

Zerg Overview

The Zerg are composed of several different types of creatures that have been integrated into the Swarm by the Overmind. These creatures, or breeds, have been selectively evolved to become efficient killers and to assist the Zerg in their quest for ultimate power. The Zerg do not utilize technology in the common sense, but their natural weaponry and armor is comparable to the most advanced gadgetry employed by any other species. This biological evolution, combined with an unmatched savagery and their blind devotion to the Overmind, make the Zerg an extremely formidable and deadly foe.

The Zerg have been found in all types of environments, including deep space. They have adapted themselves to the rigors of space travel, although it is not exactly understood how they are able to do so. The center of a Zerg habitation is the Hatchery. Their nests are composed of a thick organic matter, nicknamed the Creep, which provides nourishment for the Zerg and provides organic mass for Zerg Larvae and Drones to facilitate their transformation into larger forms. The Creep expands and covers the area around the Zerg hive, and is very difficult to eradicate.

UNITS

Hatchery Level Units

Larvae

Hit Points: 25	Base Ground Attack: N/A
Size: Small	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: 0	Base Armor: 10
Cost: N/A	Range: N/A
Build Time: 20	Sight: 4
Produced at: Hatchery	Cooldown: N/A
Requires: Hatchery	Production Hot Key: N/A

The closest creatures to the original Zerg insectoids are the Zerg Larvae. Although their size and toughness were greatly boosted by the Xel'Naga during their experiments, they still possess the two traits that originally intrigued the ancient masters: genetic versatility and psychic sensitivity. Maggot-like, Zerg Larvae contain within them the genetic code for all other Zerg breeds. When a new breed of Zerg is needed, an individual Larva will enter a pupal state and begin replicating the DNA of one specific Zerg breed at an astounding rate. After a short gestation period, the new mature Zerg hatches.

A young hive will only have the genetic code for the most basic of Zerg breeds, such as the Drone, but as it grows and develops new structures, its library of genetic strains is expanded. With a command from the Overmind, the Larva will enter a pupal state and begin the metamorphosis into whichever breed is required by the hive.

Larvae are produced at the Hatchery, Lair and Hive. They spawn one at a time up to a maximum of 3 per Hatchery/Lair/Hive. They require the Creep to survive and should the Creep ever dissipate from beneath them, the Larvae die shortly after. Unlike the mature Zerg breeds, Larvae do not require Overlord control and therefore can only be commanded to mutate by a Cerebrate.

To easily select all the Larvae from a particular Hatchery/Lair/Hive, select the Hatchery/Lair/Hive and hit the **S** key and all available Larvae will be highlighted. An alternate method can be used by holding down the **Ctrl** key while left clicking on one of the Larva -- this will select all the available Larvae on screen. Be sure to use one of these techniques when you've progressed far enough to begin producing the mature Zerg breeds, as it will greatly increase the speed that you'll be able to morph Larva.

The Larvae are susceptible to many special abilities from each race:

Defensive Matrix

As with any other unit, Defensive Matrix will provide a temporary 250 HP defensive barrier for the affected unit. The effect will carry over even if the Larva is morphed into a mature Zerg unit. Can be useful if an entire colony is destroyed and a Larva is needed to survive to rebuild the Brood.

Ensnares

Ensnares does slow down the movement of the Larva, but it serves no purpose other than to maybe help the Larva's controller to more easily select and morph them.

Hallucination

Hallucinated Larvae can be confusing for the controlling player since they will not be able to do anything with them,

but the occasion may arise when the races involved may find it amusing.

Irradiate

While Larvae are immune to the direct effects of Irradiate, they can still cause secondary damage to any other adjacent Zerg units. However, if a Larva is morphed into a mature Zerg unit within the span of an Irradiate, the mature unit will begin taking damage as soon as it hatches.

Maelstrom

Maelstrom effects can immobilize groups of Larvae, thus preventing them from mutating or morphing into the mature Zerg breeds but for a shorter period of time than Stasis Field.

Parasite

Parasite can be used on Larva, and the symbiote will continue to function even if the Larva morphs into a mature Zerg unit.

Plague

Larvae are as susceptible to Plague as any other unit and can have their HP reduced to 1 by a Plague.

Psionic Storm

Larvae are not immune to the effects of Psionic Storm and die rather quickly when facing a Storm's destructive power.

Stasis Field

Stasis Fields can halt any Larva from being able to mutate or morph into the mature Zerg breeds for an extended period of time.

Yamato Gun

Yamato Gun blasts will instantly kill a targeted Larva.

Larvae have a base armor of 10 and are more difficult to destroy than one might expect. This can become a great advantage for the controlling Zerg player since enemy players may opt to move on after destroying a Zerg Colony leaving the Larvae to squirm on the Creep, however these lone Larva can be used to morph into Drones and rebuild the base in a short period of time.

Upgrades

Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded

Drone

Hit Points: 40	Base Ground Attack: 5
Size: Small	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: 1	Base Armor: 0
Cost: 50	Range: 1
Build Time: 20	Sight: 7
Produced at: Hatchery	Cooldown: 22
Requires: Hatchery	Production Hot Key: D

Like the Larvae from which they hatch, Zerg Drones contain within them the genetic code required to morph into any of the large Zerg "buildings", which are actually living (but immobile) structures. They can only grow on areas where the Creep has established itself, as they require its nourishment and building material. The Drones also harvest any raw materials that are needed. Vespene gas is very important to the Zerg; the high energy state of the gas powers their accelerated metabolisms and is essential for the production of the more advanced Zerg breeds.

