Plants vs. Zombies (video game)

Plants vs. Zombies is a tower defense and strategy video game developed and originally published by PopCap Games for Windows and OS X in May 2009. It has been ported to consoles, handhelds, and mobile devices. In *Plants vs. Zombies*, the player takes the role of a homeowner in the midst of a zombie apocalypse. To defend their home from zombies, the player puts down plants that fire projectiles at, or have other detrimental effects on, a horde of advancing zombies, which approach along several parallel lanes. The player collects a currency called "sun" with which plants can be bought. If a zombie makes it to the house on any lane, the level is over.

The game was designed by George Fan. It was initially conceptualized as a more defense-oriented sequel to the fish simulator game *Insaniquarium*, before developing into a tower defense game featuring plants fighting against <u>zombies</u>. Other inspirations for *Plants vs. Zombies* include *Magic the Gathering*, *Warcraft III*, and *Swiss Family Robinson*. Rich Werner helped with the art style of the game and Laura Shigihara was the composer for the game's music.

The game received critical acclaim and was nominated for multiple awards. It won the "Download Game of the Year" and "Strategy Game of the Year" as part of Golden Joystick Awards 2010. *Plants vs. Zombies* received praise for its simplistic but engaging gameplay and humorous art style and at the time of its release. The game was the fastest-selling video game developed by PopCap Games and by 2010, had sold over a million copies worldwide.

A few years after the release of *Plants vs. Zombies*, PopCap Games was bought by <u>Electronic Arts</u> (EA). George Fan and 49 other employees were laid off by EA to mark a change of focus to mobile and social gaming. After the buyout, *Plants vs. Zombies* was followed by two direct sequels, three <u>third-person shooters</u>, and two spin-offs; most of which have received positive reviews.

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| Publisher(s) | PopCap Games | |
| Designer(s) | George Fan | |
| Programmer(s) | Tod Semple | |
| Artist(s) | Rich Werner | |
| Writer(s) | Stephen Notley ^[1] | |
| Composer(s) | Laura Shigihara | |
| Series | Plants vs. Zombies | |
| Engine | PopCap Games Framework | |
| Platform(s) | Microsoft Windows OS X iOS Xbox 360 PlayStation 3 Nintendo DS DSiWare | |

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Gameplay

Plants vs. Zombies is a tower defense and strategy video game [2][3] in which the player defends a house from zombies. [4] The playing field is divided into a grid[5] of five or six horizontal rows and nine columns, and is generally stylized as a lawn with a house at the left side. [1][6] The player places different types of plants and fungi on the individual squares of the grid. [6] Each plant has a different style of defense, [5] such as shooting. [6][5] Different types of zombies also have their own gimmicks, with certain plants being more effective against each one. [5][6] The player can only pick a limited number of plants through seed packets at the beginning of each level, [7] and must pay using a currency called "sun" to place them. [5][8] The player can gather sun by either clicking on the sun that randomly generate over the lawn, $\frac{[1][8]}{[8]}$ or by using certain plants, like Sunflowers, that generate it. [6][9] If zombies reach the left edge of the lane, they are mowed down by a Lawnmower at the end of each row, clearing all zombies in its path. [10] If the zombie reaches the end of the lane and the Lawnmower has already been used, the player has to start the level over.[1]

Adventure Mode

In the Adventure mode, there are five stages, each divided into ten levels. [1] Starting on the first level of stage two (level 2–1), zombies can sometimes drop money when killed. The money can be spent at an in-game store called Crazy Dave's TwiddyDinkies, which is

| BlackBerry Tablet |
|-------------------|
| OS |
| BlackBerry 10 |

Release

May 5, 2009

Windows, OS X

WW: May 5, 2009

iOS

<u>WW</u>: February 15, 2010 (iPhone)

<u>WW</u>: April 5, 2010 (iPad)

Xbox Live Arcade

<u>WW</u>: September

8, 2010

Nintendo DS

NA: January 18,

2011

PAL: May 6, 2011

PlayStation Network

<u>WW</u>: February 8,

2011

DSiWare

<u>NA</u>: March 14, 2011

PAL: May 6, 2011

Android

WW: May 31, 2011 (Amazon AppStore)

