



Adorable Creatures: Garden Gnomes

General Description

When ancient gnomes were driven from the world of the fey, history tells of a small group who scurried away deep into the forests to find refuge from villains. Finding themselves in groves that flourished like the wild lands of their past home, these gnomes sought to become a part of the landscape by using their gnomish magic to permanently affix plants to their heads and bury themselves, their heads poking just above the surface.

These gnomes later became known as garden gnomes.

Garden gnomes are a much more naïve and sociable counterpart to the more common gnome. Valuing community and friendship above all else, garden gnomes are trusting and treat strangers as they would their own kin. Beware, however: once a garden gnome's trust is broken, it takes much effort to regain it.

Garden gnomes are generally unable to distinguish differences between other races or species, even from themselves. After all, an elf is just a very tall, skinny gnome; a dwarf is just a fat, hairy gnome; and gnomes are just garden gnomes without plants affixed to their heads!

This makes garden gnomes highly sociable, though it is not uncommon for garden gnomes to break social norms, such as by sharing secrets, gossiping about adventurers, and even spreading rumors. To garden gnomes, doing so is a sign of affection and trust. Also, it's fun!

But as quickly as garden gnomes may jump into social situations, so do they take pleasure in retreating to nature, to the very thing which defines their early years as seedlings. Thus, a garden gnome can find as much joy in the setting sun as in gossiping or sharing in conversations about the future.

Physical Description

At birth, an infant garden gnome—known as a seedling—has a small bald patch on the top of the head. In this patch, a plant, typically the seed of a flower, is planted by gently pressing the seed against the seedling's soft skin. By gnomish magic, the seed becomes permanently affixed to the garden gnome's head.

Over the next two centuries, the plant will grow slowly, flowering no matter the original species of the plant. In garden gnome society, it is typical for a garden gnome to trim their plant, though it is unruly to affix jewels to it. To garden gnomes, their plant is the centerpiece of any outfit or hairstyle.

Like typical gnomes, garden gnomes stand, on average, 3-feet tall and weigh between 30 and 35 lbs. Their skin, hair, and eye color vary as wildly as among other gnomes, though they tend toward green, brown, and yellowish hues. Their eyes are slightly larger than human average and they have large mouths through which they enjoy feasts. A garden gnome's mouth always grins at rest, and thus they almost always appear cheerful.

Since garden gnomes prefer to sleep in the ground, they are rarely clean. In fact, they find perfumes and soaps to have an offensive odor. And although garden gnomes enjoy elaborate costumes, they do not do well in disguises, since they prefer not to hide their plants.

Society

Few adventurers stumbling upon a wide open field of flowers and small trees would suspect an entire community beneath their feet. But such is reality for garden gnomes, who prefer to spend idle time just beneath the surface, chatting away or sleeping. Some garden gnomes build communal houses above ground from wood and foliage, decorating them with floral elements. Such constructions do not contain doors since garden gnomes find privacy an unnerving concept.

During festivals, which are common since garden gnomes can find any reason for celebration, the community creates elaborate arbors, tents, and even tables from nearby trees and undergrowth.

In their day-to-day activities, garden gnomes take joy in sharing stories, oftentimes embellishing for effect. They also enjoy gardening, sewing, and crafting furniture for other races.

Garden gnomes nap and eat frequently, and they even have a tendency to stare off into space for hours at a time. They are incredibly patient but in conversation can hardly contain their excitement as to what the next sentence may bring.

Notably, garden gnomes have a knack for mottos and have one in mind for every situation, making them great for pep talks. As a type of gnome, their mottos may be confusing or cryptic to outsiders. Such mottos include: "Friends sleep belly up!" "The sun rises at dawn!" and "Hey, you're no giant!"

They are farmers and fishermen by trade, and they make great merchants thanks to the many connections they make on their journeys. More practiced garden gnome merchants are less trusting of strangers, though they make an effort to dissuade others from making an unfair bargain before outright refusing to ever do business with them.

Garden gnomes are a communal race and readily welcome outsiders, finding their foreign languages and stories of adventure fascinating. Their enthusiasm for other creatures often gets them in trouble. Through the centuries, garden gnomes have found giants uproot them and devour them as they sleep. As such they have learned to be quieter near giants, though they do not blame giants for trying to eat them.

While it is not uncommon for a garden gnome to climb up from underground and greet an approaching giant only to be eaten, it is not because garden gnomes are unwise. Rather they believe in the good in all creatures and understand that no matter how many giants may have eaten garden gnomes there will come a day when one will give it a second thought. And no doubt the day a garden gnome befriends a giant will be the last day giants ever eat one.

Garden gnomes have no fixed diet. They are open to eating all kinds of food though they are typically found eating fruits, vegetables, and small rodents and insects that try to eat their plants. As garden gnomes tend to become druids who wild shape, food chains confuse them.

Most garden gnomes never leave their communities, and communities only willingly migrate when conditions threaten the health of their plants. If ever a kingdom were to attempt to force a community to move, that kingdom would be met with the force of all the creatures the garden gnomes befriended.

