

## **The Slumber Cave of the Moss Giant**

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This is a short dungeon and a sketch of a town/mountain wilderness environment to go with it.

It is statted (sparsely) for „Into the Odd“ by Chris McDowall (Free League Publishing), but should be easily adapted to all games of the old-schooly „Caverns and Scaled Monsters“-kind.

Lured by the promise of treasure and ancient lore, the PC will venture into the cave of a slumbering giant, a spirit of nature and master gardener, whose home has been overgrown with glowing blue moss. The blue light in the cave is slowly turning every humanoid into a walking moss creature, so players should make sure to keep an eye on the time they spend in the cave.

They will also be confronted with some traps, natural obstacles and weird NPC, who have made the cave their home during the giant's sleep. Almost every encounter can be dealt with in a non-violent way, some easier than others. The dungeon offers hooks into further adventures.

The dungeon has an atmosphere somewhere between a Ghibli movie and the „Adventure Time“-cartoon series: whimsical, quirky, odd, but with an eerie, surreal and sometimes violent streak. Depending on your taste, it can be bent in either of these directions.

## **The Town of Flos**

A half a day's journey from the cave.

About 120 inhabitants plus d8 travelers coming through. Dwarf prospectors, solitary Elvish rangers, merchants, wizards investigating eldritch secrets, on rare occasions a group of the white ape men from the monastery of Klesh.

People live in earth mounds covered by rocks. Each houses a family or clan of 8-20.

There is a town hall/gathering place/temple to the Earth goddess Shuraf, the 'Blue Turtle Inn' (no one knows why it's called that nor what a turtle actually is) and a small marketplace.

Meritocracy of elders and respected community members (gardeners, priests, weather seers, smart leaders) as the 'Tardak' (council).

Flos can muster up to 30 average fighters with simple equipment to defend the town, 3 of whom are very skilled fighters who can act as leaders (their names are Uni, Wel, and Daf) and there is 1 priest (Cib), who can heal, influence the weather, cause fear in enemies and ask spirits for a favor.

Flos is big on flowers and spices. Every family/clan has their own garden. Merchants (and the white ape monks from Klesh) come

from far away to buy perfumes, scented oils, and ointments at high prices.

The town is very well off and thus generous to share what it has.

People speak Common with a weird accent and some funny words and expressions.

Common names: Nim, Rok, Vym, Tulda, Orn, Ari, Fav.

People fear the mythological 'small people', who are said to have lived in the area before humans and ape men came, and have since retreated underground. Stick figures in trees and over doors are hung to ward the small people off.

### **Rumors about the Slumber Cave of the Blue Moss Giant**

1 Some weird people have been asking for it lately. One of them got into trouble with Poa's gals, and when they poked 'im a bit with a sword, a tendril came out. Like he was just a potted plant in a coat, you know?

2 I once took me boy there and luv'd 'im so hard his eyes turned blue. No, literally. Might 'ave been that weird light, though.

3 The entrance is a flower what only opens on a blue moon. Reminds me of my gal some. You understand? Opens only on a blue moon? Like, she won't ... forget it. Best jokes don't work on some people.

4 I once found a giant slug close by. Ugly fucker. Gnawed its way out of the ground. Glad it was dead. Tasted like shit, too.

5 Don't you believe all about that treasure what is s'pposed ta be in there. Got hauled out long ago. See this ring? My grampa took it out of there. From a dead guy's finger. Said the guy was still walking then, as a corpse, like. Me grampa put a knife through his eye. Left the knife, took the ring. Today is nothing there but that weird moss what makes you sick.

6 Guy went in there couple years ago. Never came back out again. Said he was going ta meddletit or find a god or sumthin. A hermit, is what it's called. Ain't no giant there. It's that guy.

7 My cousin Ori once took shelter in there from a blizzard. Got kidnapped by the small folk, the ferries, right? They use us men to percreate. Trouble is, they're only as big as a thumb and half rats. So they have ta git cerative 'bout the percreatin'. Stopped being fun real quick for cousin Ori.

8 Know that lake up in the mountains? If you dive to the ground, there's a secret entrance. We used to look into it as kids. They always told us not to swim through that tunnel, but it ain't no big deal, really. Water's real cold, though.

9 The giant asks you a riddle and the answer is "man, as a child, a grown up and an old guy." That's what me grandma told me. Her uncle went in there and the giant gave him a flower when he knew the answer. It was still growing in our yard when I was a kid. The goat ate it up and started speaking. We had to put it down. The goat, I mean. "Please don't kill me", it was bleatin'. Goat cheese, never liked it after that one.

