

Bogbrew Witch – A Magic the Gathering Card Review

Bogbrew Witch is part of a very interesting three card combo built into Magic the Gathering's 2014 Core Set. Later, they would reprint all three cards in the Iconic Masters set, as well. Known as the Festering Newt combo, it has to do with a common creature card, **Festering Newt** (a functional reprint of the old favorite Festering Goblin with a twist), an uncommon artifact called **Bubbling Cauldron**, and **Bogbrew Witch**.

The Witch is how you most easily set up the combo, allowing you to tutor out either of the Newt or the Cauldron directly onto the battlefield for only 2 colorless mana and a tap. Otherwise, it's just a 1/3 Human Wizard for four mana, which without this strangely specific tutoring ability would be quite underwhelming.

Festering Newt is a slightly better functional reprint of **Festering Goblin** from way back in the Onslaught set. When it dies, a target creature an opponent controls gets -1/-1 until end of turn. Unlike Festering Goblin, one of your own creatures will never get hit as it would under the Goblin's mandatory ability. It turned out to be useful removal in Magic 2014 drafts.

The Newt has an added ability, too. If the **Bogbrew Witch** happens to be on your side of the battlefield when the Newt dies, that creature instead gets -4/-4 until end of turn. Suddenly, this little one-drop becomes a much nastier removal spell. Plus, it can be tutored up by the Witch. It's a solid one-drop for Limited, even without the Witch.

Bubbling Cauldron is where things really get interesting. First of all, it's a two-drop artifact that can be put right into play with Bogbrew Witch using her ability. With the Witch at your command, you never have to draw this Cauldron in order to play it. It has two inexpensive abilities that allow you to sacrifice a creature, the second of which requires you to have a Festering Newt in play.

The Cauldron's first ability costs one generic mana and a tap: you sacrifice a creature and gain 4 life. This obviously can come in handy if you're chump blocking and 4 life is no joke. But the other ability is what makes the Bogbrew Witch & Festering Newt combo all the more interesting.

The second ability allows you to sacrifice a Festering Newt, and each opponent loses 4 life. Not only that, you gain life equal to the life lost that way. At the very least, with all three of Bogbrew Witch, Bubbling Cauldron, and Festering Newt, you can give an opponent's creature -4/-4, have that opponent lose 4 life, and gain 4 life yourself, all for one generic mana and sacrificing a Festering Newt.

Note that the second ability reads "each opponent." That you can gain a lot more life and spread out the damage in a multiplayer game, especially Commander, is somewhat fascinating. The design team clearly expected this trio to be played in Commander.

To be fair, Bogbrew Witch made for a good Limited card if you also played any number of Festering Newt in your deck, even just for the potent removal. It's even better if you run the Cauldron, though. All three of these cards together are actually a decent team. But, it really did make sense to play the Witch without having both of these other cards already in hand.

Outside of Limited, this three-card combo has seen play in Shirei, Shizo's Caretaker Commander decks. But, honestly, the Bogbrew Witch / Festering Newt combo is best suited for play at the kitchen table.

What do you think of Bogbrew Witch and the Festering Newt combo?