

REINER KNIZIA'S

SAKURA

SPRING IS HERE, THE CHERRY BLOSSOMS ARE IN BLOOM, AND THE EMPEROR IS READY FOR HIS WALK. EVERY YEAR HE TAKES THIS WALK, AND EVERY YEAR YOU TRY TO PAINT THE PERFECT PICTURE OF THE OCCASION.

THIS WILL BE YOUR YEAR.

YOU'RE GOING TO NEED TO GET CLOSE TO THE EMPEROR TO CAPTURE THE PERFECT ANGLE, BUT YOU'RE NOT ALONE IN YOUR AIMS. JOSTLING OTHER PAINTERS IS FINE, BUT BUMPING INTO THE EMPEROR IS A MASSIVE FAUX-PAS! ONLY THE MOST SWIFT, WILY, AND RUTHLESS ARTIST WILL SUCCEED IN EARNING HIS FAVOUR, WHILST THE REST MUST RETURN HOME EMPTY-HANDED.

COMPONENTS

60 CARDS

54 TOKENS

6 PAINTERS

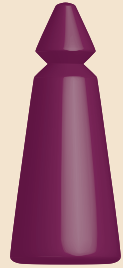
1 EMPEROR

GARDEN ACTION



PAINTER ACTION

ORDER NUMBER



THE EMPEROR'S GARDEN



- A. The torii space where the Emperor will start the game.
- B. The sakura spaces where the Emperor will pause to admire the cherry blossoms.
- C. The four bridges.

If you are playing with two, three, or four players, each bridge counts as a single space.

If you are playing with five or six players, each bridge counts as three spaces.

- D. The entrance gate where the painters will start the game.

The gate is the only space where multiple painters can stand at the same time. Painters together at the gate are neither ahead of each other nor behind each other, which affects some actions. For example, if everyone is at the gate, no-one is closest to the Emperor. Similarly, if two or more people are at the gate, no-one is furthest from the Emperor.

SETUP

Place the board with the Emperor's Garden in the centre of the table, and place the Emperor on the torii space. Have each player choose a painter and five matching tokens. Place the painters at the entrance gate and the remaining tokens near the board. Finally, shuffle the cards into a deck, and deal each player a hand of five cards.

See the last page for how to setup and play with only two players.

HOW TO PLAY

As a painter, your goal is to be closest to the Emperor when he reaches the sakura trees, in order to improve your painting, without getting so close that you bump into him. Doing so earns you tokens – signs of his recognition – and **the player with the most tokens at the end of the game will win**. Every round you will simultaneously choose cards to determine where he moves and where you move, and how you sabotage each other along the way. Be wary of moving too fast, for the Emperor will often slow down to study the scenery, or even wander back down the path a little!

ROUND OVERVIEW

Each round, players secretly choose a card from their hand and simultaneously reveal it. Cards are resolved in order from the lowest order number to the highest until every card has been resolved. Each card is discarded into a discard pile once it is resolved, and each player draws a new card from the deck. If the deck ever runs out, shuffle the discard pile into a new deck.

MOVEMENT

Once they are in the garden, painters may not share the same space. When moving your painter forwards or backwards, only count empty spaces towards your movement – do not count spaces occupied by other painters.

If a painter moves onto the space with the Emperor, the painter is disgraced. The offending painter immediately stops their movement, loses one of their tokens (if possible), and moves back three empty spaces. If the Emperor moves backwards onto a space with a painter, that painter is also disgraced, and must move back three empty spaces and lose a token if possible.

Whenever a piece moves forwards, it moves away from the gate and towards the shrine. Conversely, when a piece moves backwards, it moves back towards the gate.

If a painter would move backwards off the path, place it on the gate - they cannot move any further back. If the Emperor would move off the path, instead leave him on the last space in front of the gate.



CARD ACTIONS

Each card you play will move someone in the garden (usually the Emperor), and then separately move your painter. The actions on each card are always taken in that order – first the garden action, then the painter action. The Emperor and the painters must always move exactly as many spaces as the card dictates, unless a painter reaches the space containing the Emperor, or the Emperor reaches a sakura tree for the first time.

The actions are as follows:

GARDEN ACTIONS



Move the Emperor forward 1/2 spaces.



Move the Emperor back 1 space.



Choose whether the Emperor moves forward or backward 1 space.



Move the painter **closest to the Emperor** back two spaces.



Move the painter **furthest from the Emperor** forward two spaces.

PAINTER ACTIONS



Move your painter 1/2/3 spaces forward.



Choose whether your painter moves 1/2/3 spaces forward or backward.