10 The giant collects gems and precious stones and such. He carves them into flowers and hides them up in the mountains. That cave is stuffed with diamonds and shit.

11 The giant is a man. He ain't right in his head and is mishappen, like. But harmless, really. Poor ugly bugger.

12 The giant visits our town disguised as a merchant or hunter. If you help him do a task or buy his stuff, he gives you pocket full of gold, but it will all turn to flower petals the next day.

13 You know the people what used to live here before us? The small people? You can still find their cairns up in the mountains. Is where they buried their dead. Don't go near there. Anyway, the giant was their god. He was asleep when our ancestors drove his people out, and he's been asleep ever since up in his cave. Gonna be mighty angry when he wakes up.

14 There's a hole in that cave what goes down and down and down. Leads to the other side of the Earth, where it's all shadow and cold and where the dead people live. Or not live. You know what I mean. They tell you all kinds of secrets and they bring you back up here, if you take 'em with you. They live here as shadows. But they know stuff, these dead people. I've seen them sometimes, at night, in the mountains.

15 People will tell you all kinds of weird shit about that cave. But the fact is, there is nothing there. It is all made up to scare you away. Because when we first came here and drove out the small people, we found their treasure, see? But nobody wanted to touch it. It was weird stuff. Hexes and the like. So they stuffed in that cave and planted that giant flower to seal the entrance. It's all still there. Hey, when you go there, can I come? I know the way.

16 Cave? Giant? I got a giant cave right here in my pants, sweetie. Wanna see? It ain't smell like roses, though. Haw, haw. Seriously, that's where the youngsters here go to make out. Me, I'm not a youngster anymore, but if you care for some warm attention, this old lady here knows the drill. Lemme tell ya, I've aged like some fine fragrance.

17 I used to go there as a kid to, you know. When I had a sweetheart? We live in these big families here, in the these big huts. Not a lot of privacy there. And that cave is always warm, and the ground is soft with the moss. There is a nice light in there, blue, kind of. Makes your head swirl a little and adds to the atmosphere. Don't stay in too long, though. Turns your hair and eyes blue. No kidding. Goes away with a bit of sunlight, though. But when you come home around here looking blue, everybody knows what you've been up to. If you go in deeper, the moss gets pit-like, and you sink in it. Never went in further.

18 I never went in very far, but I did hear the sound of a waterfall. Funny smell. Like Earth in spring, but stronger, you know? Unpleasant. Like the Earth would drag you in and never spit you back out again.

19 Been to the "Blue Turtle"? Most people here don't know, but that name comes from that cave. There is a tale my granny told me about the turtle what lives in that cave. It hides in a pool and when you come near, it tries to put its horn into you lap, if you're a virgin. Hey, wait. I never really thought about that story, but maybe that's just a way of saying, that's where people go to make out. Huh. Had to be become this old to finally realize that, eh?

20 My girl Marl got lost in that cave. One of the hunters what come through charmed her away from her and they went there to, you know. When they didn't come back, next blue moon, I go looking, although I figured they'd be dead. I did my crying, but still. I found that elf hunter she went with at the entrance. No hint of her. Fuckin' hate elves. Always have. Hey, that's some pointy looking ears you have there.

### **Notable places and creatures of the area.**

The giant eagle Theromau, a knight in an armor made of shells looking for a worthy opponent, the owl witch Panjamur, the skeleton of a black dragon, the cairns of the small people, the Whispering Cataract, the Snow Valley, the Eternal Avalanche, the Queen of the Goats, the Wandering Tree, the Cave of Hands and Feet, the Immovable Cloud, the Mad Wanderer.

### **Things to stumble upon in the snow and among the rocks.**

A mirror, a closed coffin, a rusty knife, a necklace adorned with teeth, a bottle of rum, a lock, a single beautiful flower, a coat with a tattooed arm left in one sleeve, a piano (painfully out of tune), pages torn from a pamphlet of cheap pornography, a key, a letter with only the words 'murder', 'Thursday' and 'by fire' legible, a bag full of wooly hair, a lens, a small comet.

## **Smells and nuances of taste (perfumes, flowers, oils, herbs etc)**

Lemon zest, sandalwood, old leather, vanilla, moss, fresh sweat, brine, earth, honey, mushrooms, lilac, strawberry, peach, pine cone, incense, alcohol, patchouli, amber, bergamot, lavender, orange, tobacco.

Helpful modifiers: a whiff of, with a hint of, an afterthought of, a spritz of, with subtle notes of, reminding of, a breeze of, an onslaught of, an overpowering wave of, a torrent of, a whirlwind of.