<u>WW</u>: December 14, 2011 (Google

Play)

Kindle Fire

<u>WW</u>: Novmember 14, 2011

Windows Phone

<u>WW</u>: June 23,

2011

Nook HD

<u>WW</u>: November 11, 2011

PlayStation Vita

<u>NA</u>: February 21, 2012

<u>EU</u>: February 22, 2012

BlackBerry 10

unlocked after level 3–4. [6][1] Crazy Dave offers boosts that players use to upgrade already-placed plants and gardening tools for the player's Zen Garden. [5][6] The Zen Garden is unlocked after the player beats level 5–4,[1] and has the player water and maintain a group of plants [5] that are randomly dropped after a zombie is killed. [1] In return, the plants give the player money. [5] The fifth level of every stage has a mini-game challenge of some sort, often utilizing a conveyor belt that gives different types of plants to the player [4]. The stage of the player [4] of the player [4] of the player [4] of the player [4].

a conveyor belt that gives different types of plants to the player. [4] The tenth level of every stage has plants being given to the player through a conveyor belt without a mini-game type gimmick. [1] Stages one, three, and five take place in daytime, while stages two and four take place in nighttime. [1][9]

The game has the player use the fungi plants during the nighttime stages due to their lower cost and sun not being generated during the night. 1 | [3][4] | Stages three and four take place in the backyard of the house, which has six lanes and features a pool that takes up the middle two lanes. The pool requires the player to place the plants on Lily Pads; these can be placed directly on pool lanes, while most other plants cannot. Stage five takes place on the roof of the house. The roof has the player use catapult plants rather than the normal shooting plants due to the roof slanting upward in the middle.

| | <u>WW</u> : January 30, 2013 |
|----------|---------------------------------|
| Genre(s) | Tower defense, strategy |
| Mode(s) | Single-player, multiplayer |



A pool level is currently in progress. Zombies are progressing from the right in order to reach the house. The player has to place down plants in order to defend their house from the zombies.

The last level of the game has the player facing against Dr. Zomboss, an evil scientist and the <u>animator</u> of the zombies. He crushes the player's plants with his Zombot's feet and vans, and can place fire and ice balls that roll across a lane. The player can subdue these by using Jalapeños and Ice Shrooms. After beating Adventure mode, the player can choose to play through Adventure mode again, this time with the plants unlocked from the previous course of playing Adventure mode and with three randomly selected plants at the beginning of each level. [13][14]

Other game modes

There are three game modes the player can also play after beating Adventure mode: Mini-Games mode, Puzzle mode, and Survival mode. In Mini-Games mode, the player selects from a collection of twenty minigames. The levels pose the player with many unique challenges that use some sort of gimmick, often utilizing variants of a conveyor belt to give the player certain plants. Before beating Adventure mode, the player can play three levels from Mini-Games mode after collecting a gift box in level 3-2. In Puzzle mode, the player can play two types of levels, "Vasebreaker" and "I, Zombie". In "Vasebreaker", the player breaks open a set of vases that can contain either a plant or a zombie. The game ends when all the vases are smashed and all the zombies have been killed. In "I, Zombie", the player places zombies to get past preplaced cardboard cut-outs of plants to eat the brain at the other side of each lane. Survival mode offers the player a selection of levels that have the player choose plants between each wave to fight increasingly challenging waves of zombies.

Development

Concept

Plants vs. Zombies was designed by George Fan. He was inspired to make the game a tower defense game after both thinking of a more defense-oriented version of a previous title of his, *Insaniquarium*, and playing some *Warcraft III* tower defense mods. [19] Fan had the idea of a sequel to *Insaniquarium* for the Nintendo DS. In the initial concept, each screen was to represent a separate fish tank; one stacked on top of the other. Aliens would attack the top fish tank, and, if successful, would break into the bottom fish tank. The gameplay in the top fish tank would be focused on defense against the aliens, while that in the bottom fish tank would be focussed on resource generation, akin to *Insaniquarium*. [20] But, inspired by the towers in *Warcraft III*, he felt that plants would make good defensive structures. He wanted to bring something new to the genre with his game, and he found common tower defense game-play elements such as mazing and juggling to be too awkward, causing him to use the five- and six-lane set-ups that were used in the final version. [17][21] Originally, enemies were going to be the aliens from *Insaniquarium*. But while sketching concept art, Fan drew a sketch of what he considered "the perfect zombie", and the theming was reworked. [22]

