

treeblox

a strategy game about plants' competition for sunlight

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Rulebook

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Introduction

Treeblox is a plant strategy game for two players.

The life of a forest tree is not all peace and quiet. Every year, many seeds fall to the forest floor. A few of them will become saplings. A few of those saplings will become mature trees. And only some of those trees will be able to claim their share of canopy space at the very top of the forest. Finding a place in the sun involves fierce competition for available resources: nutrients, space, water, and especially light.

Treeblox focuses on the trees' competition for sunlight. The game is easy to learn, as there are only a few simple rules. But as you spend time playing, Treeblox will fascinate you with its rich tactical possibilities and strategic depth.

Average play time is around 15 minutes. Treeblox is recommended for players 14 years and older.

Visit treeblox.com for the latest information about the game.

Components



dark branches
x 16



dark leaves
x 16



board
x 1



light branches
x 16



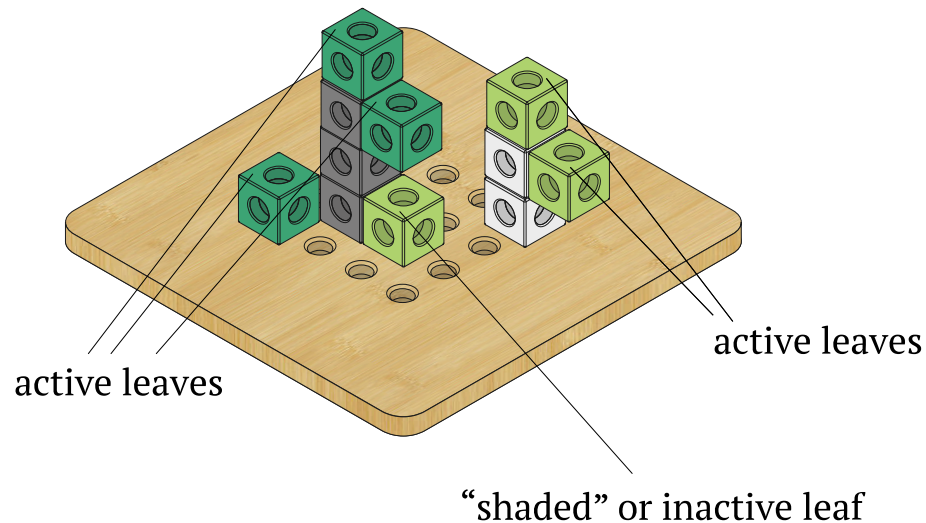
light leaves
x 16

Overview

Player one, or Dark, plays with the dark tree. Dark uses black cubes (dark branches) and dark green cubes (dark leaves). Player two, or Light, uses white cubes (light branches) and light green cubes (light leaves).

The objective of the game is to build a tree that has more active leaves than your opponent's.

Active leaves are the leaves that have no other cubes directly above them. These are the leaves that are visible if you look at the board straight from above.



The game typically progresses through the following phases:

1. Setup. The game starts with an empty board.
2. First turn. Each player places a leaf. Dark moves first.
3. Main phase. Players take turns attaching 1 or 2 cubes of their colors to their trees. If one of the players has no active leaves, the game ends immediately, and the final growth phase doesn't happen.
4. Final growth. If one player runs out of cubes, the other player places all of their remaining cubes during this one last turn.
5. Result. The players count their respective active leaves. The player with more active leaves wins.

This is a quick overview of the phases of the game. The following sections will cover the complete rules.

Setup

First, the players choose their trees. One player (Dark) plays with the dark tree; the other player (Light) plays with the light tree.

Dark has dark branches (black cubes) and dark leaves (dark green cubes). Light has light branches (white cubes) and light leaves (light green cubes).

The game begins with an empty board.

The players place their cubes on the table in front of them. The cubes that are not yet attached to the board are called available cubes.

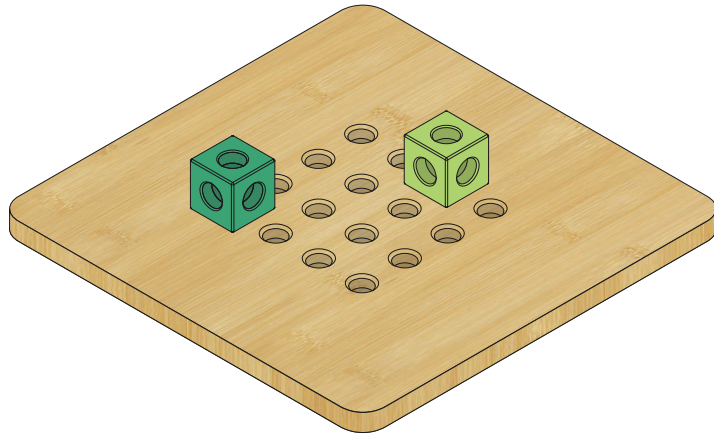
Treeblox is played with 64 cubes, 16 of each color. Each player begins the game with 32 cubes: 16 branches and 16 leaves. Your set may contain additional spare cubes. Make sure to set the spare cubes aside before you begin playing.

