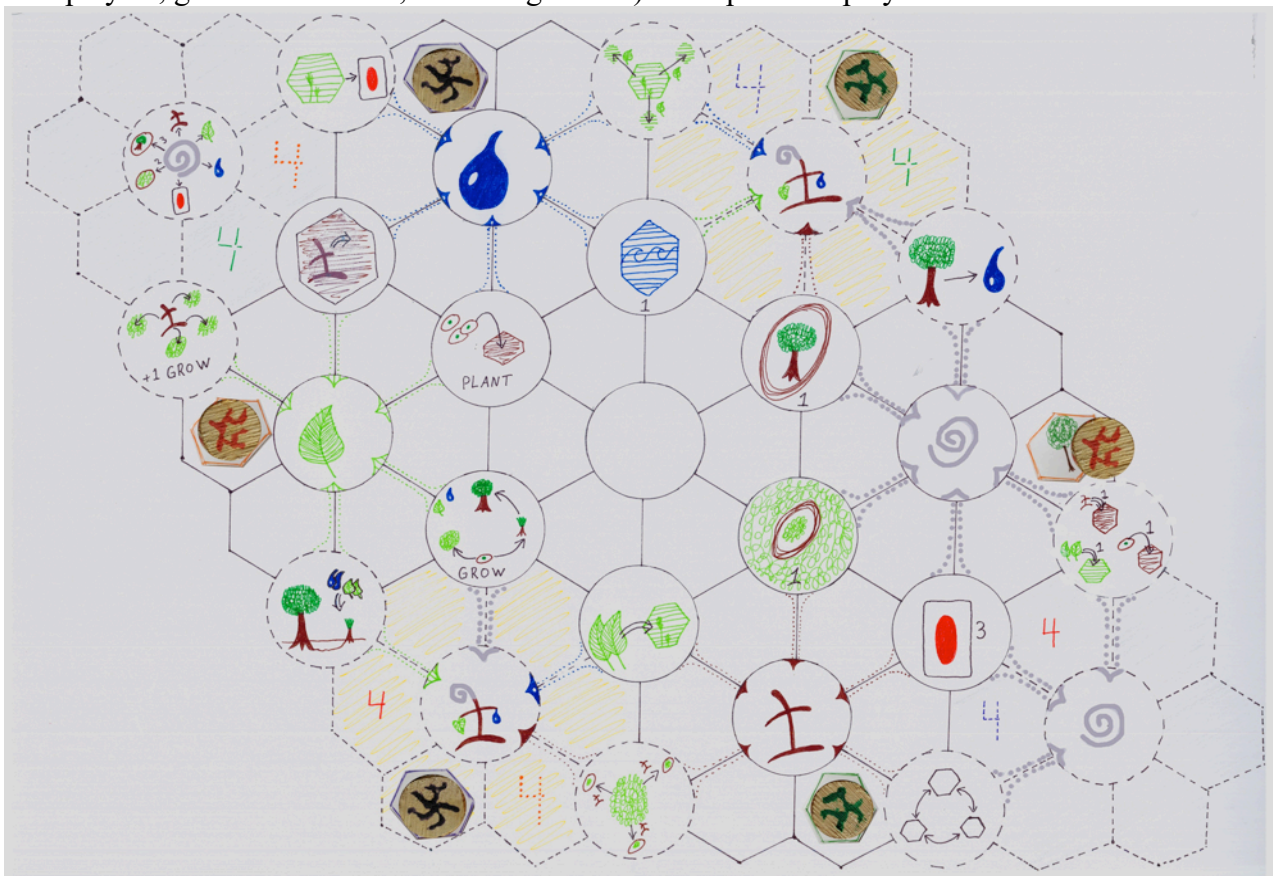
Give each player 2 of each resource *(water W* *, earth E* *, nourishment N* *, mana M* *)*
Resources are not supposed to be finite. Should they ever run out, find substitutes.
Put 2 resource on each resource-action space, according to their type.

2 E   2 M   2 W   2 N
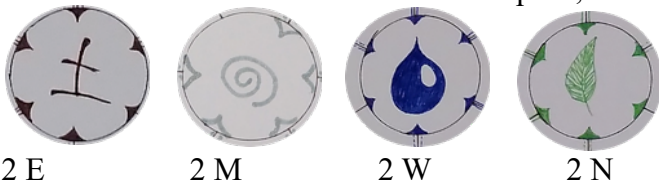
Put the upkeep track on the table, and all **Upkeep markers** on the top of the tracks of their corresponding type. Put all **Upkeep trackers** on their starting positions, one more step below the top of the track as there are players (Example for 4 players).