Some of the characteristics that defined *Insaniquarium* influenced the development of *Plants vs. Zombies*. Players advance at a similar pace by receiving new plants. Also, the way plants are chosen at the beginning of each level was derived from the way pets are chosen in *Insaniquarium*. Another inspiration for the game's mechanics came from a scene in the film *Swiss Family Robinson* in which the family defends against pirates. Fan included elements from the trading card game *Magic: The Gathering*, which he had played with his girlfriend, *Laura Shigihara*. Showing her how to customize their card decks inspired him to design *Plants vs Zombies* with seed packets rather than his original idea of using a conveyor belt that produced randomly selected plants, due to the greater complexity of the seed packet method. While the conveyor belt idea was dropped from the more common game mode, it remained as a special element in select levels. The use of five lanes was influenced by the game *Tapper*.

Name

When the game featured aliens, its working title was $Weedlings.^{[20][23]}$ It was changed to Plants vs. Zombies after the enemies were changed to zombies. Plants vs. Zombies was initially a placeholder name. [24] The planned name for most of the development was Lawn of the Dead, a pun on the title of the George A. Romero zombie film Combine Dead. [25] However, Romero did not allow Combine Dead and Combine Dead wideo of Combine Dead and Combine Dead with the subtitles saying something about runtime errors. The video was a plea to let Combine Dead and Combine Dead which would later be used as the branding on the seed packets in-game, and Combine Dead and Combine Dead which would later be used as the branding on the seed packets in-game, and Combine Dead and Combine Dead which

Design

Fan designed the tutorial to be simplistic and spread throughout *Plants vs. Zombies* to get <u>casual gamers</u> into the game. During development, it was discovered that newcomers to the genre of real-time strategy may have had a hard time learning the concept behind sun collection. So, the price of the income-generating Sunflowers was dropped from 100 to 50 to encourage players to buy them over the attacking Peashooter. As a result, the balance between plants and zombies had to be restructured—a move that Fan said was worth the effort. Adventure mode was focused on for much of the first year of development. Upon finishing some items ahead of schedule, the programmer, Tod Semple, began working on ideas that would later be used for Mini-Games mode. Some ideas for the Puzzle mode section would later be tweaked and moved into Adventure mode; "Vasebreaker" and "I, Zombie", for example, came from single-level concepts for Mini-Games mode. During testing, Fan found that Mini-Games mode and Puzzle mode seemed to detract from the focus on Adventure mode, so the additional modes had most of their levels locked, requiring advancement within Adventure mode in order to become unlocked. The plants of th

The final designs of the zombies and the plants were similar to how they were initially. After searching for an artist, Fan discovered Rich Werner, who Fan thought clicked with his design intentions. He attributed the intrigue of the design to its animation scheme; Semple suggested that they animate it in $\underline{\text{Flash}}$ and export it into the game. Fan worried that this would look like it was cut out from paper, and would resemble $\underline{South\ Park}$ too much, but was satisfied in the end, attributing this to Semple and Werner's talents. [17]

Characters

In the final game, 49 plants can be unlocked. [1] Of the plants, Fan was most proud of the Tall-Nut, Torchwood, and Cob Cannon plants. He explained that the Tall-Nut has character, citing its "determined gaze" and how it sheds a single tear when hurt. Shigihara could not stand to see this and protected it with a Pumpkin, which can protect plants inside it. He felt that the Torchwood – which gives Peashooters flaming ammunition – required players to think of how plants interacted with each other. [21] Another favorite plant of Fan's was the Squash, due to how its name suggested its purpose; to squash things. [28] A plant was proposed that is similar to the defensive item Umbrella Leaf, which would be planted above other plants to protect them from Bungee Zombies and Catapult Zombies. However, it was difficult to visualize their positions. [17] The Umbrella Leaf that made into the final game did protect plants from Bungee Zombies and Catapult Zombies, but they had to be placed next to a plant. [29] Concept art of many of the plants were drawn for *Plants vs. Zombies*, but a lot of them did not make it into the final game. [19] The human character, Crazy Dave, was a parody of a person Fan knew in real life, but more insane.