## **The Cave**

### **The effects of the blue moss**

For each turn the PC spend in the cave, have each player roll 1d6. On 1-3, nothing happens. On 4-6, let that PC move one notch up the mutation ladder.

0 A slight buzz in the head, not unpleasant, but distracting. -1 on all rolls.

1 Hair turns blue

2 Bluesight; eyes turn blue, the lighting in the cave seems natural, there is no penalty to checks anymore. Any other kind of light hurts and inflicts a -1 penalty.

3 Blue fuzz growing all over the body

4 PC recieves all nutrition through the blue fuzz on the body; cannot breathe, eat or drink normally anymore.

5 PC may communicate with the moss in the cave i.e. sense vaguely, what is behind a door, whether there is danger lurking or what once happened at a certain location via a short mental flash.

6 1d6 rounds time before the PC is immobilized and turns into a part of the moss. The PC is lost to the player and can only be retrieved by strong magic.

Effects 0-5 may be reversed by prolonged exposure of the whole body (naked, that is) to sunlight (1d8 hours per notch).

### **Random encounters in the Cave**

For each turn, roll 1d6

1 **1 d8 gnome riders on rats**. They are shy and don't speak or understand any humanoid language. They are immune to the effects of the blue light. Their blood can be made into an antidote against the mutations.

STR 8, DEX 11, WIS 10. 3 hp. Armor 1. Nasty little Crossbow d4. Upon a hit, you will shrink to become the size of a gnome within d6 rounds.

2 **1 d4 Giant slugs**. STR 10, DEX 12, WIS 5. 6 hp. Vulnerable to salt and fire. Circular maw d6, causes bleeding wounds at -1 hp each round until tended to. Poisonous to the touch, -1 hp, causing ugly pustules.

The slugs eat rock and leave tunnels in the walls. Small beings can use these tunnels to go places.

3 **1d4 mossy skeletons**. STR 10, DEX 10, WIS 5. 5 hp. Bony claws and teeth d6. Can only be hurt by blunt weapons. They never flee. At 0 hp, they collapse and re-build within d4 rounds, unless ground to dust.

4 **2 Moss guardians**. STR 12, DEX 8, WIS 10. 8 hp. Armor 2. Wrestling attack d6. DEX save to leave their deadly embrace. While in the embrace, -1 hp and an extra check on the moss scale per round.



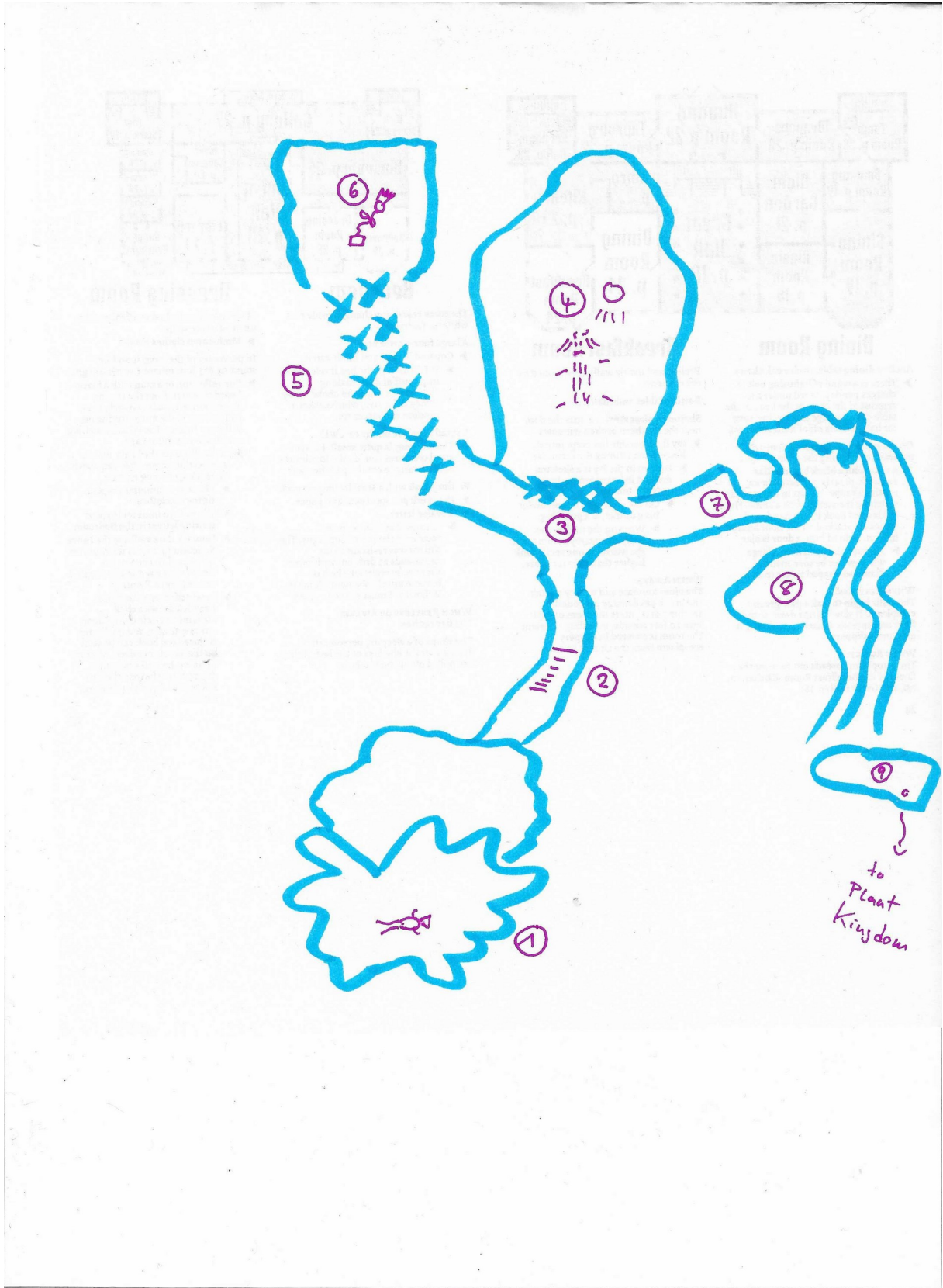
5 **Ghost of the town girl Marl.** She came here years ago to make out with an Elf who traveled through town. She is not aware that she is dead. If confronted with that fact, she will react first with incredulity, then with utter devastation. Marl can speak, hover, and move through walls, but not hold anything. She knows the architecture of the cave and its inhabitants, save for the garden and Princess Fuchsia, since she never went there when she was alive. She will want her bones to be recovered from the bottom of the waterfall and be buried in town. All checks at 12.