Gameplay

A few game concepts for understanding the turn structure, action spaces and text on enchantments:
Action space – these are the round spaces on the board. Roots are placed here to perform actions.
Area – these are the "triangles" between the action spaces. This is where tiles are placed.
Adjacent – Action space that is connected directly to the action space in question, or in direct contact with an area.
Bordering – Areas that are in direct contact with the area or action space in question.
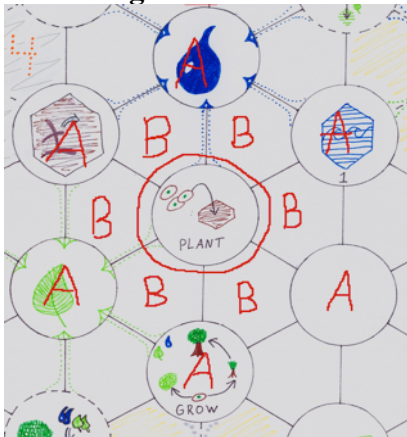
*Example, the middle circle is an **action space**. Marked with "A" are all **action spaces** that are **adjacent**. Marked with "B" are all **areas** that are **bordering**. In short, an action space has up to 6 areas bordering and up to 6 actions spaces adjacent. An area has up to 3 bordering areas and up to 3 action spaces adjacent.*

The player who last planted a tree goes first. If no one ever did, the person who last took care of any plant goes first.

Turn Structure *(An example turn can be found as appendix)*
A turn consists of 4 phases, where only the Placement happens every time:
- Pay upkeep
- Placement – move a root from one space to another on the board.
- Cast an enchantment (requires a root at your tree).
- Trigger upkeep

Pay upkeep: First, if the *upkeep marker* of any type is in front of you, everyone pays the upkeep. Then, return it to its position above the upkeep board.

Placement:
The placement phase consist of 5 steps:

- Move one of your roots from one action space or tree, to any other action space or one of your own trees. Roots can be placed above other roots at the same action space.
- If placed on an action space adjacent to a Resource action space, put another of that resource on that/those spaces from the pool. (Marked with color-coded arrows from the action space you trigger.)
- Trigger any effects on the bordering tiles (from meadows and bushes, see below)
- Perform the action at the space.
- Pay 1 resource of your choice to each player for each root they have under your own (you must know that you have sufficient resources for this when you choose the placement).

Cast an enchantment
Enchantment cards in your hand can be cast if you have a root at one of your trees. One enchantment for each root at a tree. They have a cost (usually mana) in the upper right corner that must be payed. Once cast, place the enchantment card in front of you. It is now considered active for the rest of the game, unless disarded by upkeep (see below).

(The hourglass means it is a one-time effect.)

Upkeep
There are three types of upkeep. You can always choose not to pay, even if able. If several upkeeps are to be paid at the same time, they are paid in this order:
- Lakes – Pay 1 E for each lake you have. If you do not pay, replace the lake tile with a clean earth tile.
- Bushes and Meadows – Pay 1 W for each Bush and each Meadow you have. Bushes and Meadows bordering a lake do not pay upkeep. If you do not pay, replace the tile with a clean earth tile, and remove any stacked resources to the pool.
- Enchantments – Pay 1 N for each enchantment card in front of you. If you do not pay, remove the enchantment card and put it in the discard pile.
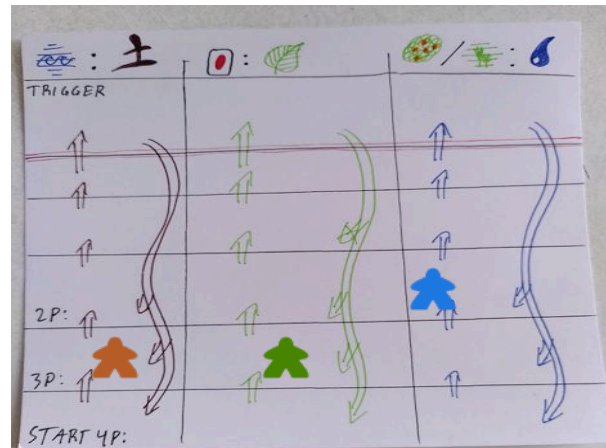
Steps of the upkeep phase:

- **Move:** For each tile you *placed*, *flipped* or *replaced* this turn, move any *upkeep tracker* one step up on the track. For each new root that entered the board from your pool, do the same. If all *trackers* come to the top, you do not get to move them more. (*Tiles replaced or flipped due not being able to pay upkeep does not count.*)
- **Trigger:** If any *upkeep tracker* is at the top of the track, take your corresponding *upkeep marker* and put it on the table in front of you, and return the *upkeep tracker* to its starting position on the upkeep track, the number of steps down is equal to the number of players plus one. This means the upkeep will trigger for you at start of your next turn.