In the final game, 51 zombies were added in. [30] Fan's favorite zombie was the Pole Vaulting Zombie, due to the hilarity involved when a player encounters it for the first time, using a specific example where a player tries to block it with the Wall-Nut, only to have the zombie jump over it. [21] Newspaper Zombie was initially just a zombie reading a newspaper. However, Rich Werner drew Newspaper Zombie to make it look like the zombie was on the toilet before turning into a zombie. This led to Fan being asked by his brother, "Was Newspaper Zombie based on Dad?" as Fan's father would often read the newspaper, oftentimes on the toilet. Despite Fan claiming no such intention, Fan considers this his favorite story behind a zombie. [25] Originally, Dancing Zombie resembled Michael Jackson from the music video "Thriller". [3] Though the Jackson-inspired zombie was present in the game before Jackson's death (which occurred a month after this game's original release), the estate of Michael Jackson objected to its inclusion more than a year after his death; PopCap agreed to remove the Jackson-inspired zombie and replaced it with a more generic disco-dancing one for all future patches and releases of the game. [31] There were many other zombies originally designed for *Plants vs. Zombies*, but a lot of them were cut during development. [20][25]

Soundtrack

The soundtrack for *Plants vs. Zombies* was composed by Shigihara. It borrows elements from <u>pop music</u> as well as a console <u>chiptune</u> songs. Before the inception of *Plants vs. Zombies*, Fan asked his girlfriend, Shigihara, if she would like to compose the music for his next title due to his admiration of Shigihara's music. She accepted, owing to his creativity. She drew influence from <u>Danny Elfman</u>'s soundtracks, drawing from a wide range of musical styles. For example, one song uses <u>marching band</u> percussion and swing beats; another utilizes <u>techno</u> beats with "organic" sounds. X. J. Donnelly, a scholar of film and film music, found the music to be bright and "cartoonish". He noted that rather than the music being dynamically tied to the gameplay, it instead progresses independently from the game. He also noted that the songs are designed in a progressive style, "almost in parallel to the unfolding of the game[play]". [33]

Shigihara described the music as "macabre, yet goofy". Using the night stage as an example, she explained that she used a combination of <u>Big Band</u> and <u>swing</u> beats with "several haunting and serious melodies". The songs "Loonboon" and "Brainiac Maniac" were written towards the end of production. She stated that these

were reactionary songs that she wrote to fit the feel of *Plants vs. Zombies* after having played through it twice. Shigihara also composed and performed the music video shown during the credits of the game, titled "Zombies on your Lawn". All the tracks in the game were eventually released as part of a soundtrack album for download.

Promotion and release

On April 1, 2009, PopCap released a music video for the song "Zombies on your Lawn" to promote *Plants vs. Zombies*. [34][35] While this was initially thought by many PC gamers to be an elaborate joke for April Fools' Day, [36] a PopCap spokesperson, Garth Chouteau, revealed in an *IGN* interview that *Plants vs. Zombies* would be released soon on PC and Mac. [37] On April 22, 2009, PopCap released an official game trailer of *Plants vs. Zombies* on YouTube. [38][39] PopCap Games eventually released a demo version of the game that allowed you to play the game for thirty minutes. [40] *Plants vs. Zombies* was officially released on May 5, 2009, for PC and Mac. [1][41] A free flash version of *Plants vs. Zombies* was released on September 23, 2009. [42]

A Game of the Year edition of *Plants vs. Zombies* was released on July 11, 2010. It was made available on Steam on August 11, 2010, and anyone who had already purchased a copy of *Plants vs. Zombies* could have the game update to the Game of the Year edition for free. The Game of the Year edition adds in a Zombatar feature that allows the player to customize a zombie's face. The edition also has support for Steam Cloud, a feature that lets players access save data of a video game from different computers.