Each player's available cubes must be visible to the other player throughout the game.

First turn

Dark moves first. The first move must always be a leaf.

During the first move, Dark puts a dark leaf into any of the 16 holes on the board. Then Light puts a light leaf into any of the remaining 15 holes on the board.



During your turn

1. Count your active leaves.

Tree leaves that have no other cubes directly above them are called active leaves. These are the leaves that are visible if you look at the board straight from above.

2. Determine your growth rate.

If you have fewer than 3 active leaves, your growth rate = 1. If you have 3 or more active leaves, your growth rate = 2.

If you have no active leaves at the beginning of your turn, the game is over and you have lost.

3. Choose how many cubes to place.

Your growth rate determines the maximum number of cubes you can place during your turn. You can also place fewer cubes than your growth rate or pass (place no cubes).

If your growth rate is 1, you can place up to 1 cube. If the growth rate is 2, then up to 2 cubes during your move.

4. Place the cubes into the available holes.

Place the chosen number of your available cubes into the available holes. The cubes you place can be of any type: branch or leaf.

Available holes are any vacant holes on branches of your color and any vacant holes on the board. No cubes can be ever attached to the holes on the leaves (green cubes).

Cubes must align to the board. In other words, you can't place cubes "diagonally" or rotated at an angle.

If no holes are available, you are forced to pass.

Once they are attached to the board or to the tree, all cubes stay in that position until the end of the game. Players are not allowed to remove any cubes from the board.

Continue taking turns until you reach the end of the game (see [End of the game conditions](#)).

If you happen to run out of your available cubes, the game transitions to a special phase: the final growth (pg. 12).

Final growth

When one player runs out of available cubes, their opponent enters the final growth phase. During this phase, the player who still has cubes places all of their available cubes into available holes until they either:
use all of their available cubes;
or there are no more available holes.

A player cannot pass on placing their available cubes if there are any available holes left.

End of the game

The game is over if:

- one of the trees has no active leaves;
- no cubes have been placed during two consecutive turns (for example, when Dark passes, then Light passes);
- after one player runs out of available cubes, and the other completes the final growth phase.

The tree that has more active leaves wins. If the number of active leaves is equal, it's a draw.

Terminology

Active leaves are the leaves that have no other cubes directly above them. These are the leaves that are visible if you look at the board straight from the top.

Available cubes are the cubes that are not yet attached to the board.

Available holes are any vacant holes on branches of your color and any vacant holes on the board. No cubes can be ever attached to the holes on the leaves (green cubes).

A branch is a black or white cube. It can be attached to the board or to another branch of its color.

Dark is the player playing with the dark tree. Dark plays with black cubes as branches and dark green cubes as leaves.

Growth rate A player's growth rate determines the maximum number of cubes they can place during their turn. The player can also place fewer cubes than their growth rate or even pass (place no cubes). If a player has fewer than 3 active leaves, their growth rate = 1. If they have 3 or more active leaves, their growth rate = 2.

A leaf is a green cube that can be attached to the board or to a branch of its color. No cubes can be attached to a leaf.

Light is the player playing with the light tree. Light plays with white cubes as branches, and light green cubes as leaves.

FAQ

Do all of my cubes need to be connected to one tree? Or can I grow multiple trees, from different starting holes in the board?

Your tree doesn't have to be in one piece. You can attach your leaves and branches to any number of available holes in the board and grow separate trees from them.

Can I shade my own leaves?

Yes. Only the leaves visible from the top count as active. No exceptions here.

Can the trees “hang” outside the dimensions of the board?

Yes. The tree can extend beyond the board.

Is there a limit to the trees’ height or size?

No. The size of the tree is only limited by the number of available cubes.

Can I remove and reuse some of the cubes forming my tree?

No. Once placed, all cubes stay in their position until the end of the game.

