

Fruit

Not Your Garden-Variety Trick-Taking Game

There is a magical tree that grows 32 different fruits, and you want to gather as many as you can—but it's tricky.

The Deck

Instead of ranks and suits, the Fruit deck mimics the structure of the tree by grouping the 32 different fruits by size, flavor, chroma (brightness), color, and type. The tree is made up of those 32 fruit cards and 30 branches. Each branch supports two more specific branches, which each support two, and so on, until the finest little limbs support no branches, but instead two fruits: one Berry and one Drupe.

So the **Large...** branch supports two more branches, **Large Sweet...** and **Large Tart...** while **Small Tart...** supports **Small Tart Bright...** and **Small Tart Dull...**, and **Large Sweet Bright...** supports both **Large Sweet Bright Red...** and **Large Sweet Bright Yellow...** which supports **Large Sweet Bright Yellow Berry** and **Large Sweet Bright Yellow Drupe**.

Thus, you might have a **Large Sweet Bright Red Berry** or a **Small Tart Dull Yellow Drupe** or any combination of those traits. There are also a handful of special cards (**Sun**, **Moon**, **Stars**, **Rain**, **Leaf**, and **Trunk**).

Set Up

Decide which special cards you're using, if any. For a first game, you might just include the **Moon** and **Trunk**. Set aside all the other special cards, including the blank, the **Uncle**, and the card which just says "...". Deal as many cards as you can evenly to each player and set aside the remaining cards.

Playing

The game plays as a trick-taking game: The first player leads any card; players must follow, if they can, and one card will win the trick. Whoever played that card will (usually) collect the cards and lead the next trick. When all tricks have been played, look at who collected the most fruits to see who won. But what does "follow" mean, and what wins the trick?

"Following" means playing a card that either describes (and supports) or is described by (supported by) the card that was led. You can think of this as either adding or removing words,

but not both. The trick will be won by whichever card is the most general and describes the card that was led. (This might be the lead card.) So if someone leads **Large Tart Dull...** you could play **Large...**, or **Large Tart...**, either of which might win. Or you can play any branch or fruit that starts with "Large Tart Dull" — but of course, it won't win because it's more specific than **Large Tart Dull...**

The hard part is playing the cards at the right time to catch a lot of fruit.

Special Cards

There are a few special cards that change how that trick works. They're all pretty important, in their own way. Most of them can be played as if they follow when you want them to be, but never have to be. If two special cards conflict, whichever was played first wins. Special cards can't be led unless you have nothing else to lead. If they are led, all cards are considered to follow for that trick.

Sun: Whoever played this card gets to lead the next trick. But they don't get the cards; the cards go to whoever would have won otherwise.

Moon: This card wins the trick, but you may not play this card if you have any fruit or branch that follows the lead. (If you know other trick-taking games, this is like a one-card trump suit.)

Stars: Whoever plays this card collects the cards from the trick as if they won. But they don't lead; the lead is determined as if this card wasn't played.

Rain: Nobody wins this trick. The cards are set aside as if they weren't dealt, and the same player leads again. If the Sun or Stars are played, that player leads, instead.

Leaf: This card doesn't do anything special, it's just a way to avoid playing a card that follows but that you aren't ready to play.

Trunk and **...**: These are the same card, some people just prefer it to say "Trunk" and some prefer it to say "...". Only use one of them. It supports and describes the two other biggest branches, "Large..." and "Small..." and all other branches and fruits. It follows any lead.

Uncle: This isn't used. It's just a nut who likes eating fruit.

Whoever collects the most fruit wins!