



From the wizard Kreon Gath, explorer and sage . . .

Mages and scholars studying on the surface world understand that magic flows through the earth. They chart its passing as ley lines that crisscross the land in intricate patterns. But these lines are only a pale, two-dimensional reflection on the surface of the three-dimensional reality of the Underdark—the veins through which the earth's own blood flows. This raw power manifests itself as flowing courses of energy, usually invisible (although a trained mage can see them) but sometimes dramatically evident.

Earthblood makes possible life in the Underdark. Its mystic energies sustain many of the strange plants and fungi that grow here in the same way that the sun gives life to all flora of the surface world. Such vegetation could never survive in the eternal darkness, deep cold, and inhospitable rock of the Underdark without earthblood. These growing things, in turn, feed many of the creatures that inhabit the realms below, and the predators of the Underdark—which are many—prey upon the creatures that eat the plants and fungi.

Earthblood manifests itself in many ways. First and foremost are the *earthflows*. Like rivers, these rushing torrents of energy move throughout the Underdark ignoring physical barriers. This power is difficult to harness, because it is moving and agitated.

Next are the far rarer *earthnodes*, where earthblood pools and congeals. Secret earthnode caverns are jealously guarded by those who discover these places of power. Although each node is subtly different, they offer raw power that one can tap into in various ways—even nonspellcasters can learn to utilize and exploit these storehouses of energy. Some even learn how to travel instantaneously from one earthnode to another, but far less dramatic uses include measuring the passage of time and simple navigation.

Lastly are manifestations that defy categorization. Sometimes earthblood fills a cavern with a subtle but bizarre radiance, while other times it robs a whole area of all its magic. Its power can mutate a creature, or even change a whole race. Dark elves, for example, owe many of their innate mystical powers as well as their spell resistance to prolonged exposure to strange earthblood manifestations. And they are not alone.

Earthblood distorts long-distance divinations and teleportations. On the other hand, those who know how to tap it properly can actually use it to power these types of magic—earthblood gives and it takes away.

Curious minds occasionally ponder: What is earthblood? Where does it come from? Most say that it flows through natural rifts from another plane of existence. These same theorists usually believe it comes from the Plane of

Elemental Earth, which explains why it seems to originate from deep underground. A few think it comes from the Plane of Shadow or some other extraplanar source.

OVERVIEW

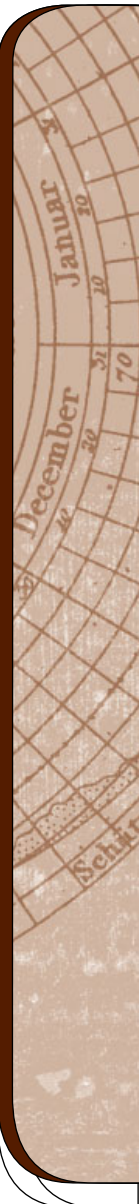
This free supplement contains game material you can use in any campaign that relies on the rules of the Open Game License. Throughout *Earthblood*, all references to spells, feats, and other rules not in this book come from the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM. This supplement is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Gaming Content on the title page. For full details, please turn to the Open Game License on the last page. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

The pages that follow provide all the information you need to introduce the concept of earthblood into your campaign, including background details, new feats, distinctive spells, specialized items, and DM-only rules. For more free game material, visit www.montecook.com.

FOR THE DM: USING EARTHLOOD

Obviously, DMs are likely to use the concept of earthblood and earthnodes only in campaigns that focus on underground exploration—an “underdark” campaign, or a setting with a large dungeon (or many smaller ones). Alternatively, the DM could make earthnodes and earthflows a surface phenomenon with just a little work; earthnodes could occur mainly in remote, natural areas, perhaps at the site of an ancient ruin or a clever wizard's tower.

Incorporating earthblood into a campaign is tricky, because its presence—or lack thereof—is the catalyst for various feats and spells that the player characters (PCs) may have taken (see pages 6 and 9). When a ranger in the group takes kobolds as her favored enemy, the DM should bring out kobolds as a fairly frequent foe. Likewise, when a PC selects an earthblood feat, the DM needs to have earthnodes show up now and again.