Using the Burrow Ability

The Zerg Drone has one major advantage over the Protoss Probes or the Terran SCVs, and that is the ability to Burrow. Before a Drone can use this ability, Burrowing must first be evolved at one of the Hatcheries/Lairs/Hives. Since Drones are relatively weak attackers, Burrowing Drones for ambushes is almost never a good idea. However, Burrow can become very useful for the Drones when an enemy force

comes pouring in. By Burrowing the Drones, you can give them the chance to survive until reinforcements arrive, or until the enemy has the ability to detect the Burrowed units. Should you repel the attack, you can quickly unburrow all of the Drones and resume resourcing immediately.

In the case of an attack, the fastest way to quickly Burrow your Drones is to either double-click a Drone or hold down **Ctrl** while left-clicking on a Drone (this will select up to 12 of the Drones onscreen) and then hitting the **U** key to Burrow all the selected units. With practice, you should be able to quickly get your Drones out of harm's way, giving your warrior units more fighting room to repel an attack.

Countermeasures

The Zerg Drone contains the genetic template to morph into any of the basic Zerg structures. As the colony moves up the evolutionary ladder, the Drone is infused with additional genetic code to morph into more advanced structures.

The key difference between the Zerg method of colony construction and the Terran or Protoss methods is that the Drone actually morphs into the structure. The Drone can be recovered during the morphing process if the structure is canceled, however once the structure is completed, the Drone is permanently lost. Note, however, that the once the Drone enters into its morphing stage, the control for the Drone is no longer needed and a few interesting strategies have arisen with this particular property. [For details, check out the Basic Strategies section.]

One of the side effects of this type of colony construction is that the Zerg constantly need to replenish their Drone supply to maintain a balance between resourcing and tech tree advancement. Should Drone replacement ever be neglected (especially in the early game), the Zerg can find themselves either climbing the tech tree too slowly, or having too few Drones gathering resources.

Another key difference between the Zerg means of construction and those of the Terrans or Protoss is that the Creep limits where the Zerg can place their structures. Although this is not usually a problem, the dependence on Creep does present a few obstacles for Zerg advancement. Creep Colonies are almost always required at a main Zerg base to provide enough room to build all the necessary defenses and tech tree advancing structures. In an expansion situation, the Zerg MUST build a Hatchery first and thus are unable to fortify the position before expanding. This can leave the Zerg vulnerable during expansion attempts so be sure to bring an escort along to fend off enemy strikes.

Resource Mining

The Drone is capable of mining both minerals and Vespene gas. To gather minerals, just right-click on a mineral cluster with the Drone and it will automatically begin resourcing. Each mineral cluster can only be mined by one Drone at a time. If only one Drone is assigned to a particular cluster, it will mine only from that cluster. However, having only one Drone per mineral cluster isn't the best ratio for mineral gathering -- usually you will want to have at least 2-3 Drones per cluster to get the most out of the minerals (however, depending on the distance of the Hatchery from the clusters, you may want more or less). Note that there can be too many Drones mining at one time and those Drones that are unable to access a Mineral cluster will usually just end up sitting idle until a cluster frees up. With experience you should be able to find optimal numbers for mineral clusters for a particular resource area.

In the case of Vespene gas, an Extractor needs to be built on top of the mine before Drones can collect from it. Once the Extractor is completed, just right-click on it with a Drone to begin collecting the refined Vespene gas. The number of Drones you'll want gathering from a mine will depend on the distance between the mine and the destination Hatchery. Note that although only one Drone can be inside the Extractor at a time, 3-4 Drones set to gather from each nearby Extractor will usually offer maximum efficiency. The general rule of thumb is to keep adding Drones to the Vespene gas Extractor until only one Drone waits outside at any given time. If more Drones begin waiting around the Extractor, then those additional Drones provide no improvement in the rate of Vespene gas harvesting.

As with the Terrans and Protoss, if you plan to build quickly up the tech tree, you will need to concentrate more on Vespene gas collection early in the game, since that is the slowest incoming resource. If you plan for a rush or other low-tech tactic, you will want to concentrate more on gathering minerals, since the lower tech units and structures are more mineral dependent.

Upgrades

Burrow	Carapace
100 100	Level 1 - 150 150
	Level 2 - 225 225
	Level 3 - 300 300

Burrow - Using the Burrow ability Drones will be able to hide from more powerful enemies.

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

As mentioned earlier the Burrow ability can be extremely helpful to your Drones during an early game invasion if you have the resources available, you should evolve it as soon as the chance arises. While the Drone can attack and defend, it is a fairly weak unit and although the Carapace upgrades may help a little, they will rarely make a difference in a battle as far as the Drone is concerned.

