

# VEGGIE MANIA

**BCM300 PROJECT DOSSIER**

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## **THEME**

Veggie Mania is a simplistic children's game with a wholesome vegetable garden theme. This theme was chosen after a discussion with my housemates as to whether I should become a vegetarian, aforementioned in my previous [blog](#). Moreover, theme comes second to mechanics in this particular game due to its dominating [Eurogame genre](#) mechanics. In the case of Veggie Mania, the theme and narrative are not overly complex, which allows the concept to be adapted to fit another game niche if necessary.

The narrative created for Veggie Mania is as follows: Grow your own veggie patch and protect it from neighbouring veggie gardens in Veggie Mania! Be the first to plant five veggies and fully grow two in your garden to win! Do you think you have what it takes to be top gardener? Then Veggie Mania is for you!

To build the world of Veggie Mania, I began with the theme (vegetables), then introduced mechanics (rules) and materialistic elements (cards, board, tokens). I found that the materialistic elements helped define the story world, as they added a visual to the theme and mechanics I was using to structure the game. The abstracted board representative of a vegetable patch, the base modifier and vegetable cards and the growth and veggie tokens were all brought in to create a simple story world. However, it was obvious after an initial playtesting session that more competitive cards would be needed to extend gameplay and add another layer of depth.

## **BACKGROUND**

### **GENRE**

The Eurogame genre was unintentionally imported into Veggie Mania through the indirect competitive features it possessed, as well as the preference of the “role of mechanics over theme in gameplay.” (Woods, 2012) It also reflects the Eurogame genre in that “there is very little randomness or luck. Randomness that is there is mitigated by having the player decide what to do after a random event happens rather than before,” which is true of Veggie Mania. Having both global and local card play supports this mitigation, as it allows for each player to act accordingly to the card which is randomly drawn. (This will further be explained in the rules and mechanics).

## **AUDIENCE**

The ideal demographic for Veggie Mania is children aged over the age of 8, as well as families with young children. It is a simplistic game with a focus on the reduction of conflict to help maintain satisfactory gameplay for younger audiences. This target audience is supported through the Eurogame genre because it has only indirect player conflict, and favours “competition over resources or points.” (Board Game Geek, 2019) Correspondingly, observational studies have backed this reduction of conflict through cooperative games, hence why I have included it in my audience reasoning. A study showed that “cooperative behavior increased and aggression decreased during cooperative games...” (Bay-Hinitz, Peterson and Quilitch, 1994) and vice versa for aggressive games. The aim of my game is to be playable by children with minimal conflict, which is put into perspective nicely in this academic article.

## **COMPARABLE TITLES AND PRODUCTS**

Some comparable titles and products with similar themes include [Vege Tables](#) and [Plants vs. Zombies](#).

Veggie Mania and Vege Tables have similarities in that they are both card games built on strategy. Throughout Vege Tables, you can hamper or block your opponents from planting and growing their vegetable seeds.

The “tractor” card mentioned in the description of the game prompted me to create a duplicate card with a similar function. This card will trigger the final narrative structure of the game. You must be holding a tractor card after growing your vegetables, adding another element of strategy and luck.

Another game with a similar mechanic is Plants vs. Zombies, this being the line of defense built with growth tokens, and in the case of Plants vs. Zombies, plants. This

mechanic helps to whether the damage inflicted by another player, which is an enjoyable aspect of both games.

## POTENTIAL MARKETING ELEMENTS

Veggie Mania's marketing elements will include a mix of traditional and digital media. The main traditional media form will be television advertisements during prime viewing time for small children. This is generally in the early morning during commercial break times on [ABC](#) such as Sesame Street, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle, and the Adventures of Puss in Boots.

Digital media marketing will be spread across multiple platforms such as Reddit (with the game being posted on subreddits such as [r/boardgames](#), [r/tabletopgamedesign](#) and [r/playtesters](#)), [Kickstarter](#), [Board Game Geek](#) (listings), Facebook and Instagram sponsored posts, and finally, Twitter. There is potential to create hype around the game online as a classroom staple for "game time" during school hours.

Additionally, there is a potential for physical presence at gaming conventions such as [Looking For Gamers](#) in Sydney and Canberra. However, this may not be feasible due to the cost of hosting a booth at such conventions.