Example of the upkeep steps:

*Setup of upkeep board and
trackers at start of 3-player game:*

Step 2: *A player placed 4 "clean earth" tiles during their
placement phase, and choose to move the green upkeep tracker 3 steps, and the blue one step.*

Step 3: *At the last step of the upkeep phase: Since the upkeep tracker was at the top of the middle track, the active player takes the upkeep marker, and moves the green meeple down to the starting position again.*

Action spaces

The game board is divided into three sections. When playing with 4 players, all areas and all action spaces are used.

For 3 players, the grey-stained areas are not part of the game board, along with the 6 lined action spaces touching them.

For 2 players, neither yellow- nor grey-stained areas are used, along with the corresponding 12 action spaces.

Basic action spaces, for 2-4 players:
**Resource spaces** (earth E, mana M, water W, nourishment N)

The player takes all the resources on the space. Afterwards, refill them by placeing 2 of the resource on the action space (on top of your root). When a Root is moved away from a resource space, resources are left there.

Clean earth

Pay 1 E for each tile of ***Clean earth*** you would like to place. Tiles should by default be placed bordering one of your tiles on the board, or one you just placed. If you want to place a tile in an area futher away, (if the path is blocked by opponent's tiles for example), pay 1 extra E for each tile you "jump over".

Place lake
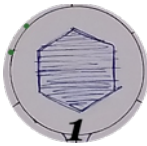
Place 1 ***lake*** bordering any of your tiles on the board. It can also be placed where you have a ***clean earth*** tile, in which case the ***clean earth*** tile is removed (back to your stash).

Place Meadows

Pay 2 N for each ***meadow*** you would like to place. ***Meadows*** can only be placed where you have ***clean earth.*** Remove the ***Clean earth*** tile and replace it with the ***meadow.***

Take bush seed

Take 1 ***Bush seed***

Take Tree seed

Take 1 ***Tree seed***

Plant seeds

Place as many ***seeds*** as you want from your pool onto any of your ***Clean earth*** tiles on the board. One seed on each tile.

Grow

Grow any number of your seeds or saplings to their next step. For each that you grow, pay 1N and 1W. For ***Bush seeds***, simply remove the seed and flip the ***Clean earth*** tile. For ***Tree seeds***, replace the tile with a ***Sapling*** tile***.*** For ***Sapling*** tiles, flip them to the ***Tree*** side, and place a ***Root*** from your ***stash*** on it. *(You are NOT allowed to grow both steps from seed to tree in the same "Growth" action.)*

Take enchantment cards

Take 3 enchantment cards.

Spaces for 3-4 players:

Special resource spaces

These resource spaces can have all types of resources on them. The 2 starting resources are the ones whose colour-coded arrows are on opposite sides of the resource space (when the space is refilled, it is with these same 2 resources). When a root is placed on adjacent action spaces, put 1 resource on this space of the same colour as the arrow on the board leading to it.
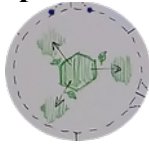
Gather water

Gain 1 Water for every Tree tile you have on the board.

Sprout

Place *sapling*/s for 2 W 2 N, but can only be placed on clean earth bordering one of your already existing trees.

Spread meadows

Place *meadows* for only 1 N each, but can only be placed on clean earth bordering your already existing fields.

Spread bushes
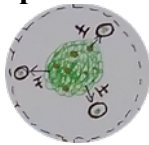
Gain and plant *bush seeds* from the pool onto your *clean earth* for 1 E each. These seeds can only be planted on *clean earth* bordering your already existing bushes

Spaces for 4 players:

Gather enchantments
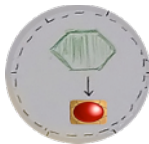
Gain 1 Enchantment card for each meadow you have.
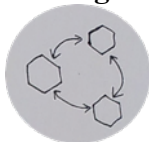
Contained growth

Grow exactly 1 seed/sapling one step. Then place 1 E on all your existing bushes.

Mana transformation

Exchange a mana for any other resource or an enchantment card, 2 mana for a bush seed and/or 3 mana for a tree seed, any number of times.

Shifting landscape

Choose up to three tiles in your territory. Swap their places in any order. This does not count as placing new tiles. Resources, roots and seeds on tiles follow the movement.

Diverse growth

Make any or all of:
Place 1 clean earth tile for 1 E.
Place 1 Meadow for 2 N.
Make exactly 1 growth action.

Effects of tiles

When part of your territory; lakes, meadows and bushes follow these rules:

Lakes Reduce upkeep costs for trees bordering, as described above. Also reduce all water costs by 1 W, for each other tile change on the bordering hexes. (Reducing costs for Growth and Sapling actions.) These reductions for costs and upkeep can be used by all players.