Contributors to *Earthblood*

About the Author

Monte Cook has worked professionally in the game industry since 1988 for companies including Iron Crown Enterprises, TSR Inc., and Wizards of the Coast. He is a codesigner of *Dungeons & Dragons*® 3rd Edition and author of the 3rd Edition *Dungeon Master's Guide*. He has designed dozens of popular roleplaying books through his own company Malhavoc Press and also has authored miniatures games, novels, comic books, and short stories.

About the Illustrators

Canadian illustrator **Toren Atkinson** is also the lead singer for the Lovecraftian rock band *The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets* and a professional voiceover artist. Check out his fantasy, science fiction, and horror artwork gallery at <http://torenatkinson.deviantart.com/gallery/>.

Self-taught cover artist **Michael Komarck** has worked as a projectionist at the local cineplex, a children's book illustrator, graphic designer, and owner of a small publishing company. Since 2003 he has illustrated covers for fantasy authors including Robert Asprin and George R.R. Martin and for many game companies. Visit www.komarckart.com.

A native of Western Canada, **Eric Lofgren** lives there still. The road to his commercial illustration career has been long and varied, including two years in a commercial sign shop, ten years running his own sign business, and several years working as a tattoo artist and digital retoucher of photographs. He has been a full-time illustrator for seven years. See more of his work at www.ericlofgren.net.

Seattle-based illustrator **Sam Wood** is well known in the roleplaying and electronic game industries. While a staff artist at Wizards of the Coast, Sam illustrated *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Magic: The Gathering*, and many other games. In addition to Malhavoc Press, he's worked for a wide range of companies, from *Green Ronin* to Microsoft.

Malhavoc Press

Malhavoc Press is Monte Cook's roleplaying game imprint devoted to the publication of evocative elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc products such as *Planescape*, Monte Cook's *Arcana Evolved*, and *The Complete Book of Eldritch Might* exhibit a mastery of the 3rd Edition rules that only one of its original designers can offer. Current titles are available to purchase in electronic (PDF) format at www.montecook.com.

But how much is too much or too little? Earthnodes should be uncommon to keep them special. Most should be inhabited, because of their value, and thus protected, guarded, or trapped. Still, from a gameplay perspective, they shouldn't be too rare. As a rule of thumb, player characters with an earthblood feat should get to use it at least once every five or six game sessions. If a PC focuses heavily on earthblood feats, the frequency should change to once every three sessions. And that's the minimum. So, if the players choose to focus on earthblood, the DM must make it an important recurring feature of the campaign.

The way to do this is to make the key locations in the campaign—such as the center of the dungeon, the heart of the temple, the sanctum of the powerful wizard, the home of the king, the dragon's lair—be earthnodes. The objects of the PCs' various quests should often lie within earthnodes. Smart players occasionally should be able to predict when an earthnode will show up. When they hear about the "ancient cave of mysteries," the subterranean fortress of the demon, the vault of the dwarven kings, or the tomb of the ghost lich, they should think "earthnode." Strongholds of creatures like dark elves or other well-known intelligent subterranean

species can become earthnodes as well. But remember to add in some surprise earthnodes or earthflows, too—their appearance can signal something important in the adventure, rather than the other way around.

EARTHNODE QUALITIES

Earthnodes average about 300 feet across, although they do not have to conform to any set size. They should be just big enough to host three to four encounters. Likely, a node is not even an entire "dungeon," but perhaps the lair of the "big bad guy" of the dungeon and his cronies. It's big enough to serve as the innermost portion of the temple, but not as the entire structure and certainly not as the whole surrounding compound.

While invisible to the eye, earthnodes have tangible effects on the areas they occupy. They are home to creatures that wield weird powers or greater than normal intelligence. Strange fungi or plants might grow in a node, sustained on earthblood rather than on conventional nutrients. The energies might also increase the chance of finding magical minerals or similar substances (adamantite, mithral, or stranger things). Pools and streams in an earth-



node can take on magical qualities. It wouldn't be out of line for a DM to include naturally occurring magical items in an earthnode. A trickling font that occasionally produces potions, a geode that contains a *gem of seeing*, or a vein of minerals with a natural *continual flame* effect are all fine examples. Obviously, a good DM isn't going to give away the proverbial farm, but there should be real incentive for the PCs (and NPCs) to seek out these places even if they don't know how to tap directly into an earthnode's power. Plus, it's interesting to introduce rewards from time to time that weren't created by intelligent beings and don't come from an intelligent being's treasure stash.