## PRODUCTION COSTS

Production cost for Veggie Mania as per [Print and Play Games](#).

All prices are estimated to be discounted in purchased in bulk (as per website).

**Bridge cards 2.25" x 3.5"** (vegetable cards and modifier cards): Double sided gloss print with images of choice.

- One sheet (21 cards): \$4.29 AUD
- 48 sheets (approx. 1000 cards): \$3.86 AUD x 48 = \$185.28

**Petal cards 3.5 " x 5.5"** (growth tokens): Double sided gloss print with images of choice. (Will need to be trimmed to fit board size if going with this company).

- One sheet (8 petals): \$4.89 AUD

- 125 sheets (1000 petals):  $\$3.18 \text{ AUD} \times 125 = \$397.50 \text{ AUD}$

**Circle cards 2"** (veggie tokens): Double sided gloss print with images of choice.

- 1 sheet (24 circles):  $\$4.89 \text{ AUD}$
- 42 sheets (approx. 1000 circles):  $\$4.00 \text{ AUD} \times 42 = \$168$

**Deluxe board 11" x 17"** (game board/veggie patch): bi-fold, one-sided printing.

- 1 board:  $\$12.07 \text{ AUD}$
- 20 boards:  $\$9.66 \text{ AUD} \times 20 = \$193.20$

**Medium box 5" x 8.5" x 1.4"** (box to hold all game pieces): printed lid, white bottom.

- 1 Box:  $\$12.30 \text{ AUD}$
- 20 boxes:  $\$12.30 \text{ AUD} \times 20 = \$246 \text{ AUD}$

## POTENTIAL PUBLISHER

In order to get Veggie Mania off the ground, initial crowdfunding will need to be utilised to potentially be picked up by a publisher (retail or otherwise). Sites such as [Kickstarter](#), [Meeple](#), and [Let's Play Games](#) are excellent examples of crowdfunding sources which will aim to get Veggie Mania in production and out to consumers.

## **RULES**

### **KEY MECHANICS**

Key mechanics in Veggie Mania are almost all categorised in a “turn.”

- 1) Reveal a “global act,” also known as a vegetable card.
- 2) React to the vegetable card with a modifier card from your own hand. These card mechanics include: plus growth (grown your own garden) minus growth (damage someone else's garden) planting cards (for example, a watering can card, sun car, fertiliser card etc... can be used to plant a vegetable token in own garden, subject to revealed compatibility with vegetable card), and action cards (switch hands with another player).
- 3) Collect your growth tokens at the end of your turn to help maintain your garden and build a line of defense against other player.
- 4) The final mechanic of the game is to play a “tractor” card once you have planted all veggie tokens and grown two veggies to full maturity with your growth tokens. This mechanic ends play and establishes a winner.

## CORE GAMEPLAY LOOPS

There are two core gameplay loops. These include:

- 1) Gameplay begins by revealing a card from the vegetable card deck.
- 2) Each player then responds to the card, or plays an action card from the cards they have in their hand to achieve what they perceive to be the best outcome. This is either planting a veggie token in their garden, growing their garden, or damaging another's garden.

## THREE-ACT STRUCTURE

Although previously outlined in my latest [blog](#), my three-act structure has since changed since playtesting ensued.

### **Beginning:**

The introduction of the materialistic elements including the individual player boards, vegetable cards, modifier cards, growth tokens and vegetable tokens, set the stage for Veggie Mania. The rules will ideally read smoothly and allow players to set their own playing space with the materials included in the box. Players should be able to establish that this is a game of strategy, with the first to plant all seeds in their individual garden board and growing two veggies to full maturity with the growth tokens becoming the winner.

### **Middle:**

Once the flow of play is established and players understand the concept of the cards and tokens within the game, tactics may come into play. With modifier cards giving players the ability to either plant a veggie token, damage another players garden, or grow their own garden, tactics will be deployed and strategies determined in the first act will have the potential to be fulfilled.



**End:**

Initially, the only way to establish a winner of Veggie Mania was for a player to have all vegetables planted in their garden. It was established through playtesting that this was an unsatisfactory method of winning which was entirely underwhelming. There was no real competitive element, and it was not emotionally satisfying as the frontrunners victory was inevitable. To tick the boxes of an emotionally satisfying game where elements come together to disrupt play and make the winner unexpected, a few elements and rules were added. In order to win the game, a player must have all vegetable tokens planted in their gardens, as well as two fully grown vegetables using the collectable growth tokens. Finally, a player must have a “tractor” card, which allows them to farm/pick their veggies and win the game. These additional elements made it slightly more difficult for one to win the game.