Meadows Each time **an opponent** places their root on an action space adjacent to your meadow, put 1 N from the pool on the meadow. Maximum of 3 resources per meadow.
Each time **you** place your root on an action space adjacent to your meadow, take all resources gathered there.

Bushes Works like *meadows*, but instead of N, E is put on them. Also, there is no limit for the number of resources on a bush.

You may not replace tiles on the board at will, e g growing a meadow where you have a bush, though you can choose not to pay upkeep to make place for other things. Tiles with seeds on them can still be used as clean earth in all aspects, but the seed will be lost it the tile is used for something else.

Winning the game

If, at the end of any turn, a player has completed the criteria on one of their victory condition cards, that player reveals that card and wins the game!
In the odd case that this happens to two players at once, you share the victory.

Optional rules

The center circle has no action on it, and can not be used in the basic game. As a variation, recommended if everyone has played the game at least once, you can add one of the following action spaces (randomized or as you agree):

Sacrificial ground

Remove any number of your tiles from the board, gaining for each:
  – Clean earth: A resource of your choice
  – Lake or meadow: 1 extra placement
  – Bush: Cast any enchantment for free. You may choose an enchantment from the discard pile for this.
(Any resources on the sacrificed tiles are lost)

Hibernate

Next turn, make a placement with this root before your normal placement for the turn.

Agressive takeover
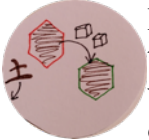
Pay 1 E to the pool, and 2 resources of your choice to an opponent, and replace one of their empty clean earth tiles with your own. You may do this any number of times and with different opponents the same turn. The tiles you take over must be bordering your own tiles (including the newly aquired tiles). Tiles placed DO trigger upkeep.

In 3-4 player games, experienced players may choose to exchange any number of the 3- or 4-player action spaces with these alternative action spaces. Simply put them over any of the 3-4-player action spaces that you agree on.
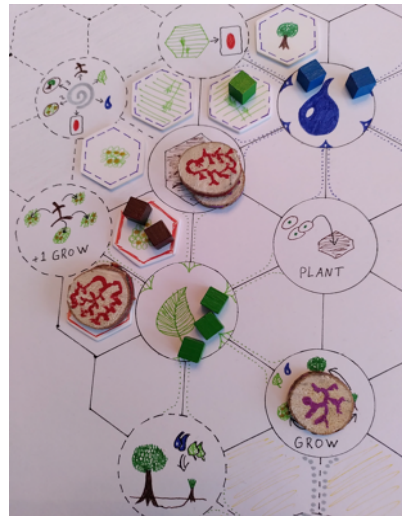
Appendix, example turn:

Phase 2 – placement:
Situation at start of red player's turn
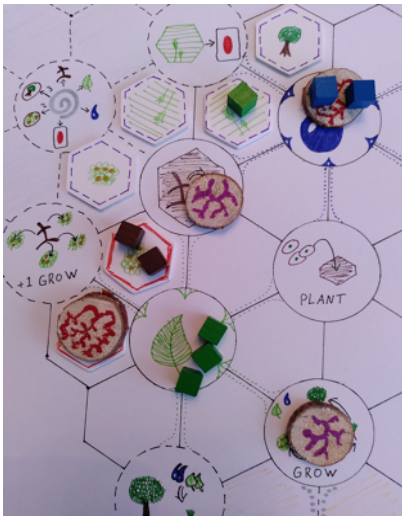
Step 1: *Red moves from water resource space to place their root on "clean earth".*

Step 3: *Trigger tiles, red takes their 2 E from their bush, and places N and E on purple players meadows and bush respectively.*

Step 2: *Refill adjacent resource spaces.*

Step 4: *Perform action, in this case red uses 4 E to place 4 **clean earth** tiles. (Note that red can use the 2 E obtained in step 3). In **Step 5**, which do not have a picture of its own, red gives one resource of their choice to purple player.*

Phase 3: *As red has a root on a tree, red may choose to cast an enchantment.* **Phase 4:** *Since 4 new tiles were placed this turn, upkeep will trigger, as is described in the upkeep section in the rules.*

Appendix 2, Turn structure:
Print and give one to each player (these were added after I sent the prototype).

Turn structure

Phase 1 - Placement
Move one root to an action space or tree.
Refill adjacent action spaces with one resource according to the arrows on the board.
Trigger effects on bordering tiles.
Perform the action at the space.
Pay one resource per root under your placed root to those root's player/s.
Phase 2 - Cast enchantment/s
Cast up to one enchantment per root you have on one of your trees.
Phase 3 - Upkeep
Pay any upkeep from upkeep markers in front of you. Pass it forward.
Move upkeep trackers one step for each new tile or root that entered during the turn.
Trigger any upkeep where trackers are on top of track, taking the corresponding upkeep tracker and place in front of you.