A DM may even want to create an earthnode with ambient, inherent benefits similar to those granted by earth-

blood feats (see page 6) but requiring no special knowledge. These should be rare, however, unless the DM doesn't want the characters to take earth-

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blood feats.
 As previously stated, most earthnodes are inhabited. Usually, a character who controls an earthnode is jealous of its power and won't allow others to have access. It's not hard to imagine someone attempting to wall off an earthnode, although even then the Earthblood Awareness feat reveals its existence behind the wall.

More typically, the force controlling an earthnode will protect it with traps or guardians. The protector might imbue earthnode guardians with Earthblood Awareness and Tap Earthblood or Earthblood Connection to take advantage of the ambient power and make them all the more challenging.

EARTHNODES VS. EARTHFLOWS

If you think of earthnodes as pools or even lakes of invisible magical power, earthflows are the streams and rivers that connect them. Unlike real rivers, however, they frequently shift course and position, while earthnodes always remain stationary.

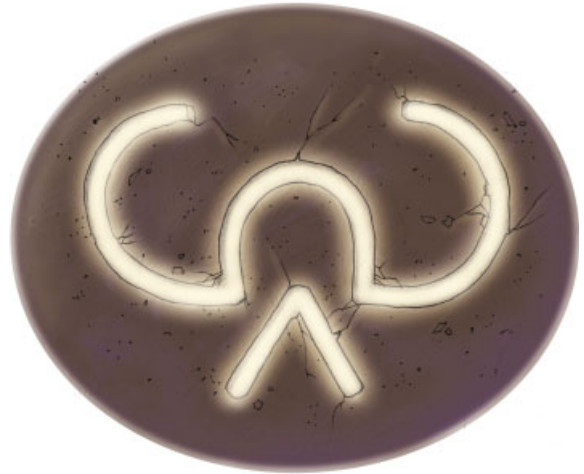
Not all earthnodes have connecting earthflows. Some are entirely cut off. Otherwise, if one can sense an earthflow, one can follow it to find an earthnode (eventually). Earthflows are typically only 5 to 10 feet wide but they stretch for miles and miles.

In an earthnode, the earthblood feats always work. In an earthflow, a character must make a level check before using the feat to get control of the fluctuating and unstable energy as it moves. The Difficulty Class varies from flow to flow (which is to say, it's up to the DM), but it's typically DC 15 to DC 20.

SOURCES OF EARTHLOOD

The DM should shroud earthblood in mystery, to be discovered by investigative player characters if they are curious. For example, earthblood actually may be:

1. The true source of magic.
2. The blood of dead gods buried deep below the surface.
3. Extradimensional energy coming from natural gates deep in the darkness of the subterranean realms. This energy originates in the Plane of Elemental Earth, the Plane of Shadow, both, or somewhere else.
4. Residual energy from the spirit of the world with which one may communicate.



The symbol of elemental earth can signal earthblood proximity.

5. The mystical by-product of the natural heat and pressure found at the center of the world.
6. The collective soul of all living beings in the world.

TELEPORTATION AND DIVINATION

Teleportation spells do not work within an earthnode, nor do they function within 1 mile of either an earthnode or an earthflow. Divination spells cannot find a target within a similar area. The only exception is when a node or flow exists within 1 mile of the surface. Earthblood does not extend this disruption within 100 feet of the surface or above the surface at all.

Design Diary: Earthblood Inspiration

The term "earthblood" is inspired by Steven R. Donaldson's *Thomas Covenant* series, although in actual fact the earthblood in those books was quite a bit different (and much more literal) than that found here. Another inspiration were the *Earthnodes* from ICE's *Rolemaster Companion*, which itself was inspired by Donaldson.