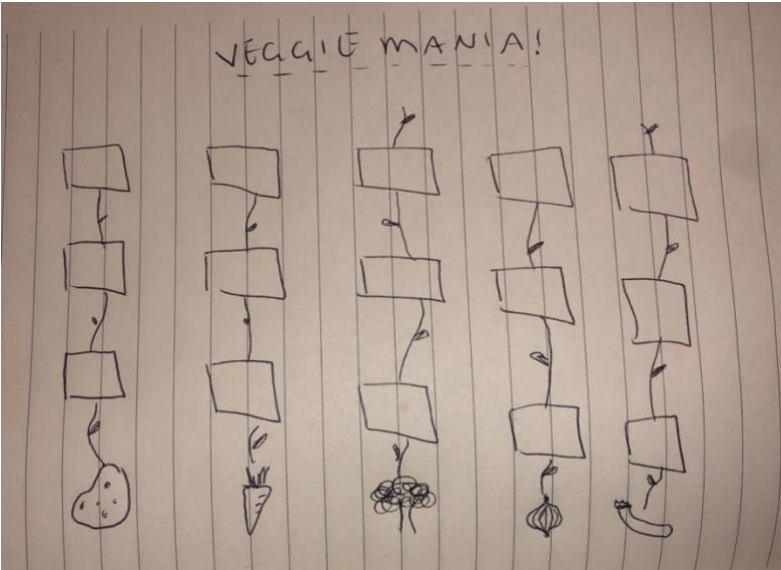
## **IDEATION**

### **CREATION PROCESS**

- 1) Game spark brain storming session.
- 2) Mechanic brainstorm. Ideas taken from games played in class and previous creation of group game.
- 3) Verbal brainstorm. Talking about the game out loud and the different concepts I wished to integrate within the game with my housemates. This acted as an initial prototype and playtest without physical elements being introduced.
- 4) Creation of first physical prototype. (Card deck and vegetable garden board).
- 5) Creation of second physical prototype. The introduction of materialistic elements once theme was solidified. This included the creation of the growth tokens and vegetable tokens (meeples were used during playtesting as veggie token substitutes).
- 6) First physical playtesting session.
- 7) Creation of third physical prototype. Changed card abilities and added more modifier cards as per feedback. (This will be explained in more depth in playtesting sub-section).
- 8) Second physical playtesting session.
- 9) Dossier completion.

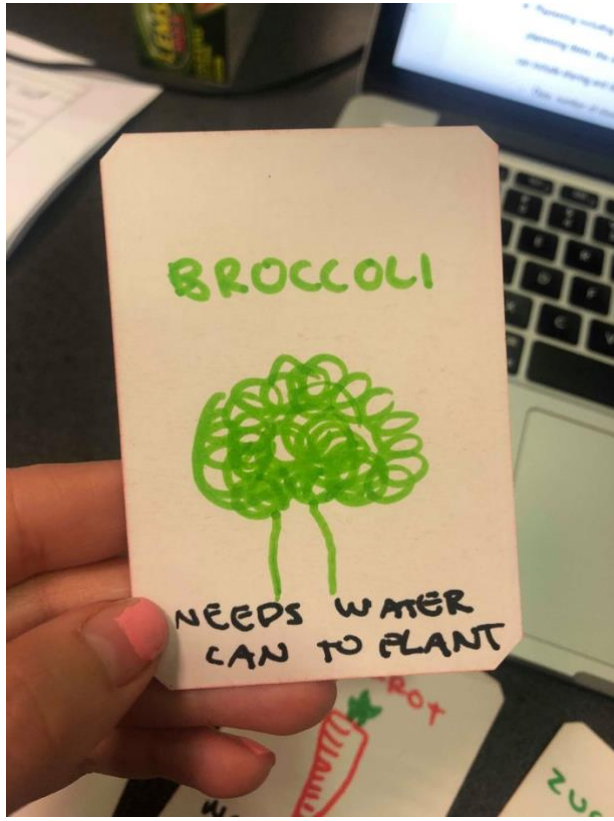
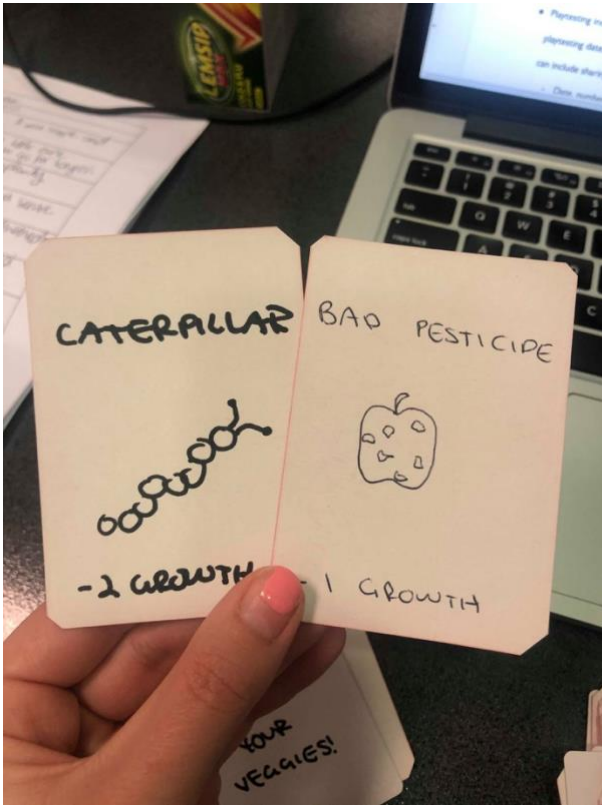
# PROTOTYPE DETAILS

