MOLE MAJORITY

A game of gaining underground for 2 to 4 players // 30 – 60mins (15mins per player) // Age: 10+

IN MOLE MAJORITY, players represent the collective conscious of a tribe of moles that has moved into a fertile meadow. Their instinctual urge is to proliferate and spread across as much territory as possible, crowding out any rival tribes of Moles while making lives for their own tribe more comfortable.

OBJECTIVE: Mole tribes must expand their own Tunnel Network, fortify their borders, and enhance the living spaces of their tribe. Once the entire meadow has been riddled with mole warrens, Domain Points are calculated.

TO WIN: Claim as much territory and win as many Domain Points as possible before one or more of the following end conditions is reached:

- An Active Player has placed their last Claim Token on the board.
- An Active player has no Moles remaining in their supply.
- All Hexes have been Claimed by players.
- Only one player has Claim Tokens left on the board.

Note that it is possible for a player to be eliminated from the game if there are no Hexes with that player's claim token on them. Be careful!

COMPONENTS

- 24 total hexagonal tiles for terrain - these are marked with either 3, 4, 5, or 6 space for Moles
- 18 Cards per player (72 total)
- 30 Mole Tokens per player (120 total)
- 10 Claim Tokens per player (40 total)
- 4 yellow Cave-In Tokens per player (16 total)
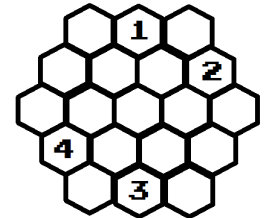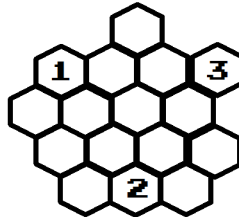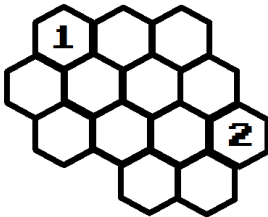- 24 green Home Tokens

SETUP:

The game board is set up differently depending on how many players are in the game. However, to start setting up for any game, do the following:

1. Each player selects a matching suit of Cards, Mole Tokens, and Claim Tokens. They also select 4 yellow Cave-In Tokens.
2. Each player selects a 6-point Hex as their Home Base, and then shuffles the rest of the Hexes into a face-down pile.
3. Draw one Hex and place it face-up in the center of the play area. This is the Center Hex.
4. Draw six more Hexes and place them face up in the play area, each one touching a face of the Center Hex. The result is a "ring" of other Hexes completely surrounding the Center Hex.
5. Each player then chooses a location to place their Home Base. It must be placed in a section so that it touches at least two other Hexes that surround the Center Hex. In any case, it may never touch another player's Home Base.
   - Players must add one of their Claim Tokens to the center spot of their Home Base, and then one Mole Token to each of the six open spots on their Home Base.
6. **For a 2-player game,** draw and add 4 more Hex tiles (2 per player) to the game board, each

one touching at least 2 different Hex tiles, one of which MUST be from the ring around the Center Hex (14 total Hexes).

7. **For a 3-player game,** draw and add 6 more Hex tiles to the game board as above (16 total Hexes).
8. **For a 4-player game,** draw and add 8 more Hex tiles to the game board as above (19 total Hexes).

See the following diagrams for some examples of game boards ready to go for different numbers of players:

9. Shuffle the green Home Tokens face-down and place one at the center of each of the Unclaimed Hexes on the board. Unclaimed Hexes do not yet have a player's Claim Token on them. In all cases, there will be some leftover Home Tokens.
10. Each player draws a starting hand of 5 cards. The starting player is selected: the player who most recently dug a hole in the ground. **Play will always continue to the left.**
Now the game is ready to play!