Mobile phone versions

During the announcements for *Plants vs. Zombies*, PopCap Games revealed that after the release on PC, *Plants vs. Zombies* would be ported to other platforms. On August of 2009, it was announced on *IGN* that *Plants vs. Zombies* would be ported onto the iPhone near the end of 2009. The trailer was released onto YouTube in February 2010, announcing the port's release date. The iPhone port was officially released on February 15, 2010. The port included a tweaked interface for iPhone users and a Quick Play mode that allowed the player to play any level in Adventure mode, but removed the Mini-Games mode, the Puzzle mode, and the Survival mode. [36][51]

In March 2010, Emily Rose of PadGadget revealed that the updated iTunes interface included upcoming game titles including ports of iPhone games for the <u>iPad</u>, with *Plants vs. Zombies* being one of them. If the upcoming games are clicked, an error message will appear, saying "the item you've requested is not currently available in the US store". The iPad port of *Plants vs. Zombies*, named *Plants vs. Zombies HD*, was released on April 5, 2010. The port utilized the iPad's 11 touch sensors, and added back in the Survival mode and the Mini-Games mode, which includes an iPad-exclusive mini-game called "Buttered Popcorn". [58][59]

In May 2011, PopCap Games officially announced that <u>Chuzzle</u> would be available on the Amazon app store for Android devices for the next two weeks with *Plants vs. Zombies* becoming available later in the month. They would both be free on launch day and cost \$2.99 afterwards. On May 31, 2011, *Plants vs. Zombies* was released onto the Amazon app store. In December 2011, it was announced through a press release that PopCap Games would be releasing *Plants vs. Zombies* and <u>Peggle</u> through the Android Market. It was officially made available on Google Play Store on December 15, 2011.

Plants vs. Zombies has been ported to other mobile devices. On June 23, 2011, the game was ported to the Windows Phone as part of Xbox Live. On November 14, 2011, and January 30, 2013, *Plants vs. Zombies* was ported to the Kindle Fire and Blackberry $10^{[67][68]}$ respectively as a launch app. The game was

later ported to another BlackBerry device, the <u>BlackBerry Playbook</u>. [69] *Plants vs. Zombies* was ported to Nook HD and Nook HD+ on November 14, 2012. [70]

Console versions

Plants vs. Zombies was announced for the Xbox 360 in July 2010. [71][72] It would be available as both a singular copy and bundle copy with *Peggle* and \underline{Zuma} . The game was ported to the Xbox 360 at Xbox Live on September 8, 2010. [73] To make the game feel natural when using the controller, the cursor was locked onto the lawn's grid pattern and sun could float towards the cursor. [74] A versus mode, a co-op mode, and new mini-game were added to the port. [72] The versus mode had one player play as the plants and another player as the zombies. [75] The goal of the zombies is to get past the plants to the house and the plants' goal is to kill three of the five target zombies at the right side of the lawn. [76] A PlayStation Network port of *Plants vs. Zombies* was announced on January 28, 2011. [77] and was released on February 8, 2011. [78][79]

The DS port of *Plants vs. Zombies* was announced in August 2010. The port was released on January 18, 2011, in North America and May 6, 2011, in Europe and Australia. The port included in the Zombatar feature and the versus mode from the Xbox Live version. It also added four new exclusive mini-games. On March 14, 2011, the DSiWare port was released in North America. It was released on May 6, 2011, in Europe and Australia. The main difference between the DS version and the DSiWare version is that the in the DSiWare version, with the exception of Adventure mode and Mini-Games mode, all the game modes were removed. The only levels in Mini-games mode were the exclusive mini-game levels in the original DS version and a new mini-game level called "Zombie Trap".