Images of initial prototype:





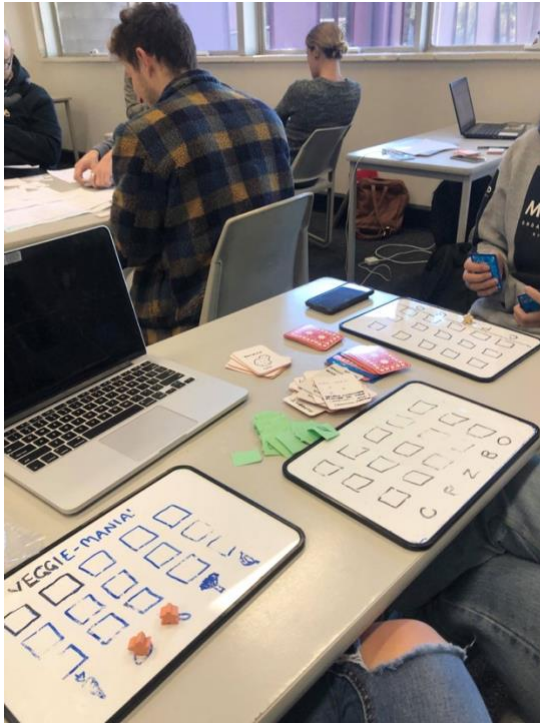
Images of current prototype:



PLAYTESTING

| DATE    | NO. OF PLAYERS       | KEY FEEDBACK  |
|---------|----------------------|---|
| 24/5/19 | 4 (Including myself) | <p>“When someone is about to win there is not a lot to do to stop them.”</p> <p>“Refine the rules.”</p> <p>“Rounds are too quick.”</p> <p>“Confusion over placement and removal of growth and vegetable tokens. Needs to be specified in rules.”</p> <p>See appendix no. 1 for full feedback.</p> |
| 31/5/19 | 3 (Including myself) | <p>“Murky rules, need refinement.”</p> <p>“Was too complex with certain cards.”</p> <p>“Make cards more appropriate for a younger audience.”</p> <p>“Attack cards were too overpowering.”</p> <p>See appendix no. 2 for full feedback.</p>  |

## PLAYTESTING DOCUMENTATION



## ITERATION

### FEEDBACK IDENTIFICATION

Key feedback was identified via my own note taking during a live playtesting session.

The feedback listed is the changes I planned to introduce immediately. Feedback listed on the playtesting reflections from classmates was then read, taken into consideration, and put forth to my next prototype and rule draft. See appendix no.3 for full list of feedback notes written by myself.

