



Gooze Gardener Design Document

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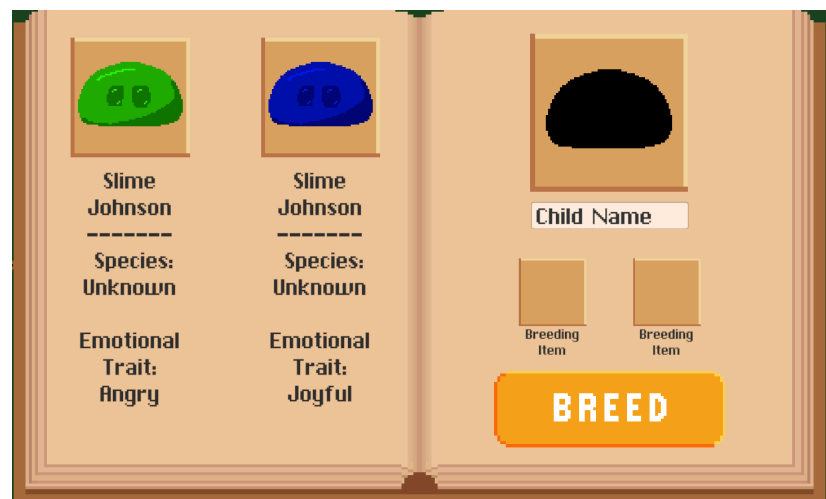
Concept

Gooze Gardener is a cozy farming simulation game where you breed and raise different exotic slimes in order to discover unique traits, characteristics, and behaviors.

Give slimes unique items to promote mutations in their children!

Sit back and relax after work or school!

Collect resources from your slimes to mutate children or expand your farm!



Overview

In Gooze Gardener, your goal is simple. Propagate slimes in order to discover new emotional traits and species. Use resources created by slimes to expand your farm, earn money, or mutate children into new species!

Market Analysis

Audience

We are targeting an audience that is looking for a more laid back experience. More specifically, we want to provide an experience for players that enjoy taking care of animals in a relaxing setting. Our game aims to provide a nice surface aesthetic for shorter bursts of gameplay, while also supplying a deeper system for players to explore if they play over longer periods of time.

Platform

Our game is aimed at personal computers. Interactions are easiest with a mouse, while the keyboard adds shortcuts to give the player more control. This allows for easier testing during early development, while not totally limiting our options later.

Competition Research

Slime Rancher has many similar characteristics to Gooze Gardener. Slime Rancher lets the player explore a foreign planet to discover different types of slimes and food. There is also a ranch where slimes can be kept and food can be grown in order to get more money. There is a good mix of exploration and farming, with the final goal being to unlock every slime and explore the whole archipelago.

The main difference between Slime Rancher and Gooze Gardener is a shift to focus on the slimes themselves. In Slime rancher there are a limited number of types of slimes and each slime belonging to a type is exactly the same. This means that after collecting more than 2 or 3 slimes of a certain type, they become indistinguishable. Slimes become a commodity to be used to generate more capital. Gooze Gardener on the other hand, focuses on making each slime distinct and memorable. This allows the player to form connections with slimes instead of purely using them.

Stardew Valley is a farming game that shares a similar audience with Gooze Gardener. Stardew Valley includes several mechanics including mining, combat, and fishing. The two most important however are farming and relationships. Stardew Valley provides the player with the experience of a full life, rounded out with different skills and connections

to make with villagers. Each character in the valley has a storyline, personality, and unique things about them that typically become the center of most players' experience.

The most obvious similarity between Gooze Gardener and Stardew Valley is the building of connections between the player and the characters within it. However, the nature of these connections are distinct. Characters in Stardew have a pre-made story and limited lines of dialogue. The player is ultimately attempting to explore this story to its end. In Gooze Gardener the player will be nurturing their own characters and story with their slimes. This provides a very different experience, as the player takes the role of the creator.

Project Plan

Scope

The MVI for our game includes the ability for players to breed slimes using different items to discover new traits and genes and increase their collection of slime, buy and sell slimes along with other items to take care of these slimes. We hope to be able to add more features like building so players can customize their garden and add a touch of resource management.