The PlayStation Vita port was announced in December 2011^[86] and released on February 21, 2012, in North America, and in Europe as a launch title on February 22, 2012.^{[87][88]} The port allows the player to play using either the touch screen or the controllers. It also introduces the ability to shake the PlayStation Vita in order to collect suns and money. The game does not have multiplayer, unlike other console versions.^{[89][90]}

Reception

| Reception | | | | |
|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
| Aggregate score | | | | |
| Aggregator | Score | | | |
| Metacritic | PC: 87/100 ^[91] iOS: 92/100 ^[92] (iPad) iOS: 93/100 ^[93] X360: 89/100 ^[94] DS: 81/100 ^[95] PS3: 85/100 ^[96] (DSiWare) DS: 73/100 ^[97] PSVita: 77/100 ^[98] | | | |

| Review scores | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Publication | Score | |
| <u>1Up.com</u> | A-[10] | |
| <u>Destructoid</u> | 10/10 ^[14] | |
| <u>Edge</u> | 9/10 ^[2] | |
| Eurogamer | 9/10 ^[9] | |
| GamePro | **** ^[11] | |
| GameSpot | PC: 8.5/10 ^[5] X360: 8.5/10 ^[99] DS: 8/10 ^[100] | |
| GameSpy | **** | |
| <u>IGN</u> | 9/10 ^[102] DS: 8/10 ^[83] | |
| <u>GamesRadar+</u> | **** <u>*</u> [6] | |
| Gamezebo | ***** ^[101] | |

Sales

On May 20, 2009, it was reported that *Plants vs. Zombies* was the fastest-selling video game created by <u>PopCap Games</u>, though the number of sales was not initially reported. In a presentation at <u>Game Developers Conference</u> China 2010, James Gwertzman revealed that *Plants vs. Zombies* had sold 1.5 million copies internationally. Fan estimated that half of the game's sales are from <u>hardcore gamers</u>. Larry <u>Hryb</u>, director of programming for Xbox Live, reports that *Plants vs. Zombies* was the thirteenth most purchased 2011 game on Xbox Live Arcade. Plants vs. Zombies was particularly successful when it was added to the iOS app store. According to PopCap, the iOS release of *Plants vs. Zombies* sold more than 300,000 copies in the first nine days it was available on the App Store. This generated more than \$1M in gross sales, making it "the top-grossing iPhone launch". [106][107]

Critical reviews

Plants vs. Zombies has received critical acclaim. According to $\underline{Metacritic}$, all versions have received generally favorable reviews, with the exception of the iOS versions, which received universal acclaim, and the DSiWare version, which received mixed or average reviews. Some reviewers felt that while the game's core mechanic was easy to understand, the game itself was challenging with $\underline{GamesRadar+}$ author Tom Francis saying "...it's casual only in the sense that it's easy to understand. There's nothing casual about the 30 goddamn hours we've spent, effectively, gardening and Seth Schisel from $\underline{The\ New\ York\ Times}$ saying that both kids and adults will enjoy the game. Not every reviewer agrees, with $\underline{GameSpot}$ editor Chris Watters saying "Tower defense veterans will have to endure a lot of simple, familiar action in order to find a real challenge, and the wait may prove too long for some $\underline{GamePro}$ and $\underline{GamePro}$ are Kim commenting that the game is not particularly easy or hard and that he never had to restart once despite him claiming to be "terrible at these sorts of games." John Walker of \underline{Rock} , \underline{Paper} , $\underline{Shotgun}$ found that the difficulty at some moments felt artificial.

Despite his criticism concerning the game's difficulty, Watters praised *Plants vs. Zombies* for its constant introduction of new units keeping the game fresh. [5] *Eurogamer* editor Christian Donlan agrees, saying "Every new enemy forces you out of your comfort zone, while each additional weapon promises a fresh strain of mischief, or a tactic you simply hadn't considered yet." Many critics have commended *Plants vs. Zombies* for its minimalistic tutorial allowing for experimentation with some believing that the entire Adventure mode is a long tutorial or a warmup for other game-modes. Many critics praise the game for its additional game modes, which offer replay value, with Francis saying "By the time you finish the Adventure, the obscene wealth of other things to do already outweighs it for entertainment value."