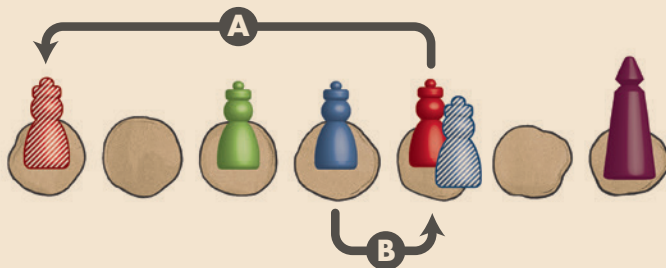


Place your painter on the first empty space in front of the next painter ahead of you. This may cause you to bump into the Emperor. If your painter is the closest one to the Emperor, they do not move.

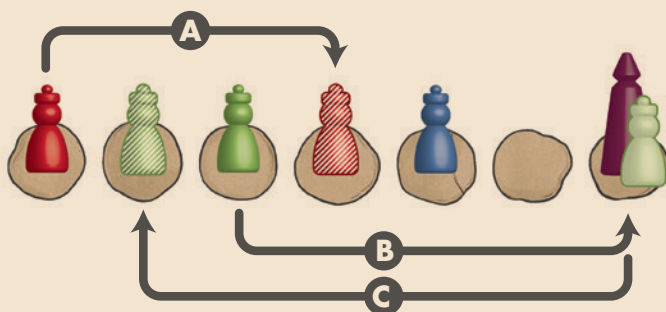


Count the number of painters between you and the Emperor, then move one space forward for each. If your painter is the closest one to the Emperor, they do not move.

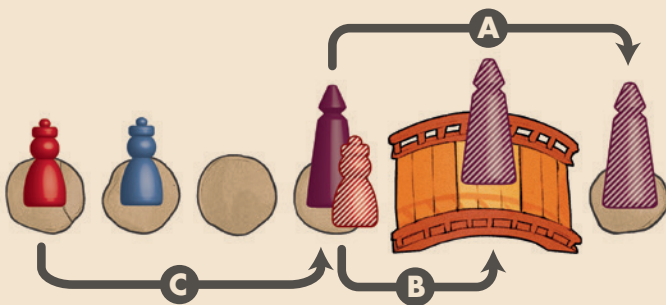
PLAY EXAMPLES



The blue player has the lowest order number, so resolves their card first. The red player is closest to the Emperor, so moves back two spaces, skipping over occupied spaces (A). Then the blue player moves forwards one space (B).



The green player is next in order. The red player is now last, so moves forwards two spaces (A), then green tries to move forwards three spaces (B), but they bump into the Emperor! The green player immediately moves back three spaces (C) and loses a token.



The red player's garden action moves the Emperor forwards two spaces. Because there are only three players in the game, the bridge only counts as one space, and the Emperor crosses the bridge in a single move (A). Had there been five or six players, the Emperor would instead have stopped halfway across (B). The red player then moves forwards two spaces (C).

SCORING

If the Emperor moves onto a particular sakura space for the first time in the game, he immediately stops. Carry out the painter action on the current card, then discard all other cards played this round, whether or not they were resolved.

Players then receive tokens from the supply according to how close to the Emperor they are. The closest player earns 3 tokens (or 4 for the last sakura space), the second closest earns 2 tokens, and the third closest earns 1 token.

If you are playing with five or six players, the fourth player also earns 1 token.

Once players have finished scoring, the second player moves their painter to the space directly behind the first painter, and the third player their piece directly behind that, and so on.

Finally, each player draws a card and the game continues on as normal. Each sakura space will only score once per game, even if the Emperor lands on it multiple times. After it has been scored, the Emperor can move past the space normally.

GAME END

The game ends immediately after scoring the last sakura space. The player with the most tokens wins. If there is a tie, the tied player closest to the Emperor wins.

PLAYING WITH TWO PLAYERS

To play with only two players, choose an unused painter to be the 'court painter' and treat them as a third player. Each round, after both players have chosen cards, reveal the top card of the deck. The court painter is considered to have played this card, and it is resolved in initiative order as per usual. Every time the court painter has an option to move a piece forwards or backwards, they always move that piece forwards.

For a more tactical game, play with the following variant:

A TRICKY VARIANT FOR TWO PLAYERS

In each round, whichever player is furthest from the Emperor will play two cards from their hand - one in front of them for their own painter, and one in the centre of the table for the court painter. The court painter still always moves pieces forwards when possible. If both players are on the entrance gate, reveal the top card of the deck for the court painter as above. The player who played the card for the court painter will draw an additional card at the end of the round to bring their hand back up to five cards.

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