Timeline

Sprint 1 - We wanted our slimes to exist in the world, to be interactable and have basic AI and movement. We also wanted to work on the dragging mechanic of the slime since that is a core part of how interactions are done in game

Sprint 2 - We started to flesh out our mechanics like introducing breeding, genes and traits along with the inventory system. These all impact the way slimes are bred and discovered.

Sprint 3 - We will work on the economic and resource management aspects of the game, along with making slimes more personalized by having naming and more behaviours.

We plan on polishing our mechanics and working on our visuals and audio after sprint 3.

Team Roles

Rishit - Team Lead and Programming, worked on the inventory system and items.

Jesse - Programming, worked on the breeding feature and the UI

Jack - Programming, worked on the slime AI and movement along with the genes system

Keelon - Programming, worked on the slime traits

Seth - Art, physics programmer

Core Gameplay

Core Mechanic

Gooze Gardener is a farming game, meaning that the player is tasked with using a selection of resources in order to nurture a product (a plot of land full of slimes, in this case) and watch it grow. Slimes will simulate a selection of unique behaviors in real time, including wandering randomly within bounds of the game world (or an enclosure they were placed in), pathfinding to sources of nourishment placed within the world as they need them, or performing one or more unique interactions depending on what their unique selection of traits allows them to do.

Core Gameplay Loop

Slimes have a layout of “genes” that affect their quality-of-life, such as movement speed, maximum hunger/thirst, hunger/thirst drain, etc that are unique to each and every slime, as well as a selection of “traits” that influence appearance and behavior. The kind of genes and traits a slime can have is based on their parents’ genetics as well as any external situations that may influence the breeding outcome. Slimes will go hungry/thirsty as time passes, and must be cared for using food that the player can buy from an in-game shop. Slimes that go completely without food and/or water for a significant portion of time will shrivel up and become unable to be interacted with until the player provides nourishment for them.

Players can interact with their slimes by dragging them around or dropping items bought with in-game currency into the world and watching how the slimes interact with them. They can also build structures such as storage solutions, decorations, and enclosures in order to organize their plot, streamline the process of interacting with the slimes, and discover exclusive interactions. Some slimes may have special interactions with the player, such as running away in fear of being picked up or following the player’s cursor around in order to seek affection.

The main method of collecting currency is selling slimes, but there are cases where slimes with an exotic traits may produce items for the player to sell. As slimes on

the farm continue to grow and have their needs met, they will eventually breed with other healthy slimes, producing a unique child slime with a new selection of genes and traits. Depending on the type of nourishment/enrichment the parents have received in their lifetimes, the child may develop different traits from the parents. Discovering a trait for the first time will add it to a compendium of discovered traits that serves as a method of judging progress throughout the game and gaining knowledge that the player may have missed from simply watching the slimes.

Secondary Mechanics

There are all kinds of slimes. Specifically, there are many different genes and traits that can affect the slime. A big mechanic in this game is trying to discover all of the genes and traits the game has to offer. Genes are varying values that affect how the slime behaves, such as its speed, decision-making, and rates of different attributes. Traits are effects that change the slime's aesthetics or visuals. These can be related to size, color, or any unique effects that a slime might have. Some may be rarer than others, and some may have very specific prerequisites, enticing players to continue discovering more. We want our player to feel a sense of curiosity for uncovering the many kinds of slime, and the game should naturally reveal them all over time.

Resource management, although important to the core loop, is still a secondary mechanic when compared to slime breeding. Players must feed the slime various foods or liquids to keep the slime happy and healthy. However, these resources are bought using money, which can be earned from actions such as selling slimes. This causes the game to be a balancing act between having enough resources to keep your slimes happy, while also having enough slimes to continue breeding for money.

A less challenging aspect of our game is the simulation of the slimes in the garden themselves. All slimes will act differently depending on their mix of genes and traits. This makes the slimes feel more lifelike and thoughtful, rather than just an object for the game to progress with. Personalization of these slimes (such as through custom names) should give players more of a connection to these slimes, as well. Players can watch the slimes move around and make decisions on their own. Players can sit there and enjoy watching the game unfold in front of them, almost like a mini simulation.