ESSENTIAL INFO: AREA CONTROL AND MAJORITY

Hexes consist of a central Claim Spot surrounded by 3, 4, 5, or 6, Mole Spaces (these look like little burrow-holes). The more Mole Spaces that are on a Hex, the more Domain Points it is worth at the end of the game (listed near the center of the Hex). By balancing expansion and defense of various Hexes, players can gain and hold on to Hexes until the end of the game. Having the largest population of Moles in a Hex is key to gaining Majority (and Domain Points) across the game board.

Mole Spaces: burrow holes on each Hex.

Whenever all the Mole Spaces on a Hex are occupied by Moles, players must immediately check to see who has Majority Control of that Hex.

- **If a Hex is completely occupied by a single player's Moles,** that player has Majority.
- **If a Hex is occupied by several player's Moles,** the player with the MOST Moles in that Hex has Majority.
- **If there is a tie for Majority,** the player whose Moles most recently moved into that Hex has Majority.
- **If the last player to move into a Hex does not have majority and there is a tie between two or more other players for Majority**, the tied player who most recently had a turn has Majority.

Once Majority is determined, the player with Majority takes one of their unused Claim Tokens and places it on the Claim Spot of that Hex.

If a Hex has a Claim Token on it, but no Moles, the Claim Token is removed and returned to the respective player's supply.

By effectively choosing when to defend ones territory or aggressively move forward, a player will be able to use their understanding of **Majority** to their advantage. The timing of placement of Claim Tokens can shift the balance of Domain Points even up to the end of the game.

ESSENTIAL INFO: WHAT IS A "TUNNEL NETWORK?"

The Tunnel Network is the series of Hexes across the board over which a player has some form of control. It is important for a player to keep the extent of their own Tunnel Network in mind at all times, as well as that of the other players.

There are three categories of Hexes in a player's Tunnel Network, listed here with the most important first:

1. **Claimed Hexes:** A player has a Claim Token in this Hex. It is worth points to them at the end of the game.
2. **Occupied Hexes**: A player has a Mole Token in this Hex.
3. **Neighbor Hexes**: This Hex shares a border with at least one of that player's Occupied Hex(es).

The MOVE and CONVERT actions are the only way to increase the spread of a player's Tunnel Network.

A general strategy is to spread outward from a player's Claimed Hexes to create more Occupied Hexes around them, and aggressively move into Neighbor Hexes whenever possible. Successfully defending Occupied Hexes and converting them to Claimed Hexes is critical to winning the game.

Note that players may share a Tunnel Network. Players may have other player's Moles in Hexes they have Claim Tokens. That's okay. Just remember that, as soon as a Hex has all spaces filled with Moles, the player who has majority occupancy places their Claim Token on it.
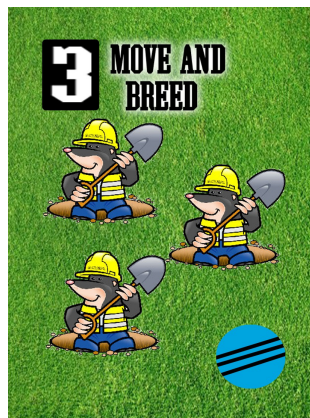
ESSENTIAL INFO: STACKABLE CARDS

On their turn, the Active Player can play up to *one* Action card and any number of stackable cards from their hand. Normal actions have the grassy background behind them, while stackable effects always have a lighter-shaded background on them. **Any number of Stackable Effects can be added to an initial Action card.** Additionally:

THEN: When a Stackable Effect is preceded with the word "THEN," add its effect to the Active Player's turn when that card is used as an Action.
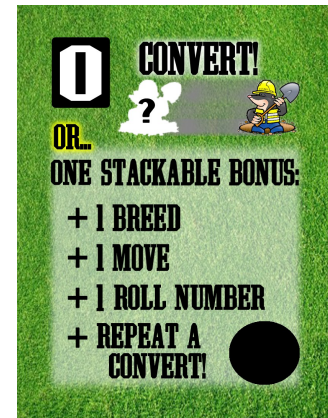
OR: This Stackable Effect only takes place when the card is used as a Stackable Card, NOT as that turn's Action.
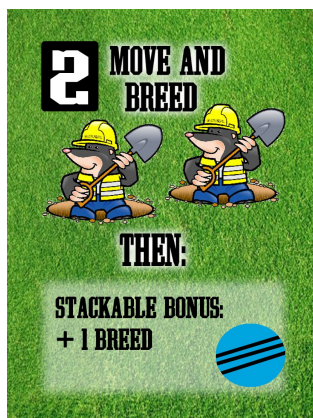
This card has a Stackable Effect. If used as an Action, add the Stackable Effect to the Action.	NO stackable effect here	Cannot use the Stackable Effect if this card is used as an Action.

PLAYER TURNS

The Active Player, or the player whose turn it is, may either play an Action card - placing them into the Discard Pile after use - or completely discard his or her hand.

- **If the player chose to play a card and any stackable cards,** he or she resolves those cards, draws 1 card to hand, and passes turn to the player on the left. **If that player's hand size reaches zero,** he or she immediately ends turn and draws a full hand of 5 cards.
- **If the player chose to fully discard,** he or she ends turn draws a new hand of 5 cards and passes turn to the player on the left.

The Active Player can play up to *one* Action card and any number of stackable cards from their hand. Normal actions have the grassy background behind them, while stackable effects always have a lighter-shaded background on them. There are three types of cards: Action Cards, Number Cards, and Special Effect cards which are explained in the following section.

Players who cannot make a legal action or play a card on their turn must pass turn. Players who must pass turn in this way are encouraged to discard their hand and redraw up to 5 cards.

There are three types of cards: Action Cards, Number Cards, and Special Effect cards which are explained in the following section.

NUMBER CARDS

These are the most plentiful cards in a player's deck, and will comprise most of a player's actions. A NUMBER CARD has a white number in a black square displayed prominently on it. This number indicates the number of mole tokens that can either MOVE to or BREED in Hexes on the board.

- *BREED* means to take a Mole Token from the Active Player's supply and place it on an empty space on a Hex that's Claimed by the Active Player (the Hex will have the Active Player's Claim Token at its center).
- *MOVE* means to take an Active Player's Mole Token already on the board and move it from a Claimed Hex to *any other* Hex within their Tunnel Network (to a Claimed, Occupied, or Neighbor Hex). Movement **must** begin at a Claimed Hex. It cannot start from an Occupied Hex.

There is one NUMBER card that allows a bonus of +1 BREED after a MOVE AND BREED of 2. In this case, you may MOVE AND BREED up to two Moles, and then BREED an additional Mole beyond those first two. This is also a Stackable bonus in itself, so this card receives the +1 BREED Bonus whether it's that turn's Action or just a Stackable bonus.

SPECIAL EFFECT CARDS

- *CAVE-IN/MAKE A HOME:* Choose one of the Actions from this card to perform at the start of your turn.
  - *To Make A Home,* **take the Home Token from a Hex you have claimed, keeping the number secret from the other players until scoring at the end of the game.** These are extra Domain Points you have earned by fortifying the Hexes where your Moles live. There is no limit to the number of times you may Make A Home, but you may only Make A Home in a Hex you have Claimed. You still hold on to those Home Tokens even if you no longer Claim that Hex.
  - **To *Cave-In,* take 2 Cave-In Tokens from your supply, and add them to any Hex or Hexes where you have a Claim Token.** Put the Cave-In Token along one edge of that Claimed Hex. For the rest of the game, the Cave-In Token prevents any Moles to move

across that edge, either into or out of that Hex. **If you have no more Cave-In tokens remaining, you may NOT perform this action.**
To finish this action, take a face-down Home Token from those not used on the game board. Just like Home Tokens gained through the Make A Home action, this Home Token is now yours and will be added to your score at the end of the game.