About a year ago, I started running a campaign that I call *The Veins of the Earth*, which takes place entirely below the surface world in the so-called Underdark. Ever since Gary Gygax's *Vault of the Drow* module, it's been a staple of such campaigns to have some kind of mysterious energy source in deep caves or cavern systems. I took that concept and expanded it, first and foremost to explain why the Underdark isn't just a bunch of lifeless caves. Earthblood sustains strange fungal growths, which themselves sustain all sorts of creatures. It's the very basis of the food chain. The concept of earthblood also allows me to create unique areas and impossible environments on a regular basis, which ultimately is the impetus for the entire campaign.

Earthblood feats became a way for the players to get in on the fun. Even though they begin as outsiders in this strange milieu, earthblood feats allow them to develop characters that embrace the core of the setting and get involved with the mysteries found there. As a DM, I also really like to give player characters interesting powers that are easily controlled (by me). Earthblood feats fit that bill perfectly.

Finally, I didn't want this to be "just another mage thing" that all the other classes ignore. Anyone can learn to use earthblood, and it provides them with very useful abilities to enhance whatever they are good at. Few characters, for example, would not benefit from being able to dimension door all around an encounter (an ability of the *Node Door* feat, page 8).

EARTHLOOD FEATS

The primary game elements related to earthblood are earthblood feats. These feats, most of which function only in an earthnode or earthflow, allow the user to tap into the ambient power to produce powerful effects. Even though some of these effects are overtly mystical—teleportation, healing, divination, and so on—most do not require the user to be a spellcaster. A character must be directly in an earthnode or in the path of an earthflow to exercise the powers granted by most of these feats.

Earthblood feats are more powerful than standard feats—much more, in some cases. The balancing factor is that they can only be used from time to time, and the player cannot always control when that time will be. Many are also balanced by the size of the local earthnodes and the frequency of earthnodes in general.

Earthblood feats work best for those using the feat-every-level approach of *The Book of Experimental Might*, since feat-taking opportunities are plentiful under that system and player characters don't need to use all their feats every session to feel that they are worthwhile. However, earthblood feats cannot be boosted as described in *Book of Experimental Might II*.

EARTHLOOD AWARENESS

(EARTHLOOD)

You develop an extra sense that gives you an awareness of earthblood.

Benefit: You can sense nearby earthblood flows and nodes, usually within 500 feet, although you may sense larger, more potent areas from even greater distances (DM's discretion).

You can use your connection to determine the precise passage of time. You also can use it to navigate by setting markers anywhere and everywhere you go. You can always find your way back to within 100 feet of such a marker.

Encouraging Earthblood Feats

Players with earthblood feats force the DM to incorporate fairly frequent earthnodes and earthflows into the game. However, DMs who want to make it an important feature of a campaign should find ways to both subtly and overtly encourage the players to take feats that bring earthblood to the fore. The best way is not only to hold many important encounters in earthnodes, but also to arm NPCs (allies and foes) with earthblood feats to show players how powerful and useful they can be. The worst way is to deny PCs who take earthblood feats fairly frequent access to earthblood.

These abilities may be used only in an area that is saturated with and connected to earthblood, as determined by the DM. Using the guidelines provided here, these abilities will not work on the surface except in areas near a so-called ley line, nor will they work if the character is in an *anti-magic field* or otherwise cut off from earthblood. They will work throughout all normal areas of the Underdark.

This feat's abilities are supernatural and require a full-round action to access.

EARTHLOOD CONCEALMENT

(EARTHLOOD)

You can use the power of earthblood to hide with supernatural skill.

Prerequisites: Earthblood Awareness, Exude Earthblood, Tap Earthblood

Benefit: Using a standard action while within an earthnode, you can become invisible, as the *invisibility* spell. This spell-like ability lasts for 1 round per level.

This feat works only within an earthnode or an earthflow.

EARTHLOOD DEFENSE (EARTHLOOD)

The power of earthblood grants you supernatural defense.

