

Game Design Document - Rootbound

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Introduction

This document outlines the design for Rootbound, a 2D Tower Defense and strategy game created during a two week long game jam with the theme "You Are The Weapon." Players take on the role of a forest spirit, defending their land against an abstract corruption by growing trees, deploying defensive units, and constructing buildings to reclaim and purify the land.

Game Summary

Title: Rootbound

In this Tower Defense strategy game, players grow trees to capture land and generate resources while defending against corrupt enemies. Defensive units, like wolves, and auxiliary structures, like mushrooms, can only be placed within reclaimed zones. Players must expand their territory, and ultimately close all enemy portals to win.

Inspiration

Tower Defense: Plants vs. Zombies and Balloon TD for creative use of environment-based defenses.

Territory Control: They Are Billions for strategic expansion under constant threat.

Environmental Restoration: Pikmin for themes of nature and growth.

Player Experience

Emotional Goals:

- Empower the player to reclaim land and push back against overwhelming odds.
- Balance tension and satisfaction through moments of strategic defense and expansion.
- Encourage creativity with placement of trees, units, and buildings for optimal defense.

Challenges:

- Defend vulnerable trees and structures from enemy attacks.
- Manage limited resources (spirit essence) effectively while expanding.
- Balance offense (purifying zones) and defense (protecting existing territory).

Platform

Primary Platform: PC.

Control Scheme: Mouse-based placement system with a selection menu for trees, buildings, and units.

Development Software

Engine: Godot.

Art: Aseprite and Affinity Photo 2.

Audio: Audacity for sound effects.

Version Control: GitHub.

Genre

2D Tower Defense with strategic territory expansion and resource management.

Target Audience

- Fans of Tower Defense and real-time strategy games.
- Ages 12+ due to light fantasy violence and abstract themes.
- Players who enjoy games with environmental and restoration themes.

Concept

The player embodies a forest spirit defending their sacred land from an encroaching corruption. Trees are planted to reclaim territory and generate spirit essence, the primary resource. Defensive units like wolves and auxiliary structures like mushrooms can only be placed within reclaimed zones. The player must close all enemy portals to win.

Gameplay Overview

Objective: Expand the forest and close all enemy portals while defending the mother tree (home base).

Core Loop:

1. Plant trees to expand territory and generate spirit essence.
2. Deploy defensive units and construct auxiliary buildings in reclaimed zones.
3. Protect the mother tree from waves of corruption while strategically expanding.
4. Win by purifying all corrupted areas and closing portals.

Victory Condition: All portals are closed.

Failure Condition: The mother tree is destroyed.

Theme Interpretation (You Are The Weapon)

The player is the forest spirit, the embodiment of nature's will. All actions—planting trees, growing buildings, and deploying units—are expressions of the spirit's ability to fight back against corruption. The player's influence over the land is their weapon.

Primary Mechanics

1. Land Capture

- Trees are planted to expand territory.
- Trees generate spirit essence but can be attacked and destroyed by enemies, causing loss of territory.

2. Unit Deployment

- Defensive units like wolves are spawned from structures such as wolf dens.
- Units are tied to the reclaimed zones and cannot leave them.

3. Building Construction

- Buildings enhance gameplay, such as generating resources (trees) or boosting defenses (mushrooms).
- Buildings grow through three tiers over time and can be enhanced by support structures like mushrooms.

Secondary Mechanics

1. Resource Management

- Spirit essence is the main resource used for planting trees, deploying units, and constructing buildings.

2. Upgrades by Growth

- Buildings and structures grow and evolve naturally, reaching higher tiers for improved performance.
- Growth can be enhanced by supporting structures like mushrooms.

3. Environmental Effects

- Trees and mushrooms are fragile and must be protected, adding an extra layer of strategy.

Art

Style: A mix of dark and whimsical elements.

Corruption zones are abstract and ominous, with muted colors and jagged designs.

Reclaimed zones are vibrant and lush, filled with greens and soft natural tones.

Audio

1. Music

- Atmospheric and ambient for exploration and tree planting.
- Tense and rhythmic during enemy waves.

2. Sound Effects

- Organic sounds for tree growth (e.g., creaking wood, rustling leaves).
- Distorted, eerie sounds for corrupted creatures.

UI and Controls

UI:

- Minimalistic with a focus on spirit essence, tree health, and corruption status.
- Hover-based tooltips for building/unit selection.

Controls:

- Mouse-based placement for trees, buildings, and units.

Development Timeline

Day 1-2: Core mechanics (tree planting, corruption spread, spirit essence).

Day 3-4: Add unit spawning, building growth, and enemy behavior.

Day 5-6: Polish visuals, audio, and UI. Add win/loss conditions.

Day 7: Playtesting and bug fixing.

Task	Type	Status
Trees and purification	Coding/Art	Done
Corruption spread	Coding/Art	Cancelled
Spirit essence	Coding/Art	Done
Wolf Den	Coding/Art	Done
Slapping Vine	Coding/Art	Done
Squirrel Tower	Coding/Art	Done

Abilities	Coding/Art	Done
Essence Collection	Coding	Done
Portals	Coding/Art	Done
Summoner Enemy	Coding/Art	Done
Ghoul Enemy	Coding/Art	Done
Ranged Enemy	Coding/Art	Done
Prevent cramping buildings	Coding	Done
Lose/Win condition	Coding	Done
Winning screen	Art	ToDo