Overlord

Hit Points: 200	Base Ground Attack: N/A
Size: Large	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: N/A	Base Armor: 0
Cost: 100	Range: N/A
Build Time: 40	Sight: 9 (11 with upgrade)
Produced at: Hatchery	Cooldown: N/A
Requires: Hatchery	Production Hot Key: O

The extent of the Overlords' control over the Zerg is unknown, but it is clear that these flying behemoths provide direction for the other Zerg breeds. Although they resemble the Portuguese man-o-war of Earth, they are fairly docile creatures that tend to young larvae and transport other Zerg across the depths of space by carrying them within their shelled bodies.

With the ability to transport, detect cloaked/burrowed units, fly and provide "supply" units for the Zerg, the flying Overlord is one of the most useful and versatile Zerg units. The key to winning most battles will lie in the utilization of every ability the Overlord has to offer. Once those abilities are mastered, the Zerg can truly become a race to be feared.

Control/Supply Issues

As the provider of control and direction for the Zerg breeds (similar to the Terran Supply Depots or the Protoss Pylons in terms of "supply"), producing many Overlords is a requirement for colony growth

One of the major drawbacks of the Overlords is that compared to the Supply Depots or Pylons, Overlords are rather weak and vulnerable, and if left unescorted, can be easily destroyed. Because of this, Overlord Hunting often becomes a viable tactic for enemy forces. 8 control (supply) units are lost with every Overlord lost and untimely losses of Overlords will quickly put a cap on population growth. This can become a serious hindrance if it happens in the early game (particularly from Terran Marines), where there aren't enough resources to build an army and maintain an excess of Overlords, so be sure to protect them well. In the later game, be sure to have excess Overlords so that if a few are picked off, the colony will still be able to grow.

Maximizing Detection

Another highly valued function of the Overlord is its ability to detect cloaked or burrowed units. With the relatively large number of Overlords that you will have for maintaining control of the Hive, there should never be a problem defending against or attacking those cloaked/burrowed units. If using Overlords as part of an attack force, bring along more than one. The enemy may directly target the Overlords in order to reduce your detection ability, and using multiple Overlords to witness a fight will help counter this tactic. Without any detection nearby, enemy cloaked units will be able to engage your own forces undetected. In most cases a single Overlord will not suffice and the more present, the better the chances of a successful attack. To maximize the ability to detect, be sure to evolve the Overlords for Pneumatized Carapace (faster movement upgrade) and Antennae (increased sight range).

Transportation

Finally, the Overlord's ability to transport comes once its genetic code has been evolved for Ventral Sacs.

The Overlord, like the Dropship and Shuttle, has 8 transport slots and can carry:

- 8 Drones (1 slot each)
- 8 Zerglings (1 slot each)
- 4 Hydralisks (2 slots each)
- 2 Lurkers (4 slots each)
- 4 Defilers (2 slots each)
- 2 Ultralisks (4 slots each)

OR any combination of these units up to but not over the 8 slot limit

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With the abundance of Overlords that should be present by the time Overlords evolve Ventral Sacs, the sheer number of units that can be transported at any given time becomes quite intimidating. Use this to your advantage and overwhelm enemy bases with large "drops" at a location that they may least be expecting. Be careful with the approach when using large numbers of Overlords to drop, since if spotted, the enemy will mostly likely figure out what is coming and may have enough time to ready a defense. If possible, take unusual routes to the enemy to minimize the chance of being seen. Note that the Pneumatized Carapace (faster movement upgrade) is almost required for successful drops.

Load

There are 4 different ways to load units into your transport capable Overlord:

- Select the Overlord, click on the Load button, then click on the ground unit to load
- Select the Overlord, hit the **L** keyboard shortcut for the Load command, then click on the unit to load
- Select the Overlord, then right-click on the unit to load
- Select the unit to load, then right-click on the Overlord

Group selecting is possible with all 4 methods, as is command queueing using the **Shift** key. The best method to use will depend on the situation, though practicing the different methods will allow you to quickly load your units in any situation. (one very useful method is to select a group of ground units, hold down the **Shift** key, then right click on one Overlord at a time. Your units will load into the first Overlord as space provides. The remaining units will then load into the next Overlord. This will continue until all units are loaded).

Unload

To Unload your Overlord, either:

Select the Overlord, issue the Unload command (either by clicking on the Unload button, or using the U keyboard shortcut) then select the drop location. The Overlord will move to the target location and unload all its units.

OR

Select the Overlord, then click on the wireframe of a single unit you wish to unload. That unit will then be unloaded directly under the Overlord's current position

Countermeasures

Use every opportunity to hunt down and destroy Overlords should they happen to fly astray or be left unguarded. By doing so, you reduce the Zerg control/supply, limit their detection abilities and destroy any possible means of transport (and any units they might be carrying).

Terrans

- Use Marines to quickly dispatch any scouting Overlord early in the game. For the best results, position your Marine(s) directly below the Overlord before attacking so that your Marine(s) do not waste time having to walking up or chasing after the Overlord.
- Goliaths, with their explosive air attack, can deal serious damage to Overlords.
- Use cloaked Wraiths to quickly dispatch the Zerg means of detection. If attacking or defending against a Zerg force accompanied by Overlords, kill the Overlords first and cloaking will give you the distinct advantage when attacking the rest of the force.
- Valkyries can quickly destroy packed groups of Overlords in an alarmingly short amount of time.
- Science Vessels with Irradiate are probably the Overlord's worst enemy. Once infected with an Irradiate, the Overlord is as good as dead (unless a Medic uses Restoration to save it).

