

Apotropaic Ambulatory Groundcover Swamp Beet

(*Beta vulgaris* subsp. *palus daemonium occisio*)

This particular cultivar should be distinguished from non-magical variants of cultivated beetroot. It shares a common ancestor (the sea beet, or *Beta vulgaris* subsp. *maritima*), but was specifically bred for reasons besides taste. In fact, while Swamp Beets are edible they are not palatable; the leaves and root both share an unpleasantly meaty taste and texture. The juice is also both unpleasant smelling, and tasting -- and cooking does *not* improve the flavor or smell.

Then again, Ambulatory Swamp Beets were witch-bred to keep down evil wetland spirits, not bfor the dinner table. At that task, they are well-suited; the Beets instinctively seek out sites where inimical spirit entities spontaneously generate, and take up residence there (albeit, very very slowly). Once in place, the Beets' roots intermingle and 'pollute' the soil with an etheric 'enzyme' that is highly irritating to evil-aligned esoteric entities. The end result is an area where evil swamp spirits can no longer fully form; as long as they keep trying to do so, the Ambulatory Swamp Beets will continue to thrive.

Ambulatory Swamp Beets also have one other useful trait. When an uprooted Swamp Beet comes within five feet of any evil swamp spirit-possessed person or creature, the Beet will attempt to stuff itself into the possessed entity's mouth and throat and directly feed on the possessing entity. That this usually fails is irrelevant to the witches that originally bred this cultivar; the important thing is that the Ambulatory Swamp Beet makes for an effective and cheap swamp spirit possession detector. As long as there's somebody there to pull out the beet in time, the current situation is acceptable.

Note, by the way, that Ambulatory Swamp Beets have no more native intelligence than any other root vegetable. They act entirely on instinct. That's because they weren't bred by *evil* witches. They may not be particularly *nice* witches, but they definitely were not evil ones, either.

- © Moe Lane. All rights reserved.
- <http://www.moelane.com>
- <https://www.patreon.com/MoeLane?ty=h>