The art style and music of *Plants vs. Zombies* has also been praised. Susan Arendt from *the Escapist* said "The music is excellent, the art is charming and adorable, and the game's sense of humor will really have you grinning." Many reviewers have called the graphics from *Plants vs. Zombies* adorable. Watters said "All of the units are cleverly realized and adorably animated." He further clarified "From angry jalapenos to spacy wall-nuts, each unit has a great sense of personality". Some have also noted its humor, with *Wired*'s Earnest Cavalli saying "You'd think that slaying hundreds of reanimated bodies would be somber or terrifying, but every level of the game offers something to laugh about" and Marc Saltzman from *Gamezebo* finding humor in the many ways to kill the zombies. IGN editor Daemon Hatfield praises the soundtrack of *Plants vs. Zombies*, calling it a "catchy, organic soundtrack that becomes more intense as your yard is flooded with enemies". In contrast, Walker found the soundtrack "disappointing", saying "After the promise of the gorgeous music video, the hope of similarly catchy in-game tunes is not kept."

The iPhone port of *Plants vs. Zombies* was commended by critics for being faithful to the PC version and addition of quick play mode, but many were disappointed by the lack of most of the game-modes. [36][110][51] Many critics praised the iPad port adding back the Mini-Games mode and the Survival mode along with "Buttered Popcorn", the new exclusive mini-game. [57][58][59] The Xbox 360 port of *Plants vs. Zombies* was praised for its addition of exclusive game-modes, including a Co-op mode and a Versus mode. [4][111][76] The Nintendo DS port was commended for the addition of four new mini-games and the Versus mode from the Xbox 360 version, but was considered inferior in its animation and graphics. [83] The port was criticized for its high price compared to other ports, the top screen of the DS only being used for the player to indicate how far they have progressed in the level, and the frame rate dropping when zombies and plants filled the screen. [112][100]

Awards

Plants vs. Zombies has been nominated for various categories in the 2009 Spike Video Game Awards, [113] the 13th Annual Interactive Achievement Awards, [114] the 10th Annual Game Developers Choice Awards, and the 6th [116] and 7th British Academy Games Awards. It has also won in the categories of "Download Game Of The Year" and "Strategy Game Of The Year" in the Golden Joysticks Awards 2010, [118] and in the category of "Best Casual Game" in the 7th International Mobile Gaming Awards. Awards Plants vs. Zombies has won more than 30 Game of the Year awards.

Awards earned by Plants vs. Zombies

| Year | Award ceremony | Category | Result | Ref. |
|---|--|---|-----------|-------|
| 2009 Spike Video Game Awards | 2000 Crites Video Como Avuerdo | Best PC Game | Nominated | [113] |
| | 2009 Spike Video Game Awards | Best Downloadable Game | | |
| 104 | 13th Annual Interactive Achievement Awards | Casual Game of the Year | | |
| | | Outstanding Achievement in Game Design | | [114] |
| | | Best Game Design | | |
| 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 2010 | Innovation Award | | [115] | |
| | | Best Downloadable Game | | |
| | 6th British Academy Games Awards | Strategy in 2010 | | [116] |
| | | Download Game Of The Year | Won | |
| Golden Joystick Awards 2010 | Golden Joystick Awards 2010 | Strategy Game Of The Year | | [118] |
| | | Portable Game Of The Year | | |
| 2011 | 7th International Mobile Gaming Awards | Best Casual Game | Won | [119] |
| 2011 | 7th British Academy Games Awards | Strategy in 2011 | Nominated | [117] |

Legacy

George Fan's layoff and Octogeddon

PopCap Games and its assets were bought by \underline{EA} on July 12, 2011, for 750 million dollars. Fifty employees were laid off in the Seattle studio of PopCap Games on August 21, 2012, to mark a switch of focus to mobile and social gaming. After a statement in a podcast, *Roundtable Live*, by $\underline{Edmund McMillen}$, creator of $\underline{The \ Binding \ of \ Isaac}$, rumors circulated around 2012 that Fan was fired by EA because he opposed the implementation of $\underline{pay-to-win}$ mechanics in $\underline{Plants \ vs. \ Zombies \ 2}$. Fan did admit in a 2017 tweet that he was laid off and that he did oppose the freemium aspects of $\underline{Plants \ vs. \ Zombies \ 2}$, but did not make a correlation between the two events. $\underline{[123][124]}$