Protoss

- Dragoons can be used to destroy Overlords, but with their long cooldown times, be sure to position the Dragoons below the Overlords before attacking to get the kill before they can escape.
- Corsairs are probably the single best anti-Overlord solution. With a group of 5 or more Corsairs, Overlords are easy prey, whether they're alone or in groups.

- Scouts deal incredible aerial damage and are another prime choice for Overlord Hunting. If outfitted with weapons and speed upgrades, the Scouts can put a quick end to any Overlord.

Zerg

- Hydralisks are the early game solution for Overlord Hunting. Be sure to position them below the Overlord before attacking to get the most out of the attack.
- A pair of Scourge is all it takes to destroy an Overlord. Use them to quickly clear out lone scouting Overlords.
- Packs of Mutalisks can quickly destroy lone Overlords, and are even better against packs of Overlords.

Upgrades

Ventral Sacs

200 200
Transporting for Overlord

Antennae

150 150
Increase Overlord sight range

Pneumatized Carapace

150 150
Faster Overlord movement

Flyer Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Ventral Sacs - This upgrade will allow your Overlords to act as a transport for ground troops.

Antennae - The added sight range is useful in exploring enemy bases at a safe distance, as well as for spotting Cloaked or Burrowed units.

Pneumatized Carapace - This speed upgrade is an extremely useful evolution for the Overlord. Not only does it provide for faster transportation, the Overlord will also have a better chance of escaping from a fatal situation.

Flyer Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Zergling

Hit Points: 35	Base Ground Attack: 5
Size: Small	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: 0.5	Base Armor: 0
Cost: 25	Range: 1
Build Time: 28	Sight: 5
Produced at: Hatchery	Cooldown: 8 (6 with upgrade)
Requires: Spawning Pool	Production Hot Key: Z

The small, savage Zergling is one of the few breeds that a core **Special Abilities** has been found for. It is so closely related to the dune-runners of Zz gash that it is believed that the Zerg at some point encountered and "absorbed" the DNA structure of the dune-runners. Mutated by the Zerg to be more efficient killers, the voracious Zergling are capable of ripping a larger creature to shreds with their razor-edged forearms and sharp fangs. Their DNA structure is so simple that two Zerglings can be created from a single Larva.

Zerglings are the first producible attack units the Zerg have at their disposal. With the ability to spawn in pairs, they can be produced in large numbers in a very short period of time. They serve as prime choices for rushing and depending on the build order used, they can execute the fastest rush in the game. Their small size and large pack movement make them virtually impossible to select one at a time, making it difficult for an enemy to systematically destroy them.

Although the Zergling is small and relatively low in vitality (HP), do not underestimate their usefulness. In addition to the early game rush, Zerglings can be a vital tool in the later game as well serving as the frontline of an attack backed by Hydralisks, Mutalisks, or Guardians. As cannon fodder, they give the more expensive units a longer lifespan and better attack potential while they tie up the enemy. Also, since Zerglings require no Vespene gas to be produced, they are a good choice to use up the usual mineral overhead that is accumulated in the later game to balance the gas usage for the more advanced breeds.

In some cases, the Zerglings don't even need to be used as decoys or fodder. Once their melee attack, Carapace, Metabolic Boost and Adrenal Glands have been upgraded/evolved, they can be a huge threat when built in substantial numbers. A swarm of 100 or more fully upgraded Zerglings can be fairly cheap for the amount of sheer havoc they can wreak. The unending flood of these units can cause even the most stalwart enemy to tremble in their feet.

Countermeasures

With all the Hydralisk abilities and traits, you can expect to face them in almost every Zerg encounter.

Terrans

- If you decide to use Marines/Firebats against Hydralisks, make sure you have the advantage in numbers or be backed by Medics. Also get the U-238 Shells upgrade for the Marines as quickly as possible so at worst case, the Marines will be able to hold ground against them. Also, take the time to build Bunkers for your Marines against Hydralisk hordes, since not only do they provide protection, but they increase the Marine attack range as well.
- Reinforce Bunkers with Siege Tanks in siege mode to keep Hydralisks at bay (preferably at a choke point, if possible).
- Use Irradiate with Science Vessels to destroy tight packs of Hydralisks.
- Make good use of Cloaked Wraiths to attack Hydralisk groups that have no nearby detectors.
- Battlecruisers with their thick hulls and Laser Batteries can hold well against Hydralisks, but be sure to build them in fleets.

Protoss

- Zealots can be a good counter against Hydralisks in larger numbers. They're better yet if escorted with Dragoons.
- If there are no nearby detectors, use Dark Templar to quickly dispatch Hydralisks.
- Reavers can quickly depopulate incoming groups of Hydralisks with their superior range and power.
- Psionic Storms serve as the best counter against groups of Hydralisks. A few seconds beneath a Psionic Storm and even the mightiest Hydralisk can be reduced to nothing.