Relations

As a patient race, garden gnomes fare better with elves than typical gnomes. Orcs and dwarves frustrate them as they tend to be unfunny or short. Garden gnomes enjoy the company of halflings, humans, and other gnomes because of the shared pleasure each can have in conversation.

Garden gnomes can run into trouble in social circles since they enjoy gossiping and starting rumors. They are also privy to interrupting others, even those onstage. For this reason, garden gnomes can be outsiders in more sophisticated circles or formal settings.

Alignment and Religion

Garden gnomes can be played as any good alignment. They frown upon betrayal, greed, self-righteousness, and senseless violence. They are always on the lookout for the well-being of others. They worship good-aligned gods, most often those that value nature, community, and good will.

Adventurers

Few garden gnomes leave their communities. Those who do become merchants or performers for the benefit of the community. However, as natural performers with a wonder for the natural world, it is not unheard of for a young garden gnome to be struck by wanderlust. Whether to learn more about nature or about other races, or to do exceptional things for the sake of having an extraordinary tale to tell, a garden gnome may leave their community, vowing at least to write home or return at some point or another.

As do-gooders, a garden gnome may also leave its community to help others or to learn new magic or trades that may help their community. As performers, they lean toward storytelling and acting. They generally only play instruments when assured someone will sing or play along with them, as is typical in their communities.

Some garden gnomes also leave home to find a peaceful place to die. Usually two to three years before death, an elderly garden gnome will venture to find a comfortable, exotic place to plant himself, remaining there until the end of his days. After planting himself, his plant will flourish, bursting with flowers and fruits said to revitalize even the most tired of adventurers.

Garden gnomes favor the following classes: bard, cleric, and druid

Garden Gnome Names

It is a running joke among garden gnomes to give seedlings long, gibberish names as a form of affection. Since a child's birth is a cause for celebration in garden gnome culture, whole communities are present to name the child. Following tradition, when the seedling opens its eyes, whatever sound or name is called first will be the child's name. However, because numerous garden gnomes are certain to shout at the same time a seedling opens its eyes, garden gnomes can have very long names.

Meanwhile, garden gnomes do not understand the concept of lineages or surnames. All garden gnome communities share the last name, and if ever one community meets another, the two communities' surnames will be combined into one longer name.

Garden Gnome Racial Traits

Type: Humanoid (Gnome)	0 RP
+2 Charisma, +2 Wisdom, -2 Strength: Garden gnomes are simple but thoughtful creatures who relish the company of others. Owing to their general laxness they do not have the physical benefits of typical gnomes.	1 RP
Small: Garden gnomes are Small creatures and thus gain a +1 size bonus to their AC, a +1 size bonus on attack rolls, a -1 penalty to their Combat Maneuver Bonus and Combat Maneuver Defense, and a +4 size bonus on Stealth checks.	0 RP
Slow: Garden gnomes have a base speed of 20 ft.	-1 RP
Burrow: Garden gnomes can tunnel through dirt at a base speed of 15 ft. *	3 RP
Low-Light Vision: Garden gnomes can see twice as far as humans in dim light.	1 RP
Gnome Magic: Garden gnomes add a +1 to the DC of any saving throws against enchantment spells that they cast. Garden gnomes with a Charisma of 11 or higher also gain the following spell-like ability: 1/day— <i>create water, dancing lights, message, and speak with animals</i> . **	2 RP
Camouflage: Garden gnomes receive a +4 racial bonus on Stealth skill checks in forests as a general means for avoiding giants.	1 RP
Friendly (Skill Bonus): Garden gnomes receive a +2 racial bonus on Diplomacy skill checks.	2 RP
Social (Skill Training): Sense Motive and Bluff are always considered class skills for garden gnomes.	1 RP
Languages: Common, Gnome, and Sylvan. Garden gnomes with high Intelligence scores can choose from the following: Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Halfling, and Orc.	0 RP
Total:	10 RP

* Typically only normal-speed races can have Burrow, thus I have reduced the garden gnome's Burrow speed from 20-ft. to 15-ft. to accommodate for their slower movement. If Burrow is not approved by your DM, replace with:

- **Eternal Hope (2 RP):** Garden gnomes rarely lose hope and are always confident even in hopeless situations. Gnomes with this racial trait receive a +2 racial bonus on saving throws against fear and despair effects. Once per day, after rolling a 1 on a d20, the gnome may reroll and use the second result.

** Since garden gnomes are more social and focus much of their lives on tending to their plants, I made some changes to the Gnome Magic quality that I believe are balanced and flavorful. If not approved by your DM, replace with the normal Gnome Magic:

- **Gnome Magic:** Gnomes add +1 to the DC of any saving throws against illusion spells that they cast. Gnomes with Charisma scores of 11 or higher also gain the following spell-like abilities: **1/day**—*dancing lights, ghost sound, prestidigitation, and speak with animals*. The caster level for these effects is equal to the gnome's level. The DC for these spells is equal to 10 + the spell's level + the gnome's Charisma modifier.