

# Felci (Ferns)

An abstract strategy game  
for 2 players, duration 20'  
by Giuliano Polverari

*An ancient garden attracts a crowd of enthusiasts. As these colorful ferns slowly populate every corner of the garden, dedicated visitors seek the best vantage points.*

***Strike the perfect balance between placing ferns and visitors, to secure your victory!***

## Components

**1 board** representing a Garden, divided into 4 sections (each with 13 cells) surrounded by 8 Benches (4 white, 4 black).

### 50 Fern tiles

(10 for each of the 5 types of ferns).

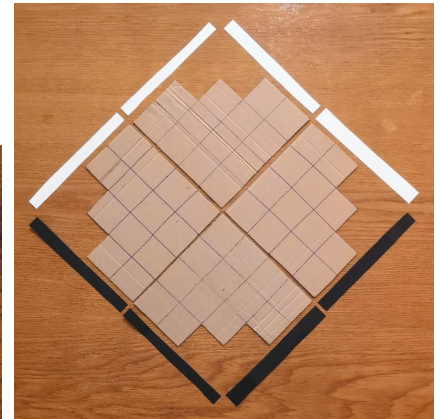
### 10 Visitor tiles

(5 for the white player and 5 for the black player).

Each Visitor has a favorite type of fern, shown on the side.



*The Ferns and the Visitors*



*The Garden and the Benches*

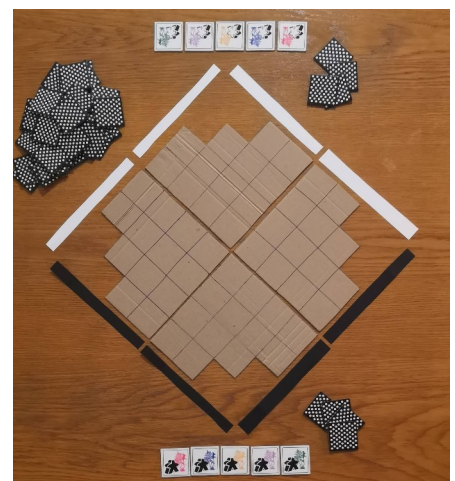
## Game setup

Players choose who will play white and who will play black, arranging the Board so that each player has the Benches of their color in front of them.

Each player takes their 5 Visitor tiles and places them face-up in front of them.

Shuffle the Fern tiles and place them in a facedown stack next to the board.

Each player draws 4 Fern tiles to hold as their starting hand.



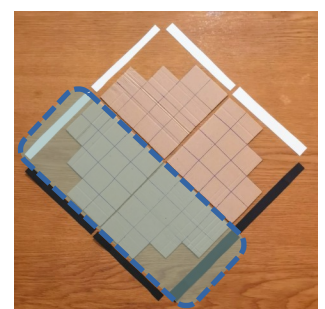
*Game setup, the white player is up and the black player is down*

## Definitions

**Disturber:** A Visitor seated on a Bench of the opposite color (e.g., a white Visitor on a black Bench).

**Free Fern:** A Fern in the Garden is free if at least one of its adjacent cells (horizontally or vertically) is empty.

**Side:** Any pair of adjacent sections of the Garden forms a Side; a Side is always bordered by one white and one black Bench. A Bench overlooks a Side, allowing the Visitor sitting there to observe all the ferns growing on that Side.



*A Garden Side*

# Gameplay

Players take turns, starting with the white player.

Each turn consists of **2 actions**, which may involve placing either a **Fern** or a **Visitor**.

The turn ends with a **Drawing** phase.

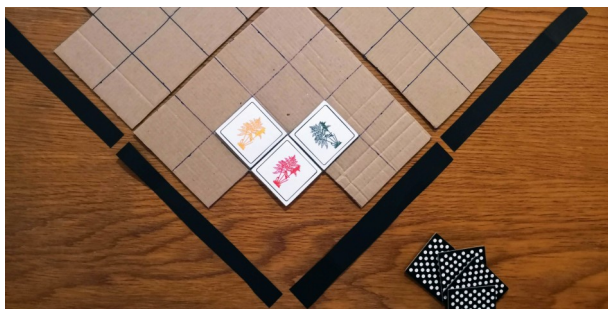
## Fern Action

The player chooses a Fern tile from their hand and places it in the Garden:

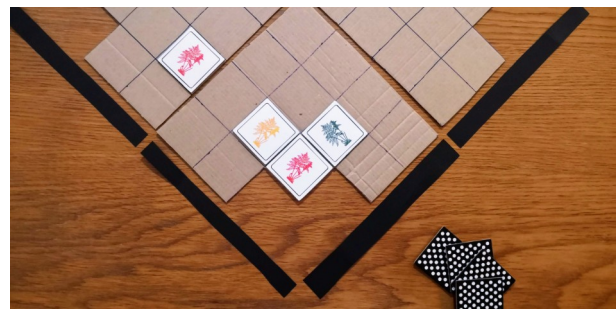
- **New plant:** If there are no free ferns of that color already in the Garden, the tile may be placed in any free cell.
- **Spore:** If there is at least one free fern of the same color in the Garden, the new tile **MUST** be placed in a free cell adjacent (horizontally or vertically, NEVER diagonally) to an existing fern of that color.