Zerg

- Use upgraded Zerglings in mass numbers to overwhelm groups of Hydralisks. (Even better if accompanied by Hydralisks)
- In equal number confrontations, Hydralisk vs. Hydralisk encounters will boil down to who has more upgrades and better unit control.
- Lurkers can shred Hydralisks if they have no nearby detection.
- In the latter game, Guardians can use their superior range to attack from high ground where Hydralisks will be unable to retaliate.
- Use Queens to Ensnare enemy groups of Hydralisks, giving your force a better chance of survival.
- Use Defilers to utilize Plague against enemy Hydralisks or Dark Swarm over friendly Hydralisks.

Upgrades

Burrow	Missile Attacks	Carapace
100 100	Level 1 - 100 100	Level 1 - 150 150
	Level 2 - 150 150	Level 2 - 225 225
	Level 3 - 200 200	Level 3 - 300 300

Muscular Augments	Grooved Spines
100 100	150 150
Faster Hydralisk movement	Increased Hydralisk attack range

Burrow - Burrow can give Hydralisks time to regenerate or set up an ambush.

Missile Attacks - Each upgrade adds +1 to Missile Attacks for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Muscular Augments - To make sure Hydralisk attack groups can attack or retaliate when needed, get this upgrade to increase their speed so that targets can be reached as soon as possible.

Grooved Spines - Getting the increased attack range upgrade will give the Hydralisks the ability strike the enemy sooner, keeping them at bay or damaging them while they approach. An essential upgrade for the Hydralisk.

Special Abilities

Lurker Aspect
Cost: 125 125
Brood War Only

Once the ability is evolved at the Hydralisk Den, the Hydralisk has the ability to morph into the Lurker. During the transformation, the

Hydralisk can still be recovered, but once it's complete, the Hydralisk is lost.

Lair Level Units

Mutalisk

Hit Points: 120	Base Ground Attack: 9
Size: Small	Base Air Attack: 9
Supply: 2	Base Armor: 0
Cost: 100 100	Range: 3
Build Time: 40	Sight: 7
Produced at: Lair/Hatchery	Cooldown: 30
Requires: Spire	Production Hot Key: M

Frankly, the Mutalisk is an enigma. It is not known how they are capable of maneuvering through a vacuum, or even of controlled flight within an atmosphere, but they have been able to stand toe-to-toe (so to speak) against Wraith fighters along the Coreward border worlds. The Mutalisk's attack is quite unusual. The Mutalisk produces and projects much smaller, voracious creatures that rapidly fly between enemy targets as it disintegrates explosively.

The Mutalisk serves as the basic flying support unit for the Zerg and has the ability to strike both air and ground targets. However its Glaive Wurm attack has the special property of hitting several targets within close proximity of the initial strike and against packed groups of enemy units, Mutalisks can quickly tear them apart. The initial hit does 9 base points of normal damage (more if upgraded), the 2nd hit strikes the enemy nearest to the first target and does about 1/3 damage and the 3rd hit strikes the enemy nearest to the 2nd target while doing about 1/9 damage.

The Small size classification of the Mutalisks can become critical if an enemy begins producing anti-air units with explosive attacks like Hydralisks, Goliaths or Dragoons since the Mutalisks will only take 50% damage. Use this advantage whenever the chance arises and keep the damage ratios in mind when deciding whether or not to attack an enemy force or not.

The Mutalisk can attain tremendous air speeds and can travel across battlefields in a very short amount of time, making them perfect as scouts, interceptors and hit-and-run attackers. Probably the best use of the Mutalisk is in the hit-and-run tactics. With their mobility, enemy expansions or stray attack groups make easy targets for the Mutalisk and often they can raze an enemy base or force before they have the chance to properly retaliate. But be sure not to fall into an enemy trap since with a fairly weak vitality, the Mutalisks are easy prey for the more powerful anti-air units of any race. Keep the advantage with the Mutalisks by keeping them constantly moving to avoid as much damage as possible while attacking weakly defended enemy areas.

One Mutalisk property that can work both for and against it is the ability to stack when grouped together. For an opponent this can be fairly frustrating since it is very difficult to select individual Mutalisks when they attack. However, this can be a curse when the enemy uses area attack units like the Corsair or Valkyrie or area-effect abilities like Psionic Storm, Ensnare or Irradiate. When facing these kinds of defenses Mutalisks will usually die or be affected en masse. Should the enemy use these area-effect abilities or attacks regularly, try splitting the Mutalisks into smaller groups so that the damage done against the attack force is minimized.

Even if Guardians and Devourers are producible, it is still usually a good idea to keep a few Mutalisks around to serve as escorts, support and fodder. They can supplement the anti-air or anti-ground attacks of the Guardians or Devourers while absorbing the damage and directing attacks away from the more expensive units.

Countermeasures

Terrans

- Marines are the best means of defense against an oncoming Mutalisk group with their Normal damage attack and cheap cost. If backed by Medics and Stimpacked or protected within a Bunker, the Marines can cause serious damage to Mutalisks.
- Cloaked Wraiths have the advantage over Mutalisks if there are no detectors nearby.
- Irradiate from Science Vessels can be particularly nasty to stacked groups of Mutalisks.
- Battlecruisers in groups can withstand many Mutalisk attacks and with their powerful Laser Batteries, they can quickly whittle down a group of Mutalisks.