6 **A giant centipede.** Scales, teeth, poison glands and flashing eyes can be harvested from the dead monster. The light of the eyes negates the effect of the blue light. The centipede may be tamed using the herbs from the hothouse garden, which it loves. It also feeds on the gnome riders.

STR 14, DEX 12, WIS 8. 12 hp. Armor 3. Bite d8. Poison: Blinds you for d6 rounds (-2 to all checks). If bit another time, at 1-3 in d6 you start to liquefy from the inside over the course of d6 rounds. -2 to all attributes per round. Die as a blubbery puddle.

Flashing eyes: A beam of unnatural white light, confusing all creatures within a range of 4 m for 1 round. Roll d6: 1 flee, 2-4 attack friends next round, 5 hurt yourself for 2 hp, 6 all out attack the centipede.

The Cave Proper



Unless noted otherwise, the interior is wholly covered hand-deep in thick, moist blue moss. The moss gives off a shimmering blue light that causes the mutation. PC can see for about three m away. A faint hum emanates from the moss.

**1 Entrance to the Cave.** Covered by giant flower petals that only open by the light of the full moon. A blue sheen from inside. There is a corpse on the ground.

Upon closer inspection, it turns out to be the remnants of an elf with all the signs of six notches on the mutation scale. He carries a handaxe (d8, "Nutbiter" inscribed in floral elvish runes on the handle), 4g and a letter to his wife, a certain Dunga in the town of Munima (his name, apparently, is/was Oswald)

**2 Tunnel.** 10 m long. Big enough for one human to walk upright. Party has to go single file. After 4 m, there is a 2 m long, 3 m deep pit deep in the moss. DEX save to avoid sinking, STR save to work through to the other side without aid. Each round spent in the pit - 1 hp. Every other round spent in the pit, extra roll for mutation.

**3 Crossing.** A tangle of blueish roots seals the entrance to the slumber cave at 4. Snoring can be heard from within. The exoskeleton of a giant centipede can be discovered deep within the tangle, apparently sucked dry. STR save to push through. Fail has PC stuck in the roots, which start sucking the life from them. -1 hp per round. Sucking noises wake the sleeping giant at 1-2 on d6.

Prolonged disturbances in this area wake the giant at 1 in d6 in the first round, 2 in d6 the second and so on.

A trickle emanates from under the tangle and disappears in the tunnel to the right. The sound of a small waterfall from further down that way.

Strong smell of plant green and an increasing hothouse atmosphere in the tunnel to the left.