- *CONVERT:* use this card to replace another player's Mole with your own. Convert cards may be used only within your own Tunnel Network, and ignores Cave-In Tokens. To use this card:
  - **Choose a target Hex** that is within your Tunnel Network.
  - **Play the CONVERT card** and move it to your Discard Pile.
  - **Remove one opponent's Mole from that Hex.** Return it to that opponent.
  - **Take one of your own Moles from your supply, and put it in the same space you just emptied.**
  - **If the Hex is completely occupied now, you must re-assess Majority** to see which player now Claims that Hex.

  Note that this is also a Stackable card. Choose one of the effects listed in the lighter-shaded area of this card and carry out its effect. Some special considerations:
  - +1 ROLL NUMBER and REPEAT CONVERT actions can be chosen only if this card is stacked on that specfic action (for example, you may add +1 ROLL NUMBER only if you first played a GROUNDSKEEPER card as that turn's action).
  - This card does not allow a CONVERT action against 2 Moles when played on its own – it must be stacked on another CONVERT card to do that.
  - The MOVE and BREED actions can be stacked on any previously-played Action.

- *GROUNDSKEEPER:* use this card to reduce the number of Moles in any Hex on the board. To use this card:
  - **Choose a Target Hex anywhere on the board.**
  - **Play the GROUNDSKEEPER and a NUMBER CARD and add both to your Discard Pile.** The number on the NUMBER CARD is now the ROLLING NUMBER.
  - **Pick one mole, and move either clockwise or counter-clockwise around the Mole Spaces in the Hex.** The Groundskeeper will continue to roll up to the ROLL NUMBER of Moles from that Hex, until an empty space is encountered. **The Groundskeeper will stop rolling if it encounters an empty space,** even if the ROLL NUMBER would allow a Groundskeeper to continue rolling.
  - **Any Moles rolled over by the Groundskeeper are returned to the supply of their respective Players.**

  You may perform this card's BREED action at the end of your turn, if you wish.

  This is a Stackable card, meaning that you may play a NUMBER CARD or ACTION CARD beforehand, and then use this card's BREED Bonus at the end of your turn. Play and discard it as you would any Action Card, but in this case the Special Effect is ignored. You may not use the GROUNDSKEEPER action as a Stackable action, only BREED.

- *GOPHER IT!*: use this card to steal cards from other players and add them to your draw deck. To use this card:
  - Choose a target opponent.
  - Look through the top three cards of their Discard pile.
  - Select one, and add it to your own Discard pile.
  - Put your used GOPHER IT! Card in your target opponent's Discard pile.

You may perform this card's BREED action at the end of your turn, if you wish.

This is a Stackable card, meaning that you may play a NUMBER CARD or ACTION CARD beforehand, and then use this card's BREED Bonus at the end of your turn. Play and discard it as you would any Action Card, but in this case the Special Effect is ignored. You may not use the GROUNDSKEEPER action as a Stackable action, only BREED.

END OF GAME
The game ends when at least one of these end conditions has been met:
- An Active Player has placed their last Claim Token on the board.
- All Hexes have been Claimed by players.
- Only one player's Claim Tokens remain on the board (a decisive Victory)

At that point, each player must add up their Domain Points:
- The numbers found on any Hexes they have placed a Claim Token (face value of points).
- The numbers found on any Home Tokens they have collected throughout the game (face value of points).

The player with the most Domain Points is the winner! If there is a tie, wins go to the player who has the most Moles on the board (or fewest Moles remaining in their supply). If there's still a tie, the win goes to the player who has the highest sum from the NUMBER CARDS in their hand (add all the values together). Still tied? Then it's a draw.

