

Lantern Moths

2–4 players · ages 8+ · 20–30 min

Prototype rules v4, rewritten

Overview

Lantern Moths is a card and tile game for 2 to 4 players, ages 8 and up, that takes 20 to 30 minutes. Each player is a moth keeper. Over several rounds you plant moths in a shared garden and light wicks to draw them to your lantern. When the night ends, the keeper whose lantern holds the most valuable moths wins.

The rules for 5 players have not been tested and are not included.

Components

- 1 moth deck of 54 cards: 48 moth cards (44 coloured, 4 white Ghost Moths) and 6 Dusk cards
 - 9 garden tiles (8 coloured, 1 grey)
 - 4 lantern boards
 - 12 wick tokens (3 per player), lit on one side, unlit on the other
 - These rules
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Setup

1. Give each player a lantern board and 3 wick tokens, unlit side up.
 2. Set the 6 Dusk cards aside. They enter the game after round 2 (see The night ends).
 3. Shuffle the 48 moth cards and deal 5 to each player. Place the rest face down as the deck, with space beside it for a discard pile.
 4. Shuffle the 9 garden tiles and lay them face down in a 3 by 3 grid. Turn the middle tile face up.
 5. The player who most recently saw a moth is the start player. If nobody remembers, the youngest player starts.
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The turn

Players take turns in clockwise order. On your turn, take 2 actions. You may take the same action twice, except Light, which you may take only once per turn.

Draw. Take the top card of the deck, or the top card of the discard pile. If you take from the discard pile, show the card to everyone first. If the discard pile is empty, draw from the deck.

Plant. Play a moth card from your hand onto a face-up garden tile. The tile must match the moth's colour, or be the grey tile, which takes any colour. A tile holds at most 3 moths; you cannot plant on a

full tile. A Ghost Moth may be planted on any face-up tile regardless of colour, including the grey tile, and no wick works on that tile this round (see End of round).

Light. Turn one of your unlit wick tokens to its lit side and place it beside a face-up tile. You may have only one wick beside any one tile. You may light a tile with no moths on it.

Flip. Turn one face-down garden tile face up. It must be orthogonally adjacent to a tile that is already face up. The grid is shared; there are no player sides.

End of round

A round ends when every player has taken one turn. Then, in this order:

1. For each tile with exactly one lit wick beside it, the owner of that wick takes every moth on the tile and places them face down beside their lantern. These moths are scored at the end of the game. You may look at your own; nobody looks at another player's.
2. A tile with two or more lit wicks beside it keeps its moths. A tile with a Ghost Moth on it keeps its moths, whatever wicks are beside it. Moths that stay on a tile remain there into the next round and still count towards the limit of 3.
3. Every player turns their wicks unlit side up and takes them back.
4. Every player draws from the deck until they hold 5 cards.
5. The start player passes to the left.

The night ends

After the end of round 2, shuffle the 6 Dusk cards into the deck.

When anyone draws a Dusk card, they place it face up in the middle of the table and draw again; the Dusk card does not count as the draw. This applies both to a Draw action and to drawing up to 5 at the end of a round.

When the fourth Dusk card is placed, the night is ending: finish the current round, including the end-of-round steps, and the game is over.

If the deck runs out before the fourth Dusk card, finish the current round in the same way, and the game is over.

Scoring

Each player totals the moths beside their lantern:

Every moth card is worth the number printed on it (1 to 3).

Every Ghost Moth is worth 2.

Every set of 3 moths of the same colour is worth 4 extra points. Each moth counts in one set only.

The player with the most points wins. On a tie, the tied player with more moths wins; if still tied, the one with fewer Ghost Moths wins; if still tied, the players share the win.

Edge cases

Lighting an empty tile is allowed. The wick stays there and stops at the end of the round like any other.

Two of your own wicks may not be beside the same tile. Wicks from different players may be beside the same tile, and then nobody takes its moths that round.