### FEEDBACK AND CHANGES

First playtesting session:

- **“Veggie token could move up a square instead of having growth tokens.”**  
This mechanic, although abstract, would not appeal to a younger audience as

much as physical growth tokens would, therefore feedback did not change prototype.

- **“To win the game: have one of each veggie in the garden, plus two fully grown veggies.”** This feedback was utilised and became part of the key mechanic to win the game.
- **“More could be done with cards in hand.”** This feedback was taken into account and caused me to change the cards in a players hands from vegetable cards to modifier/action cards. This enabled more control over play and whether other players may be able to block someone from winning to add another layer of complexity.
- **“Instead of getting a veggie every time a vegetable card is revealed, you have to match the revealed card with one in your own hand to get a veggie token.”** This feedback was utilised but reiterated to instead have only particular action cards that will enable a player to collect a veggie token to plant in their garden, rather than match a vegetable card.

#### **Second playtesting session:**

- **“Get rid of the hail card.”** This feedback was the biggest of my second playtesting session and the only one that changed. The hail card was too damaging for the audience I was targeting, as it allowed for players to remove all growth from another players garden.
- **“What if I’ve already planted a veggie token in my garden and have no other active cards to grow or plant anything?”** This feedback prompted me to introduce a rule which allows players to place two extra growth tokens down if they have already planted a veggie token in their garden.



## **FINAL THOUGHTS**

The final version of the game would look more cartoon based and less realistic unlike most vegetable games who feature dull colours and very realistic looking vegetables. (Similar to the ideal final version images depicted in the prototype details). The more materialistic, the better, especially with young children who tend to think veggies are boring and gross.

Ideally, I would have a sufficiently functioning board game given more design time. I would refine my card types, functions and modifiers to fit the game in a style that has a nice balance between simple and complex. I would also like to address my rules more thoroughly. They have been a struggle for me to create and write in a passive manner.

Overall, I am pleased with my efforts to create a working game (although it has a very long way to go if it were to be pursued and published).

## REFERENCES

Bay-Hinitz, A., Peterson, R. and Quilitch, H. (1994). Cooperative games: a way to modify aggressive and cooperative behaviors in young children. *Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis*, 27(3), pp.435-446.

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Board Game Geek (2012). *Vege Tables*. [online] BoardGameGeek. Available at: <https://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/128072/vege-tables> [Accessed 27 May 2019].

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## APPENDIX

### Appendix 1

BCM300 Game Making - Playtesting Reflection

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Student Name   | Morgan Pagan   |
| Game Title   | Vegete Mania   |
| Was the game fun?  | Mostly, yeah. It was simple and easy to follow.                          |
| Did the game provide enough engagement?                              | Not quite, it needs a little more complexity and needs to go for longer. |
| Was the balance between complexity and simplicity effective?         | Needs a little more complexity.  |
| Is the game Abstract, if so does it make sense?                      | A little abstract but it makes sense.                                    |
| Is the game thematic, if so, is the theme successfully communicated? | Yes, it's gardening/vegetable themed very well communicated.             |
| Did the rules make sense?  | Yes they were very simple and clear.                                     |
| Reflect on the positive aspects of the game                          |  |
| Reflect on the negative aspects of the game                          |  |
| How could the design be improved?                                    | could remove growth below if they aren't necessary                       |
| What are the next steps to refine the game?                          |  |

BCM300 Game Making - Playtesting Reflection

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Student Name   | Scanny  |
| Game Title   | Veggie Mania  |
| Was the game fun?  | Y   |
| Did the game provide enough engagement?                              | Y } For target audience   |
| Was the balance between complexity and simplicity effective?         | Y   |
| Is the game Abstract, if so does it make sense?                      | Not abstract - its cool   |
| Is the game thematic, if so, is the theme successfully communicated? | Theme nice  |
| Did the rules make sense?  | Yes primarily (confusing over removal of growth helps offer insight about plants - all from same plant? choice of which plant?) |
| Reflect on the positive aspects of the game                          | Easy to learn Rules make sense  |
| Reflect on the negative aspects of the game                          | Rounds don't last long enough for growth timers to feel effective/usable  |
| How could the design be improved?                                    | Rounds are quick More could be done with cards in hand  |
| What are the next steps to refine the game?                          | Add another layer of complexity   |