Protoss

- In the early game, Dragoons are necessary to defend against Mutalisk attacks, however, it's a good idea to make

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sure they stay near Shield Batteries and recharge their shields whenever possible.

- The High Templar's Psionic Storm is probably the best defense against Mutalisks since any Mutalisk will perish should they remain under the entire duration of a Psionic Storm. If they happen to be stacked beneath one, they will all take heavy damage.
- Archons in numbers can cause staggering damage to groups of Mutalisks with their psionic might and splash damage.

Zerg

- Hydralisks beneath Dark Swarm work well against Mutalisks, but in the open, Hydralisks usually aren't a good idea to use against them.
- In Mutalisk vs. Mutalisk encounters, unit control, upgrades and sheer numbers will determine the outcome.
- Scourge, though not very good against enemy Mutalisks by themselves, can be very useful if they're used to escort friendly Mutalisks. They can quickly dispatch or heavily damage enemy Mutalisks, giving the friendly Mutalisks a much better chance of winning the encounter. Be sure to keep close control of the Scourge though, making sure that all of them don't target a single Mutalisk.
- Devourers with their splash Spore attack and heavy armor can withstand groups of Mutalisks, but not if they're severely outnumbered. Use them sparingly.

Upgrades

Flyer Attack	Flyer Carapace
Level 1 - 100 100	Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 175 175	Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 250 250	Level 3 - 300 300

Flyer Attack - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Attack for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Flyer Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded

Special Abilities

Guardian Aspect

50 100

Once the Spire has been morphed into the Greater Spire, the Mutalisk becomes capable of mutating into the Guardian. During the cocoon phase, the mutating Mutalisk is vulnerable to attack and can be reverted back into its Mutalisk form. However, once the Guardian emerges the transformation cannot be reversed.

Devourer Aspect

150 50

Brood War Only

Also, after the Greater Spire has been set up, the Mutalisk becomes capable of mutating into another form: the Devourer. As with the Guardian, the morphing Mutalisk is vulnerable to attack and has the option to revert back to its Mutalisk form. However, once the Devourer emerges, the Mutalisk cannot be recovered nor can it be morphed into a Guardian.

Scourge

Hit Points: 25	Base Ground Attack: N/A
Size: Small	Base Air Attack: 110
Supply: 0.5	Base Armor: 0
Cost: 12.5 37.5	Range: 1
Build Time: 30	Sight: 5
Produced at: Lair/Hatchery	Cooldown: Instant
Requires: Spire	Production Hot Key: S

The Scourge serve as kamikaze-attack flying units, capable of causing 110 damage to aerial targets. Like Zerglings, Scourge spawn in pairs from a single Larva and can be produced in mass numbers in a very short period of time.

Their low vitality (HP) and inability to hit ground targets make them vulnerable to attack and therefore they should be used with stealth and caution so that they can best achieve their destructive potential. They prey easily on lone or small groups of enemy air units, but they lose their usefulness against larger groups of aerial units capable of counterattack.

To get the most of the Scourge, use them in combination with Mutalisks, Guardians or Devourers. The Scourge can quickly even the odds in the favor of an already established Zerg air force and with the Mutalisks/Guardians/Devourers there to absorb most of the damage from the enemy, the Scourge have a much better chance of a successful attack run.

Scourge acquire their targets very quickly and if used to patrol key areas, can be useful for putting an end to an enemy drop tactic. However, in the battlefield, all available Scourge may lock onto a single target and may simultaneously attack, resulting in a huge waste of resources for only one kill. As a result, you should either keep a watchful eye and tight control on your Scourge groups or separate them into pairs in case of auto acquiring as well as for easier management during a heated battle.

Determining the number of Scourge for a Kill

One thing to keep in mind when using Scourge is knowing how many are needed to destroy any given target. Using too few Scourge will only damage a target and with the Terran ability to repair, Protoss ability to recharge shields and the Zerg ability to regenerate, only damaging a target can be a waste of time and resources. Using too many Scourge is a waste of precious Vespene Gas and should be avoided whenever possible. Listed below is the minimum number of Scourge needed to destroy each unit (but more may be necessary if these units are in groups):

Wraith - 2 Scourge
Dropship - 2 Scourge
Valkyrie - 2 Scourge
Science Vessel - 2 Scourge
Battlecruiser - 6 Scourge (1 will always be killed en route)

Observer - 1 Scourge
Shuttle - 2 Scourge
Scout - 3 Scourge
Corsair - 2 Scourge
Carrier - 5 Scourge
Arbiter - 4 Scourge

Overlord - 2 Scourge
Mutalisk - 2 Scourge
Guardian - 2 Scourge
Devourer - 3 Scourge

Of the listed units, the best choices for a Scourge attack are the Dropship, Science Vessel, Observer, Shuttle, Carrier, Arbiter, Overlord and Guardian. These units make prime candidates either because they have little or no means of stopping the Scourge attack run and the damage they can potentially cause make it worth it to kill them as quickly as possible to neutralize the threat. The one unit you will almost never want to kill using Scourge is the Battlecruiser. Their immense firepower can easily annihilate Scourge as they move in for the kill and if the Battlecruisers are in groups of 4 or larger, the sheer number of Scourge needed to kill even one Battlecruiser becomes ridiculous. At best, use Scourge to kill lone Battlecruisers and even then be wary of any support they might have from the ground or air. If you absolutely have to use Scourge against Battlecruisers, be sure to upgrade the Flyer Carapace. This can give the Scourge a slightly better chance of success by being able to survive two shots rather than one (given that the Battlecruisers are unupgraded).