NEED MORE HELP?
There is extensive documentation for **MOLE MAJORITY** found on the Board Game Designer's Forum (BGDF):

http://www.bgdf.com/game-journal/mole-majority

Stephen Thomas, designer, can be contacted via email or phone.
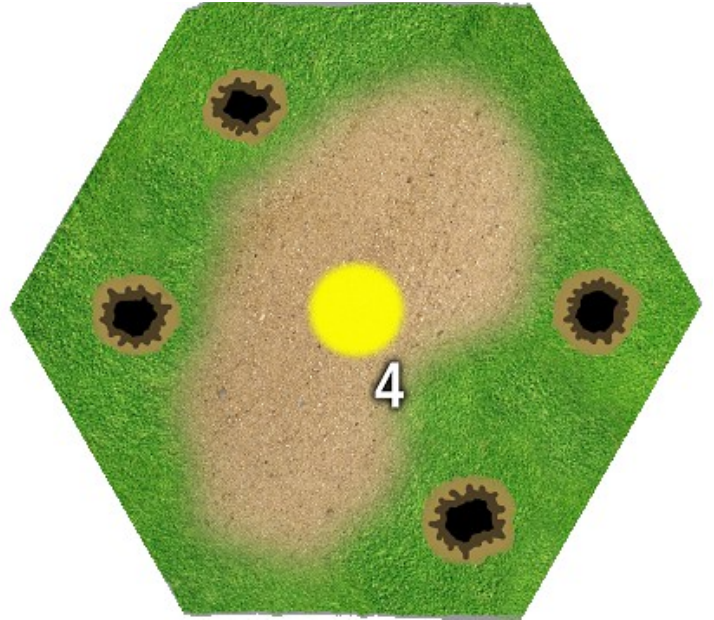**Email: editor@let-off.com**
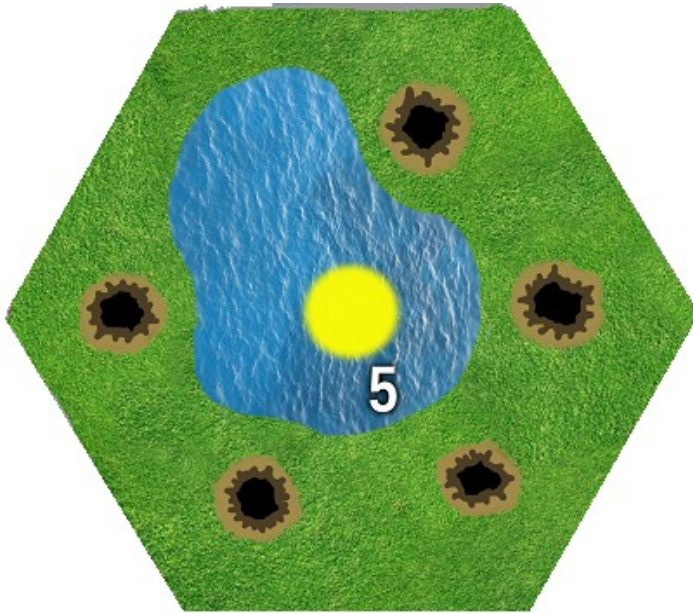**Phone:(USA): 443-653-2120**
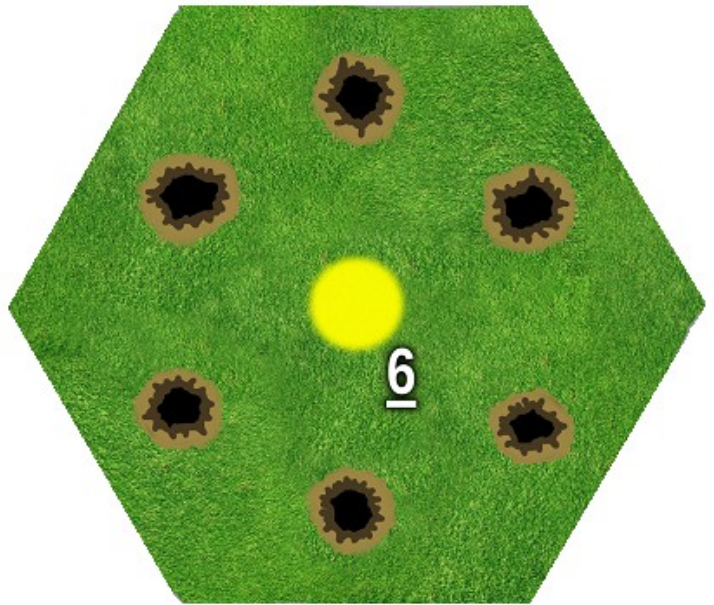
"THANK YOU FOR PLAY!"