BCM300 Game Making - Playtesting Reflection

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Student Name   | Grace   |
| Game Title   | Veggie Mania  |
| Was the game fun?  | Yes   |
| Did the game provide enough engagement?                              | Yes, maybe needs an additional component  |
| Was the balance between complexity and simplicity effective?         | For the target audience, yes  |
| Is the game Abstract, if so does it make sense?                      | Yes   |
| Is the game thematic, if so, is the theme successfully communicated? | Yes, cute   |
| Did the rules make sense?  | Yes   |
| Reflect on the positive aspects of the game                          | The game has a great reason and the growth aspect acting as protection is really good |
| Reflect on the negative aspects of the game                          | Not when someone is about to win there not a lot to do to stop them                   |
| How could the design be improved?                                    | Just with more time & resources   |
| What are the next steps to refine the game?                          | Refining the rules  |

## Appendix 2

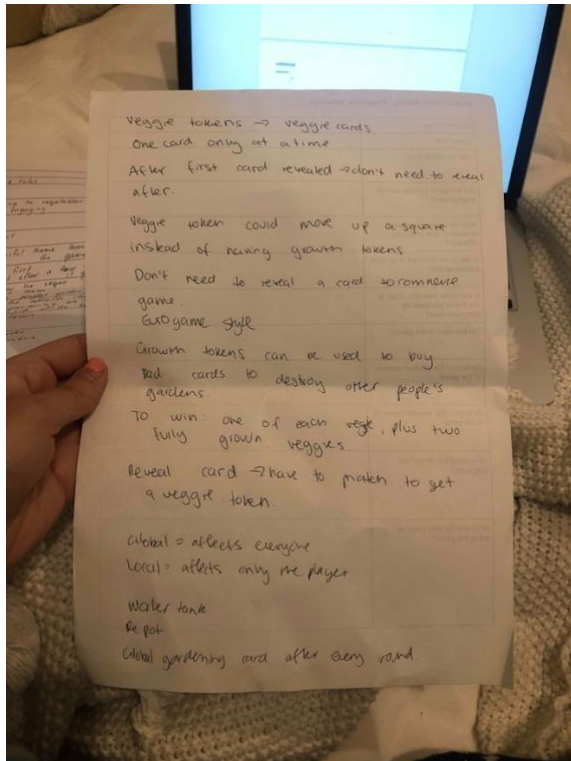
BCM300 Game Making - Playtesting Reflection

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Student Name   | Shari   |
| Game Title   | Vege Tales  |
| Was the game fun?  | yes   |
| Did the game provide enough engagement?                              | yes watching the vegetables grow was the engaging                       |
| Was the balance between complexity and simplicity effective?         | yes   |
| Is the game Abstract, if so does it make sense?                      | not abstract  |
| Is the game thematic, if so, is the theme successfully communicated? | very successful theme throughout the game.                              |
| Did the rules make sense?  | hard at first a few rounds but after a bit got easier                   |
| Reflect on the positive aspects of the game                          | fun to grow the veges and plant them attacking peoples garden was funny |
| Reflect on the negative aspects of the game                          | at first the attack cards were overpowering we got rid of the hail card |
| How could the design be improved?                                    | bright colours  |
| What are the next steps to refine the game?                          | better cards<br>clearer rules   |

BCM300 Game Making - Playtesting Reflection

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Student Name   | Shania smells like dead fish   |
| Game Title   | Vege Tales   |
| Was the game fun?  | Yes  |
| Did the game provide enough engagement?                              | Yes  |
| Was the balance between complexity and simplicity effective?         | Yes  |
| Is the game Abstract, if so does it make sense?                      | Yes  |
| Is the game thematic, if so, is the theme successfully communicated? | Yes  |
| Did the rules make sense?  | Much, need refinement  |
| Reflect on the positive aspects of the game                          | fun theme, liked watching veges grow   |
| Reflect on the negative aspects of the game                          | Was too complex until rules changed  |
| How could the design be improved?                                    | better artwork, solid boards, laminated cards                                  |
| What are the next steps to refine the game?                          | refine rules, make them more appropriate for young audience, improve prototype |

### Appendix 3



- Growth or minus growth cards can be played at any time by any player if veggies have been planted or
- Reminds of plants verse zombies
- If you already have a veggie and you draw another card to plant the same veggie, you can put two growth down
- Getting rid of the hail card and decreasing the amount of growth damage a card can do.