**BRANCH SEVEN**

The Leprechaun Treasure Hunter arrived in a fluster, red-faced and out of breath, dragging behind him a kart. Bouncing around on the kart was the Astapaedia, a heavy bound book almost twice as thick as the little leprechaun was tall.

“I’m so glad… I’ve found… you!” the leprechaun said, his chest heaving. “I have read… the Weekly… Portal article… about the tree… Starmer has been… growing and… you need… to read… the entry… on page…” he stopped, pulling the Astapaedia off the kart, letting it fall to the ground and said, “Everything we know about Befuddle-Me Trees is in here. It’s all in alphabetical order.”

Alphard ran over and lifted open the enormous book cover, “OK. Askalottles… Azzwizzara… Bamboozalars. Befuddle-Me Trees!” Alphard cleared his throat and began to read the entry aloud.

Befuddle-Me Trees

Thought to have become extinct during the *Dread Dragontide* (page 443), Befuddle-Me Trees were a race of walking trees who lived in groups called a *Baffle* (page 206). Baffles roamed freely around *Astaroidia* (page 167) flooding everywhere they visited with trees.

**Appearance**

Each Befuddle-Me Tree was unique. Paintings discovered in *Treasure Caves* (page 2202) and pictures shown in old *Adventure Books* (page 131) show Befuddle-Me Trees of every shape, size, colour and substance. One painting even seems to show a Befuddle-Me Tree made of *Gingerbread* (page 752) standing next to another made of *Pheathers* (page 1649).

Befuddle-Me Trees seem to have been able to temporarily alter their appearance by changing shape, colour and texture at will, just like a *Kraken* (page 1163).

**Growth**

Befuddle-Me Trees started out as *Seeds of Imagination* (page 1923) that sprout into *Fuddlings* (page 689). Most were able to grow extremely quickly under the right conditions. No one knows how they did this or what type of energy or food was necessary to make this happen.

Befuddle-Me Trees had the ability to grow whatever they wanted, whenever they wanted. These items mostly grew from their branches and twigs but it is also thought that the most powerful Befuddle-Me Trees could also grow items from their trunks.

Witness accounts record seeing Befuddle-Me Trees grow clothes, pens, paper, food, toys, gadgets and even storybooks. Another account suggests that one romantically inclined Befuddle-Me Tree grew an engagement ring after an unplanned proposal was made beneath its boughs.

It is said that a *Phoenix* (page 1681) can only nest amongst the branches of a Befuddle-Me Tree, which might suggest their nests have to be grown and cannot be made.

**Riddle-Me-Rees**

One thing all Befuddle-Me Trees could grow were seeds called a *Riddle-Me-Ree* (page 1855).

As you would expect, each Befuddle-Me Tree grew Riddle-Me-Rees that were uniquely shaped on the outside. But on the inside, these always contained riddles or clues. Solving one Riddle-Me-Ree caused the next Riddle-Me-Ree to ripen and fall off its branch. Riddle-Me-Rees created a trail ready to be adventured.

**Treesure**

Sadly, there are no documented examples of where any *Riddle-Me-Ree Adventure Trails* (page 1857) have lead. Perhaps no one has ever reached the end of one? Unsubstantiated rumours suggest these adventure trails eventually led to the Befuddle-Me Tree’s most prized possession *-* it’s *Treesure* (page 2212).

**A Befuddle-Me Tree’s Guardian**

Every Befuddle-Me Tree has a *Guardian* (page 785), also known as a *Tree Spirit* (page 2210). It is suspected that the Guardian is created at the same time as the Befuddle-Me Tree but no one can be sure.

Most Befuddle-Me Trees learn as Fuddlings that they will one day meet their Guardian. However, the majority of Guardians are unaware that they are destined to be matched with a Befuddle-Me Tree, a revelation that often comes as a big surprise.

Befuddle-Me Trees do not meet their Guardian until the *Matching Ceremony* (page 1304), which is traditionally performed on the *Winter Solstice* (page 2555).

**A Befuddle-Me Tree’s Hollow**

Like many trees, each Befuddle-Me Tree develops a hollow in its trunk as it matures. This hollow is a warm snug where the Befuddle-Me Tree’s Guardian lives. It is also where the Befuddle-Me Tree’s *Kernel of Truth* (page 1111) grows.

At this point Alphard paused and said, “There is an envelope stuck into the Astapaedia. It looks old. Hang on a minute and I’ll open it.”