

Stone Mountain Miniatures -- Alien Fungus Terrain

Review by Jonathan Aird

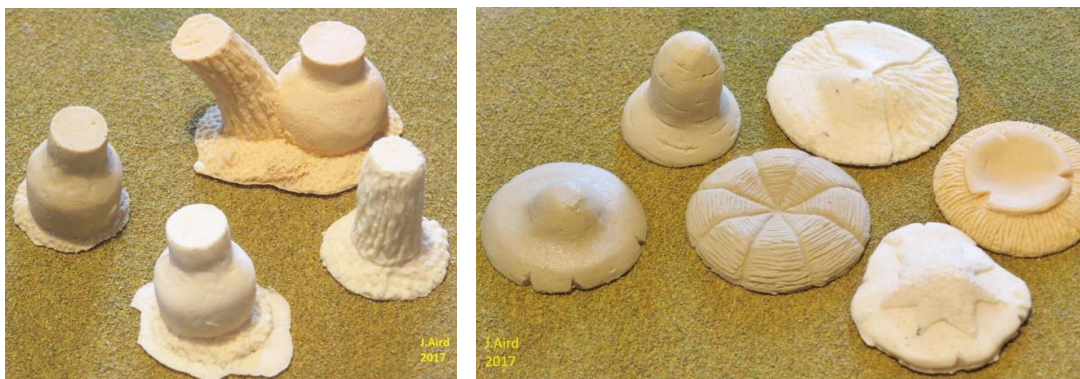
Stone Mountain Miniatures (<http://www.wargamingminiatures.com/>) make some quite unusual items alongside the more predictable buildings and bridges. In their 25mm fantasy and science fiction terrain range, they have two sets of giant fungi -- one consisting of the makings of a veritable fungus forest, the other a more evolved magical fungus -- thinking fungi! These items obviously have some novelty value in fantasy worlds -- I can imagine the talking fungus being used in Role Playing Games, for example -- but they are also pretty useful for games set in the Songs of Blades and Heroes spin-off Fightin' Fungi which imagines a whole realm of magical fungi that fight amongst each other, as well as against more staple fantasy opponents such as Elves, Orcs and Hobbits.

Taking the giant fungi first -- there are six bases and six caps, which should mean that there are 36 variations of fungi that can be assembled. In actuality, due to some duplication and some fungi stems being represented as pairs on a single base, and the size of the caps preventing a complete mix-and-match approach, there are somewhat fewer combinations that are practical, and some combinations just don't look as good -- the longest stems and smallest caps look a bit odd to my eye although there are plenty of real world examples of such variations. However, even identical pairings can be differentiated through painting. Is this an off-white mushroom? Or a grey one? Or a brown stem with a white cap with red spots? Or any of the myriad variations any wargamer could conceive of!



The fungus stands vary in height from the shortest at 25mm to the tallest at 30mm. The caps vary in diameter from 30mm to 50 mm, and show different shapes from flat, pancake like caps to a tall pointed cap. All are nicely marked on the top surfaces -- the undersides, however, are flat, but this shouldn't really show up when placed on the gaming table. They are also not at all expensive -- the pack of 6 is \$6.95 -- and will furnish decoration for a fantastic forest. Another potential

use is in a Journey to the Centre of the Earth style science-fiction setting. In Verne's classic story, the explorers came across a world of dinosaurs and monstrous creatures -- and at one point encountered a literal forest of fungi -- giant fungi which towered over them like great trees. These offerings from Stone Mountain would represent this environment very well for 15mm or smaller figures. Forests of these toadstools would make for a very different looking 6mm science fiction setting.



Now to the other offering -- the leering fungus man. This is a huge fungus, with a distinct face and a great lolling tongue. It lacks any obvious means of mobility, although this shouldn't hinder the imagination -- perhaps it has a subsoil snake-like body that allows it to shift through soft loams? Even if assumed to be a stationary creature, it could take a number of roles -- perhaps it is the Delphic Oracle of the mushroom men? Or alternatively it could be a powerful magic user or, perhaps more prosaically, it may be able to trap the unwary with its sinuous tongue, pulling them into its great maw to be consumed -- somewhat akin to a fungus variant on Tolkien's Old Man Willow. Whatever the case, it's an impressive figure -- standing some 60mm tall and on a base ~55mm in diameter. Used with 15mm or smaller figures, it could thus be some kind of fungus deity, or perhaps a Behemoth for a Hordes of the Things army themed around killer trees, plants and fungus. The face is quite crude, but sits well with the idea of a sentient fungus. Again it is relatively inexpensive at just \$4.95.



Anyone looking to make their fantasy wargaming table top a little different from the everyday would be well advised to have a look at these offerings. Any Fightin' Fungi players will doubtless want large numbers of these!