Couldn’t find your question? Check the support page on our website:

<https://treeblox.com/support/>

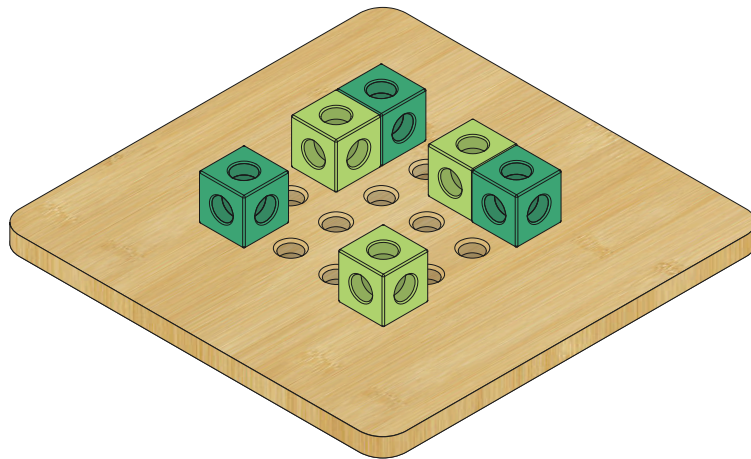
Strategy tips

This section is best understood after one has played Treeblox a few times.

Opening

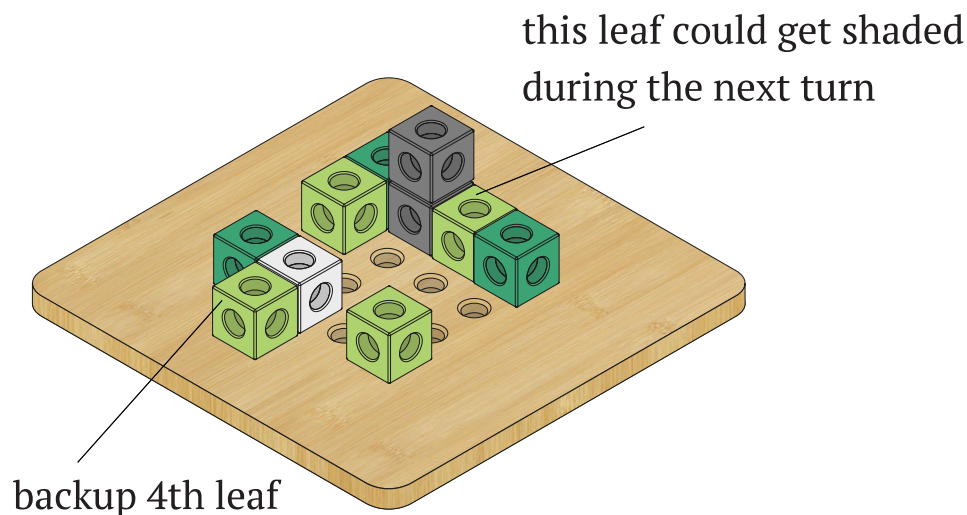
The first move is always a leaf. It is tempting to start building your tree right away and to place a branch as your second move. But this has proven to be a losing strategy. Your first three moves should all be leaves, so that you reach the maximum growth rate as soon as possible.

A typical position after the first three moves looks like this:



4th move

After you reach 3 active leaves, it is important that you maintain your growth rate. Growing one cube per move when your opponent grows two cubes per move can be deadly. An attacking strategy is to try and reduce the opponent's number of active leaves to fewer than 3 and then "kill" their tree by shading all of their remaining leaves.



In the example above, Dark could afford to put two branch cubes as their fourth move (pictured). Dark now threatens to shade Light's leaf during their next turn, which would reduce Light's growth rate back to 1. Therefore, Light cannot afford to also play two branches during their fourth move. Instead, they need to place at least one backup leaf during this move in order to keep their growth rate.

Always scan the field for opportunities your opponent may take advantage of: places where they might try to reduce your active leaves to fewer than 3. The simplest way to mitigate the threat is to grow an extra leaf.

Endgame

Growing faster than your opponent improves your chances of winning. But if your opponent manages to survive your accelerated growth rate, you will run out of pieces before they do. And that means they will have the advantage of executing the final growth ("Final growth," pg. 12).

Match play

Dark's first-move advantage is significant in Treeblox. From the very start of the game, Light can be forced on the defensive. Because of this, the best way to play Treeblox is in matches that consist of 2, 4, 6, or some other even number of games, in which players switch colors every game.

Here is how to play a Treeblox match. After each game, write down the number of active leaves each player has. After completing the agreed number of games, tally these numbers and compare the totals. The player with more total active leaves at the end of the match wins.

An example score table of a 4-game match:

Game	Player 1	Player 2
1	5 (dark)	3 (light)
2	3 (light)	7 (dark)
3	4 (dark)	0 (light)
4	8 (light)	11 (dark)

Total 20 21

Result: Player 2 won by 1 point

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