Prerequisites: Earthblood Awareness, Tap Earthblood

Benefit: Using a standard action, you draw earthblood into yourself, gaining a +2 luck bonus to Armor Class and saving throws. This supernatural bonus lasts for 1 round per level or until you leave the node or flow, whichever comes first.

This feat works only within an earthnode or an earthflow.

EARTHLOOD HEALING (EARTHLOOD)

You may heal your wounds with the power of earthblood.

Prerequisites: Earthblood Awareness, Tap Earthblood

Benefit: Using a standard action, you draw earthblood into yourself, healing 1d6 points of damage per two levels. You cannot use this feat more than three times per day. This is a supernatural ability.

This feat works only within an earthnode or an earthflow.

EARTHNODE CONNECTION

(EARTHLOOD)

Your link to earthblood grants you supernatural awareness of all within an earthnode's confines.

Prerequisite: Earthblood Awareness

Benefit: Using a standard action while within an earthnode, you sense the location of all creatures or magic items (your choice) in the node. You do not learn any other infor-

Name	Prerequisites	Benefit
<i>Earthblood Awareness</i>	—	<i>Sense flows and nodes, determine the passage of time, navigate via markers</i>
<i>Earthblood Concealment</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Exude Earthblood, Tap Earthblood</i>	<i>Become invisible for 1 round/level</i>
<i>Earthblood Defense</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Tap Earthblood</i>	<i>Gain +2 luck bonus to AC and saves for 1 round/level</i>
<i>Earthblood Healing</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Tap Earthblood</i>	<i>Heal yourself 1d6 points of damage/two levels, three times per day</i>
<i>Earthnode Connection</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness</i>	<i>Sense all creatures or magic items in a node</i>
<i>Earthnode Senses</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Earthnode Connection</i>	<i>Gain tremorsense with a range of 30 feet</i>
<i>Earthnode Transport*</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Earthnode Connection, Greater Node Door, Node Door, Tap Earthblood, character level 14th</i>	<i>Transport yourself to any earthnode you know of (as teleport)</i>
<i>Exude Earthblood</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Tap Earthblood</i>	<i>Creatures within 30 feet must succeed at a Will save or be stunned for 1 round</i>
<i>Greater Node Door*</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Earthnode Connection, Node Door, Tap Earthblood, character level 12th</i>	<i>Transport yourself to any earthnode you know of that is connected to your current position by an earthflow (as dimension door)</i>
<i>Infuse Earthblood</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Tap Earthblood</i>	<i>Item gains one benefit: +1 enhancement bonus, +2 caster level, +10 hardness, expends no charges, activation as a free action, invisibility</i>
<i>Node Door*</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, Earthnode Connection, Tap Earthblood, character level 10th</i>	<i>Transport yourself to another location within the earthnode you currently occupy (as dimension door)</i>
<i>Tap Earthblood</i>	<i>Earthblood Awareness, caster level 5th or base attack bonus +5</i>	<i>Spellcasters: Your spells act as though affected by Empower Spell and gain a +2 enhancement bonus to save DCs. Others: Your attacks inflict +1 point of extra damage/two levels plus you may infuse your weapon with earthblood to cause a struck foe to save or be stunned and fall prone.</i>

* Characters can take this feat a second time in order to transport others as well (up to one extra creature per five levels).

mation about the creatures or items. Creatures hidden by Earthblood Concealment and items hidden by Infuse Earthblood are invisible to these senses.

This feat works only within an earthnode.

EARTHNODE SENSES (EARTHLOOD)

Your connection to earthblood grants you supernatural senses.

Prerequisites: Earthblood Awareness, Earthnode Connection

Benefit: You have tremorsense with a range of 30 feet. This is a supernatural ability.

This feat works only within an earthnode.

EARTHNODE TRANSPORT (EARTHLOOD)

Travel along an earthflow using your connection to earthblood.

Prerequisites: Earthblood Awareness, Earthnode Connection, Greater Node Door, Node Door, Tap Earthblood, character level 14th

Benefit: Using a standard action while within an earthflow or an earthnode, you transport yourself (and only yourself) to any earthnode you know of, anywhere in the world, as if using *teleport*. You can appear anywhere in the node that is known to you. Otherwise, you arrive in a random safe