Countermeasures

The Scourge are particularly vulnerable to anti-air ground units of any kind, so whenever possible, use those ground units to eliminate the Scourge threat.

Terrans

- Marines and Goliaths can both attack Scourge with complete impunity.
- Cloaked Wraiths can destroy packs of Scourge quickly (if undetected).
- Irradiate from Science Vessels can quickly destroy/damage packs of Scourge.
- Battlecruisers are the ultimate Scourge killers, especially with attack upgrades.

Protoss

- Dragoons and Archons can both attack Scourge with complete impunity.
- The High Templar's Psionic Storm can instantly eradicate groups of Scourge.
- Fleets of Scouts or Corsairs can do well against Scourge.
- If unescorted, Arbiters can use Stasis Field to halt an incoming Scourge attack.

Zerg Strategies

Zerg

- Hydralisks can attack Scourge with complete impunity.
- Mutalisks or Devourers in large groups can deal with Scourge.

Upgrades

Flyer Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Flyer Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded

Queen

Hit Points: 120	Energy: 200 (Upgrade to 250)
Size: Medium	Base Ground Attack: N/A
Supply: 2	Base Air Attack: N/A
Cost: 100 150	Base Armor: 0
Build Time: 50	Range: N/A
Produced at: Lair/Hatchery	Sight: 10
Requires: Queen's Nest	Cooldown: N/A
	Production Hot Key: Q

The Zerg "Queen" (a misnomer, as it does not produce Larvae) is capable of producing biotoxins that have dramatic effects on both Zerg and other lifeforms. There have also been reports of Queens spawning smaller Zerg creatures (Broodlings) by injecting other species with thrown egg clusters. Like the Overlords, the Queens appear to tend to Larvae, and are generally found near the central nest.

A Queen has no physical attack of its own, but it does have the ability to hover through the air at great speeds, allowing it to escape from harm relatively quickly. What makes the Queen a truly deadly Zerg breed are the abilities it has at its disposal including: Ensnare, Spawn Broodling and Parasite. For more details on these abilities, check out the Special Abilities section below.

Countermeasures

Queens are completely vulnerable to attack of any kind, however the ability to fly limit the number of units that can successfully destroy a Queen. Know which units can hit these Queens and use every opportunity to hunt them down.

Terrans

- Stimpacked Marines are a prime choice to hunt down any Queen hovering over open ground.
- Goliaths with the Charon Booster upgrade can hit Queens from a great distance while inflicting considerable damage. They come in especially handy for hitting Queens using terrain to stay out of harm's way (i.e. over water, space, high ground).
- Missile Turrets are probably the best defensive measure against Queens. Build a ring of them around a base to keep the Queens at bay.
- Cloaked Wraiths can quickly dispatch Queens, but beware of being Ensnared or Parasited in the process.
- Use Irradiate with Science Vessels to destroy Queens.
- Battlecruisers and Yamato Gun are especially nice for killing stray Queens unfortunate enough to get in the way.

Protoss

- Use Dragoons to clear out any Queen presence over open ground.
- Scouts and Corsairs make excellent Queen hunters with their powerful attacks and quick speed.
- The High Templar's Psionic Storm can be useful for damaging any idle Queens within range. However, with their quick speed and reflexes, Queens will typically escape before a Psionic Storm can deal its full damage to them.
- Carriers can be used to chase away Queens, but with the Queen's speed, it is usually difficult to actually kill one with a Carrier.
- Use the Dark Archons Maelstrom ability to immobilize a Queen, use the Feedback ability to cripple or damage it, or take over a Queen completely with Mind Control.

Zerg

- Hydralisks make a good choice for killing Queens over open ground.
- Scourge are well suited for hunting and destroying Queens anywhere on the battlefield.

- Mutalisks and Devourers make excellent Queen hunters.
- Use your own Queens to Ensnare or Parasite enemy Queens.
- Use the Defiler's Plague ability to heavily wound enemy Queens.

Upgrades

Flyer Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Gamete Meiosis

150 150
(+50 Queen energy)

Flyer Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Gamete Meiosis - This evolved property gives the Queen the ability to hold an additional 50 energy, increasing the Queen's energy limit to 250.

Special Abilities

Infest Command Center

Cost: None

Queens can naturally produce bio-toxins that can be unleashed on damaged Terran Command Centers. Once these toxins are released they quickly infest the facility, bringing it under the control of the Zerg.

Infesting a Command Center is a simple process. During your attack of a Command Center, just place a Queen over it and as soon as enough damage is inflicted, the Queen will automatically enter the facility and infest it. The infestation process is very quick and within moments the Command Center will be yours to move and to produce Infested Terrans.

Infest enemy Command Centers whenever the opportunity arises, even if you have no need for Infested Terrans. You have to remember that not only do you gain the Infested Command Center for your own use, you are taking it away from your enemy, perhaps stalling future plans for expansion. On the other hand, if you have a dire need for Infested Terrans, you can also infest friendly Command Centers (an ally's or teammate's) just as well as enemy ones.