A Ghost Moth counts towards the limit of 3 moths on a tile.

A tile nobody lights keeps its moths. Once it holds 3, nothing more may be planted there until a wick takes them.

Solo play: not included. The prototype marks it as not yet written.

Index of terms

- Deck: the face-down stack of moth cards (and, after round 2, Dusk cards).
- Discard pile: face-up cards beside the deck; the top card may be drawn.
- Dusk card: one of 6 cards that mark the end of the night; the fourth ends the game.
- Full tile: a tile holding 3 moths.
- Garden: the shared 3 by 3 grid of tiles.
- Ghost Moth: one of 4 white moth cards; plants anywhere, blocks every wick on its tile that round, scores 2.
- Grey tile: the one tile that accepts moths of any colour.
- Lantern: your scoring area; moths taken by your wick go here face down.
- Lit wick: a wick token placed lit side up beside a tile during a Light action.
- Round: one turn by every player, followed by the end-of-round steps.
- Set: 3 moths of one colour beside your lantern, worth 4 extra points.

Change log: what moved and why

For the designer. Every rule in the prototype is in the rewrite; nothing was added. Remove this page before print.

1. **Components listed in one place.** The prototype named the 48-card deck, the 6 Dusk cards, the tiles and the wicks across four paragraphs; a reader setting up for the first time needs them before anything else.
2. **Setup numbered, Dusk cards set aside in step 2.** The prototype said 'NOT the 6 dusk cards, those get shuffled in later, see below'. Same rule, now a step with a cross-reference.
3. **The four actions given one paragraph each, in the order the prototype listed them.** The prototype's Plant rule continued in a later 'one more thing' paragraph; the two are merged. Nothing added.
4. **Ghost Moth on the grey tile stated once.** The prototype said 'for now yes' and again in the questions. The rule stands as written by the designer: a Ghost Moth may go on the grey tile and blocks it.
5. **End of round given numbered steps in the prototype's order.** Taking moths, resetting wicks, drawing to 5, passing the start player. Same order as the prototype.
6. **Dusk-card draw rule extended to the end-of-round draw.** The prototype said 'when a dusk card is drawn'; the end-of-round draw also draws cards, so the rule is stated for both. Flagged as question 2 in case the designer meant otherwise.
7. **Ghost Moth scoring: the earlier 'cancels your lowest moth' version removed.** The prototype crossed it out in the same sentence ('no wait we changed that'). Only the current rule, 2 points each, is kept.
8. **The 'Things people asked' answers folded into The turn, End of round and Edge cases.** Each answer now sits beside the rule it belongs to; the questions no longer need to be read as a list.
9. **5-player and solo play named as not included.** The prototype said 'maybe 5 works but we haven't tested it' and 'Solo rules: TBD'. The rewrite says so plainly rather than leaving the box count open.
0. **Playtester thanks left out of the rules body.** Credits belong on the back page or the box; a line is suggested in the questions.

Questions for the designer

Places where the prototype could be read two ways. The rewrite takes the reading named here; the decision is yours.

1. Is a tile 'next to' a face-up tile only orthogonally, or also diagonally? The rewrite says orthogonally; change it if you meant otherwise.
2. When a Dusk card appears during the end-of-round draw to 5, should it be placed and replaced the same way as during a Draw action? The rewrite assumes yes.
3. If the fourth Dusk card appears during the end-of-round draw (after moths have already been taken), does the game end immediately, or is one more round played? The rewrite ends it there.

4. Can a Ghost Moth be planted on a full tile? The rewrite says no, because the limit of 3 applies to every moth; say if Ghost Moths are meant to ignore it.
5. In a set of 3 moths of one colour, does a Ghost Moth count as any colour? The rewrite says no; Ghost Moths are white and form no sets.
6. Does the player who draws the fourth Dusk card still draw a replacement card? The rewrite says yes.
7. Do you want a credits line ('Thanks to the Thursday group') on the back page? It is not in the rules body.