HEXES AND POINT VALUES

3-point Hex

4-point Hex

5-point Hex

6-point Hex

CARDS AND EXPLANATIONS

4 MOVE AND BREED
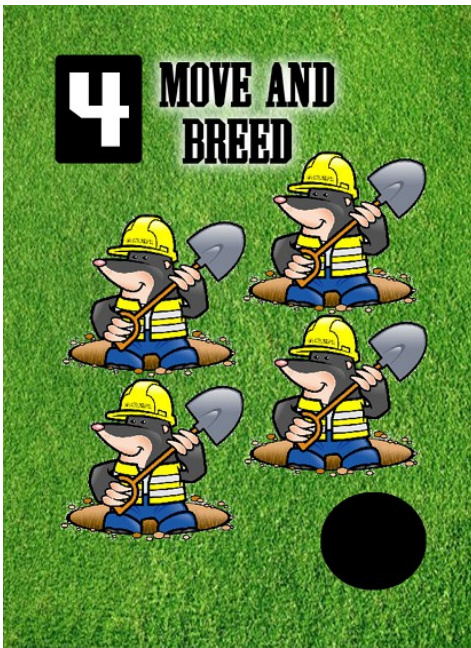
NUMBER CARD: MOVE OR BREED up to 4 Moles in any combination.
Also in the MOVE OR BREED 3 variety.

2 MOVE AND BREED

THEN:

STACKABLE BONUS: + 1 BREED

NUMBER CARD: MOVE OR BREED up to 2 Moles in any combination, then BREED an additional Mole if you wish.
Stackable Card: +1 Breed

**GOPHER IT!**

THEN:

STACKABLE BONUS: + 1 BREED
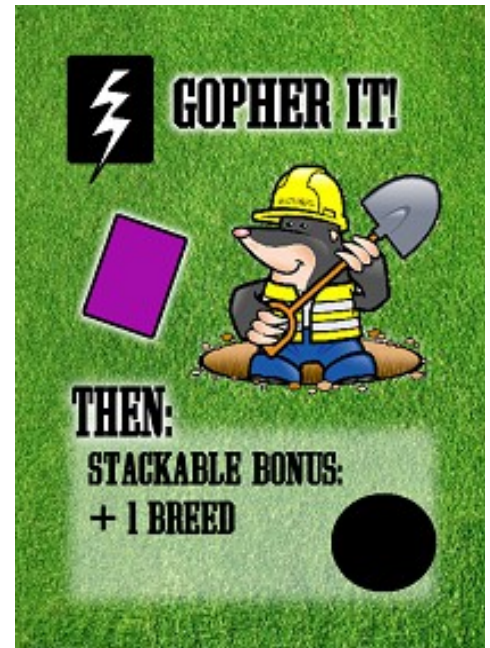
SPECIAL EFFECT: Take a card from the top three in an opponent's discard, and switch it with this one.
Stackable Card: +1 Breed

2 MOVE AND BREED

AND BUILD:

1 HOME   OR   2 CAVE-INS
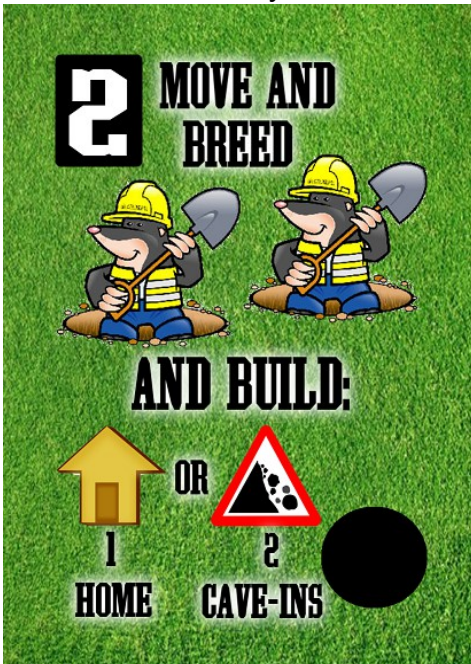
SPECIAL EFFECT: MOVE OR BREED up to 2 Moles, then either place 2 Cave-In barriers OR take 1 Home Token from a Hex you have already Claimed.

0 CONVERT!

OR...
ONE STACKABLE BONUS:
+ 1 BREED
+ 1 MOVE
+ 1 ROLL NUMBER
+ REPEAT A CONVERT!
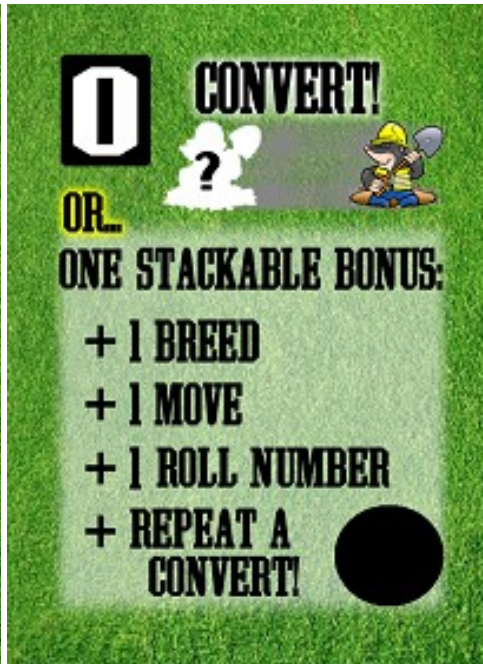
SPECIAL EFFECT: CONVERT a Mole from a Hex in your Network.
Stackable Card: +1 MOVE or BREED.
Stack on a GROUNDSKEEPER to add +1 ROLL NUMBER.
Stack on CONVERT for REPEAT CONVERT.

GROUNDSKEEPER!

ADD A NUMBER CARD

THEN:

STACKABLE BONUS: + 1 BREED
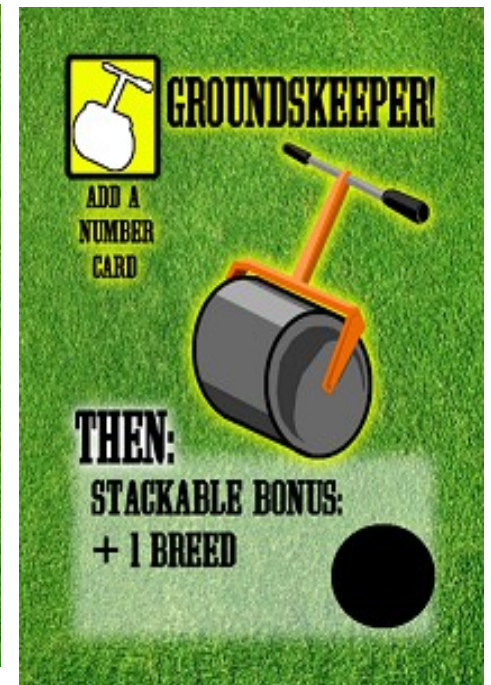
SPECIAL EFFECT: Play and add a NUMBER CARD to Roll Over and remove up to that many Moles in any Hex on the game board.
Stackable Card: +1 or +2 Breed (shown on card)