The suggestion that Fan was fired because of his concerns about *Plants vs. Zombies 2* was later debunked by three former PopCap employees, including Allen Murray, a former producer of *Plants vs. Zombies 2*. They said that Fan was laid off as part of the systematic lay-offs in August 2012 and that Fan was not even part of the *Plants vs. Zombies 2* team, as he was working on other ideas for games at the time, including a game called *Full Contact Bingo*. He had lost interest in *Plants vs. Zombies* when EA envisioned the game as a huge franchise. After getting laid off, Fan worked on the arcade action-strategy game *Octogeddon*, originally as part of a Ludum Dare contest. After the idea was received positively, Fan formed a company along with Werner, the artist of *Plants vs. Zombies*, and Kurt Pfeiffer, the programmer of the Xbox 360 port. He further developed the game for several years. The game was officially released on February 8, 2018 to generally positive reviews, according to Metacritic.

Sequels and spin-offs

Since the acquisition of PopCap Games by EA, the game has been expanded into a video game franchise, spanning many consoles and a few different genres. *Plants vs. Zombies Adventures*, a spin-off and social game, was released for Facebook on May 20, 2011^[130] and was closed on October 12, 2014.^[131] A mainline sequel named *Plants vs. Zombies 2* was released for the iOS on August 14, 2013.^[132] *Plants vs. Zombies: Garden Warfare*, a multiplayer third-person shooter, and its sequel were released on February 25, 2014 for the Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, and Xbox One^[133] and February 23, 2016 for the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One^[134] respectively. A digital collectible card game, *Plants vs. Zombies Heroes*, was released internationally for the iOS on October 18, 2016.^[135] The third third-person shooter, *Plants vs. Zombies: Battle for Neighborville*, was released on October 18, 2019 for the PlayStation 4 and Xbox One.^[136] A third mainline title in the franchise is currently in development for the Android and iOS.^[138]

According to Metacritic, with a few exceptions, all the sequels and spin-offs of *Plants vs. Zombies* received generally positive reviews. [139] Fan, despite his opposition to the freemium model that *Plants vs. Zombies 2* took on, [23] has praised the series for delving into different genres, particularly *Plants vs. Zombies Heroes* taking on the digital card collecting genre, and hopes that EA will continue branching the *Plants vs. Zombies* series into more genres, but still keeping the charm of the original. [25]

Other media

Zen Studios collaborated with PopCap to make a <u>downloadable content</u> (DLC) interactive <u>pinball table</u> based on *Plants vs. Zombies* using official PopCap assets during development of <u>Zen Pinball 2</u> and <u>Pinball FX 2</u>.[140][141] The DLC was released on September 4, 2012, in North America and September 5 in Europe.[142][143]

In July and August 2013, <u>Dark Horse Comics</u> released six issues of a comic book adaptation miniseries onto an iOS app. The miniseries was called *Lawnmageddon* and was written by Paul Tobin and drawn by Ron Chan. [144] Dark Horse Comics would release issues for the next two years. Starting in 2015, Dark Horse Comics started releasing an issue of the comic series monthly, both in digital and print. Every three issues would be a separate miniseries. The first print miniseries was called *Bully for You*. [145]

Cultural references

According to Christ Carter, editor-in-chief of *Destructoid*, *Plants vs. Zombies* has been a subject of many homages and references in pop-culture. Fan's favorite homage is the *Magic: The Gathering* card "Grave Bramble", which was created as part of the *Innistrad* expansion. A recreation of *Plants vs. Zombies* was added as a mini-game quest known as "Peacebloom vs. Ghouls" to *World of Warcraft* as part of the *World of Warcraft*: *Cataclysm* expansion. Shigihara provided some music for the mini-game quest.

See also

List of most downloaded Android applications

Notes

a. There were announcements of the original game before its release that showcased Zombatar, [38][39] but the feature was not included in the original game.

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