**4 A 10 x 5 m cave**, 6m in height. Moss giant asleep on a mossy bed in the middle. Light from a blue bulb above.

The bulb is the size of a pony, but light as a feather. Breaks easily. Light from the bulb turns every humanoid creature into a moss giant over the course of seven days. Worth 1000 g to a mad scientist or wizard.

In moss-covered alcoves, flowers cut from blue gems (150 g), a blue ukulele whose sound puts flowers to sleep (80g to a gardener or evil flower), several blue murals and a blue sphere, prison to a genie named Ahuf, who will grant one wish to the person who sets him free, but curses anyone who makes wishes he deems "indecent" or "an offense to the gods".

A picture of the giant's dead wife by the name of "Loamia". She is depicted staring down a tangle of unruly roots.

Prolonged disturbances in this area wake the giant at 1-2 in d6 in the first round, 1-3 in d6 the second and so on. Let the players know that the giant is tossing and turning.

### **The Moss Giant**

Looks like a smurf version of your friendly forest spirit neighbor, but isn't always friendly and not necessarily the neighbor you'd wish for.

A master gardener. Very grumpy after waking up, attacks any living creature in the surrounding for d4 rounds. Calms down after and apologizes grumpily. Ready to call it even. If no one is left alive, he digests the remnants through his mossy skin and grumpily returns to sleep.

Otherwise, he can be an okay dude with a mellow groove. Talkative PC with an interest in the cottage core side of life may make friends with him. His name is Burlapius.

STR 16, DEX 14, WIS 12. 15 hp, Armor 2.

Can fly.

Mighty roar: WIL save by everyone around to avoid being knocked prone and immobilized for the next round.

Drops his mossy butt on you: d8.

Swallow: DEX save to avoid being swallowed whole. STR save or a smart idea to come out again. -1 hp each round inside the giant. Can swallow up to 4 human sized beings at a time.

Inside the giant, there are are some giant slug eggs, which the gastropods have stored within while he was asleep. The slugs are almost ready to hatch and feed on him.

**5 A steep slope** leading upwards to 6 made of roots wedged into each other. Climbable, but will turn into a slide after the PC have come about 5 m. STR save to hold fast, DEX to not take d6 fall damage. "Loamia" is the magic word that lets the roots of the slope switch between slide and climbable surface.

**6 Hothouse cave.** No moss here. Very tasty herbs (50 g). Silver garden tools (200g, +1 to gardening checks)

A compost heap full of worms with blue beards. Tasty smell. The first two helpings of humus from the heap are invigorating (+1 to all rolls for d4 turns), every further helping inflicts d4 damage and -1 to all rolls for d4 turns.

**Fuchsia, the Princess of the Flower kingdom.** In a pot and very weak. Abducted by the giant, pressed for the secrets of her royalty. Craves to return to her kingdom. Knows that there is a portal somewhere in the cave. Promises great reward. In her current state: STR 6, DEX 8, WIS 14. 1 hp. Has to be carried.

**7 Winding tunnel, 8m.** Ends abruptly at the edge of waterfall spilling into 9. DEX to save from falling.

**8 Small cave behind the waterfall.** Trux the Hermit is here, meditating. He is 5 notches down the moss scale and appears dead/like a natural feature of the cave. If he notices the PC however, he speaks up. He is harmless, does not know how to fight and does not own anything in this world. He eats gnomes to prevent going further down the moss scale. Also, he communicates telepathically with Bora, the turtle, in the pool below.

**9 Bora's pool.**

Roughly 10x5 m, up to 8 m deep. A shattered human skeleton at the shore. Bora, the Giant Turtle, lives here. She is asleep most of the time, and communicates with Trux at 8 in her thoughts and dreams. She is bone-white, immune to the moss, and about as big as a very nasty orc or a small troll. She eats algae floating into the pool from the Plant Kingdom through the hole at the bottom of the pool.

STR 15, DEX 12, WIS 17. Armor 6. 22 hp. Snap attack d8.

Bora fell asleep in a much bigger pool in a jungle swamp millennia ago, and woke up caught in what had become a very small pool in an icy cave due to natural and magical changes in the landscape. She is very curious about the outside world and would love to leave the cave. She likes to trade stories and knows history and (magical) lore from when the world was young.

If you ask her nicely, she will let you go through the tunnel and in to the Plant Kingdom. She knows that the Giant went there at some point and returned, but she is not aware of the Princess' abduction.

The tunnel is just big enough for a smaller human to squeeze through. You will have to find scientific or magical means to make yourself smaller. The first thing you will notice about the Plant Kingdom is that you can not breathe there naturally, unless you are

protected by a member of the plant royalty or at least at notch 5 of the moss scale. Also, living beings who produce carbon dioxide are being kept like cattle in the Plant Kingdom.