

NEW TROOPS

CHRONOPIA

by André "Duncan" Winter

Scythe Worms

The swamps of the Fallen Lands are not only home to the swamp goblins and their insectoid mounts, but also to much stranger beings. In ancient times, when the Stygians were just at beginnings of their first empire, Scythe Worms already inhabited the swamplands of Chronopia. Part reptile, part insect - maybe a race of its own as they don't seem to be indigenous to this world, possibly a world that has many more than its share of monsters and strange beings. Their slender but also surprisingly strong bodies lend a deadly elegance to their attacks. Their attacks become even more horrible by the fact that there seems to be no structure in their behavior. At one time they burrow out of the ground right under their victims and at other times they shoot out of swamps or fall from trees. Even the dreaded tree devils know to fear the high-pitched sound of scythe claws, which are capable of cutting through nearly anything in fractions of a second. Although blind in the way we understand the world but nevertheless outfitted with an excellent but alien sense of their surrounding the Scythe Worms come close to being the ultimate swamp predator. Strangely there was never found even the tiniest trace of a Scythe Worm culture. We should consider ourselves fortunate that sightings report only single worms. Fortunate because a single worm could lay waste to an entire unit of fighting men. Warbands attacked by these worms, and many had to die before even the slightest bits of information about their existence got to our ears, relay stories about their incredibly advanced capability to regenerate body parts. Scythe claws that were recently severed from the body started to regenerate after only a few minutes, even while those abominations feasted on the ravaged bodies of our comrades. Rumors about that even the armies of the prophets avoid areas reported to be inhabited by scythe worms.

Worming through the game

Even with the first time I had a look at the Red Terror in the Tyranid Codex I had fallen in love with it. Compared to the rest of the Tyranids this sculpt has something truly natural to it. One could look at it and say, "Yes, something like this could live somewhere in the universe!" It does not have that overdrawn design many GW products do have. At that time I had already

designed a swamp-scape for my Swamp Goblins it was quite easy to determine where and how that beastie would be deployed. The whole miniature yelled, "Take me to the jungle!" Aware of Chronopia's balanced rule system I did not desire to unhinge it and there was no sense in introducing a monster that would give a single army an unfair advantage. Even alone it could play in the same league as the Sisters of Tiamat, but the design was more inspired by Alien rather than by the Stygian reptiles. My first decision was to let it be run by all players and second it had to be connected to the landscape. The Scythe Worm has to be experienced as a force of nature, meaning nature became the balancing element at the table that interfered with the plans of every player. By creating a table of reactions it was possible to give control in succession to the players. This allowed for a not too random behavior but also avoided giving too much power to a single player. In fact, the worm can even turn against the player running it. Since the worm is quite powerful I would suggest that you have no more than one in any single game, but there are no limits to the scenarios in which it can be used. One interesting scenario is to have all the players have orders to destroy the other player, but to ultimately be successful they first have to cooperate to get rid of that nasty worm. A good way to avoid the usual last-man-standing fights.

Hatching the worm

After determining how the Scythe Worm could be integrated into Chronopia I got a copy of the stats from the Tyranid Codex and a Red Terror miniature. Cleaning up was a bit more significant than with products from Excelsior or FASA, but nothing to shy away from, like the Balrog from GW that caused me some problems. The lower half of the worm is a little bit tricky to clean up as the mold lines could have been placed better than along the most structured part of the miniature. The upper half is a breeze to clean up though. Pining would be an option but the shape of some parts prohibits it and all of the part fit together snugly anyway. I really liked that the joints made it easy to position the claws in nearly any position imaginable. This allowed me to create a less static appearance. But be warned, the Red Terror picture GW shows would take you claws from two Red Terrors to make it look like it is in the picture, it's not possible to create this look with the parts included in a single kit. After one day of cleaning up and filling some gaps the worm was ready to get a black base color. I have not decided which colors to paint it since at the moment I'm paying more attention to getting my Elves painted

but it will be a paint scheme like those seen in the swamp goblins book, the Tyranid codex picture and various natural insects.

Game Stats

CC	MW	PW	LD	AC	W	ST	MV	A	DEF	Cost	SZ
13	-	-	13	3	3	2	Spec	25	-1	92	2

Special Abilities

- Immune to Panic and Fear
- Causes Fear
- Leap
- Sense Presence
- Ferocity
- Unseen Assailant, Stealth
- Feast

Special Rules

- Once per turn, as part of a regular attack action, a Scythe Worm can attack with its tail in addition to either a Bite or Scythe attack.
- Across open ground it moves 6, below with 1d4 inches. For two actions it can shoot towards its target at 1d6+6 and gets one free claw attack. This rushing attack cannot be combined with the tail attack above.
- Appendage Sacrifices. A Scythe Worm has four large claws or scythes, which are used in close combat. Even though they are mainly used for attacking, and then only one claw is used during an attack action, a Scythe Worm can choose to lose two of their four claws instead of suffering a single wound from close combat. Basically, the Scythe Worm deflects the blow away from its body using its claws, which are severed in the process. In the long term the claws will eventually grow back, but during an encounter they can be used to prolong its life.

Weapons

- Scythe Claws (Dam12*2)
- Bite (Dam 13)
- Tail (Dam 12)

The Scythe Worm cannot be purchased by any army and a more appropriate 'owner' for the beast would be the land itself. Cost is included to account for victory points or if you want to match an army of Scythe Worms against a regular army.

Deployment:

After all player troops are deployed the game table should be sectioned off into areas of equal size that do not include any standard deployment zones and the Scythe Worm should be randomly assigned a starting position.



Control:

Each turn a randomly determined player takes control of the Scythe Worm.

Movement:

If there are any models within 9" and LOS of the Scythe Worm it will consider that its target and will move directly towards it using a randomly determined movement method (See below) for each action until it is in contact and then will use attack actions until the model is dead. If there are no models within 9" and LOS of the Scythe Worm roll on the deviation table to determine its facing and roll for movement method (see below) for each action until it is within 9" and LOS of an enemy.

Movement Table: d10

- 1-2 Below Ground
- 3-4 In the Trees (If available, otherwise ground)
- 5-9 Ground Level Movement
- 10 No Movement (action wasted)

If a Scythe Worm attacks from Below ground or from In the Trees they receive an additional +2 to their CC score for their first attack from that position.

Victory Points are scored for the player that successfully kills the Scythe Worm.