**Undergrowth Rule:** When placing a spore, the player may first place one or more tiles from their hand facedown in a sequence of free cells adjacent to the starting Fern. They then place their spore tile (face-up) adjacent to the last placed tile.

*Note: Undergrowth tiles CANNOT be used when placing a new plant.*



*Starting from this situation,  
let's see some examples of Fern action.*



*- Place a Red Fern -  
There is already a Red Fern in the garden,  
but it is not free to grow. The player  
can therefore place the Fern anywhere.*



*- Place a Yellow Fern -  
There is already a Yellow Fern in the garden  
free to grow, so the new Fern  
must be placed next to it.  
The player decides to place it to the southwest,  
without Undergrowth tiles.*



*- Place a Green Fern -  
As in the previous case, there is already a free Green Fern;  
therefore the new Fern must be placed in an adjacent cell.  
In this case the player decides to place two Undergrowth  
tiles (therefore covered), and completes the action by  
placing his Green Fern.*

## Visitor Action

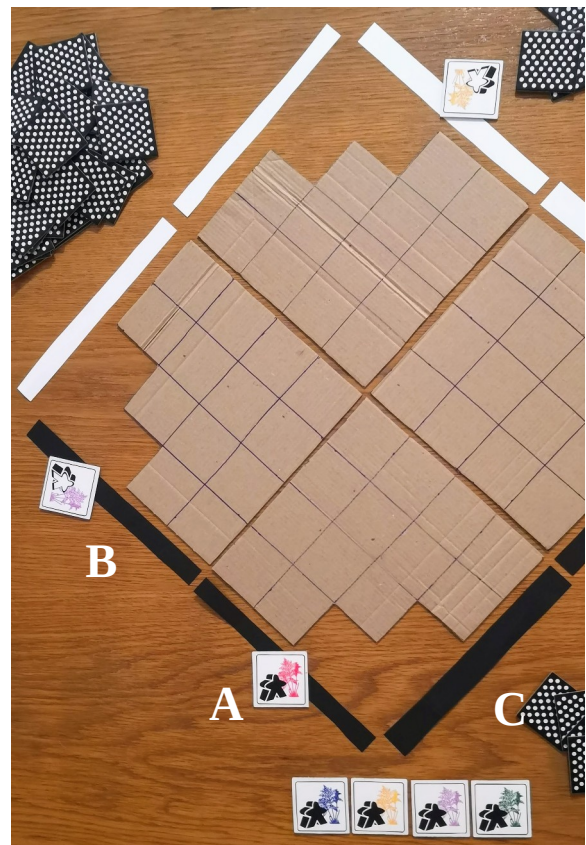
The player chooses one of their Visitors and places it on a Bench, with the following restrictions:

- Two Visitors of the same player cannot occupy the same Bench.
- A Visitor cannot be placed on a Bench if another Visitor passionate about the same type of fern is already seated on the same Side (on that Bench or its opposite).

Visitors placed on Benches will remain there **for the rest of the game**.

*In the example on the right, the black player:*

- On bench A cannot place other Visitors, because has already a Visitor there.
- On bench B can place the green or blue Visitor, because on the same Side there are yellow and rose Visitors already.
- On bench C can place any Visitor, because both that bench and the opposite are both empty.



Visitor Action

Visitors seated on their own Benches earn points at the end of the game, while those on opposing Benches (Disturbers) reduce the opponent's points.

**Clarification on turn's actions:** the player can freely choose which actions to perform and in what order, whether they are two Fern actions, or two Visitor actions, or a Visitor and a Fern (and related Undergrowths).

**Clarification on Undergrowth tiles:** Undergrowth tiles (i.e. covered Ferns) placed in the Garden have no effect on the rest of the game: they occupy their own cells and cannot be moved (like any other tile in the game), nor can they be crossed by other tiles; furthermore, they will not give points at the end of the game.

## Drawing

After their 2 actions, the player draws Fern tiles (if available) **until they hold 4 tiles in hand**.

This ends their turn, and the opponent takes their turn.



## End of the game

The game ends immediately if, **at the start of the white player's turn**, there are no tiles left in the draw pile. The winner is determined by calculating the Visitors' happiness.

### Scoring

Each Visitor seated on a Bench of their own color earns **points equal to the number of their favorite ferns visible in their Side**.

If the Bench has a Disturber, subtract the number of ferns of the Disturber's type visible in that Side (the score for that Bench can drop to zero but never below).

### Scoring example

Let's sum up the points for each Visitor, from left to right.

White player points:

- Red Visitor, 2 points
- Green Visitor, 5 points
- Yellow Visitor, 6 points; rose Disturber's effect, -4 points; total 2 points
- Blue Visitor, 4 points
- TOTAL: 13 points

Black player points:

- Red Visitor, 4 points
- Green Visitor, 4 points
- Blue Visitor, 5 points
- Yellow Visitor, 3 points; rose Disturber's effect, -2 points; total 1 point
- TOTAL: 14 points



*End of the game example*

**The black player wins!** Note: In this example the Disturbers are both rose, but in other games they may be of different colors.

## Game variant for beginners

If the black player is inexperienced, the white player may concede an advantage by skipping their first turn.

## Awards

Felci won the **Mensa Ludo: Genesis** award in 2024, dedicated to unpublished games that "stimulate logical and strategic skills through original and creative design solutions," organized by Mensa Italia.