Parasite

Cost: 75

Range: 12

The Queen can produce and attach a remora-like Parasite to any other unit, organic or not. These parasites give their Queen the ability to see everything the affected unit can see. These Parasites, once attached, are difficult to remove and can be destroyed either by killing the host unit or having a Medic use her Restoration ability on the host unit. Zerg Drones that have been Parasited can destroy the Parasite by morphing into a structure. In any other situation, the Parasite will survive for as long as the host unit is alive and will continue to share the affected unit's vision with the Queen. Note that this ability works only with units -- buildings of any kind cannot be Parasited.

Units that have been Parasited can be distinguished through the status window. If only the affected unit is selected, the status screen will indicate that a Parasite has been detected. If the unit is group selected with other units, its wireframe icon will appear green instead of the normal blue. But even with these obvious clues, it can be easy for an opponent to overlook a worker or other unit that may be Parasited.

Parasite is an effective counter to cloakable/burrowing units and if a unit is Parasited before it cloaks it can be seen by the Queen's brood. Also if an enemy detector is Parasited, it will reveal all cloaked units within its sight range. This makes Overlords, Observers and Science Vessels especially good targets for Parasite.

A few other prime targets for Parasite include but are not limited to: Arbiters, Archons, Shuttles, Battlecruisers, Ghosts or Wraiths (before they cloak), Dropships, Siege Tanks, Guardians, and Overlords. The reason why you don't usually want to Parasite a smaller or cheaper unit is because they are easily killed, whether by your hand or by your enemy's. The loss of one Parasited Zergling, Marine or Zealot means almost nothing to an opponent, especially if it means keeping a small element of surprise. Transports like the Shuttle, Dropship and Overlord are very good choices for Parasite because not only will you be able to see what may be loading into those units, but you will be able to spot any attempts for a drop attack. One thing to be wary of when Parasiting is becoming too complacent or overconfident. Clever commanders may use Parasited units to set up a decoy attack then attacking a completely different area, most likely one that is lightly defended. So despite having the advantage of the Parasite's shared vision, keep your guard up at all times.

Ensnare

100 100
Cost: 75
Range: 9

When a Queen uses its Ensnare ability, a web of sticky green fluid is ejected over a small area, affecting all units caught beneath it. The affected area covers a 4x4 matrix and lasts for approximately 40 seconds. Once a unit is caught by an Ensnare, its movement is cut in half. Note that this ability is indiscriminate in its effects and you can potentially get your own units caught.

As an area effect ability, Ensnare is useful for slowing down tightly packed groups of units, giving you the battle advantage once you confront the affected group. The best time to use this ability is just before a battle and the better prepared you are to take advantage of the after effects, the better.

One of the most useful properties of an Ensnare is that it can reveal and affect any cloaked units caught within the web. The best way to catch cloaked units is to watch for the slight visual distortion that a cloak field generates and cast the Ensnare over the area that the cloaked units appear to be in. If it looks like the cloaked units are moving, lead the Ensnare casting to where the units will be once the web takes effect and the results will generally be more favorable for you.

To further increase your advantage after revealing cloaked units with an Ensnare, use Parasite on the Ensnared cloaked units and you'll be able to eliminate any advantage that unit might've had with its cloaking field.

Spawn Broodling

200 200
Cost: 150
Range: 9

Once evolved with the ability, Queens can launch a small spore cluster to a target non-robotic ground unit. The spores then attempt to fertilize within any organic matter in the target, even making their way through armored shells to reach their organic destination. The spores metabolize the victim immediately and within a few seconds, the spores gestate and produce a pair of Broodlings which, upon an explosive birth, destroy the host.

The Queen can launch these deadly spores from up to 9 matrices away and in groups, Queens can clear out defensive blockades or halt an enemy invasion in a matter of seconds. Every ground-based organic unit has the right be fearful of the Queen, from the minute Zergling to the mighty Ultralisk and Siege Tank.

Although the ability requires a considerable amount of energy to be used (150 energy), the fact that the energy regenerates and the victims do not, make Spawn Broodling one of the deadliest abilities in the Zerg arsenal. However, unless you have large numbers of Queens at ready, you will usually want to be selective with which units to infest. Prime targets include the Ultralisk, Siege Tank and High Templar since their abilities and attack power are significant enough to turn the tide of battle at any time. However, don't limit yourself to these targets, using Spawn Broodling to clear out groups of Goliaths or Dragoons to give your air forces a better chance for a successful attack or defense. In some cases, Spawn Broodling can come in handy for the sole purpose of forcing your opponent to waste resources in producing units to replace those lost in the birth of a pair of Broodlings.

One thing to keep in mind that although the ability can prove itself to be extremely useful, be careful where you send your Queen to carry out the task. Should the Queen be forced to wade through a multitude of Missile Turrets or Photon Cannons, the ability will be useless if the Queen dies before it can accomplish the deed.

Lurker

Hit Points: 125	Base Ground Attack: 20s
Size: Large	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: 2	Base Armor: 1
Cost: 50 100	Range: 6
Build Time: 40	Sight: 8
Produced at: N/A (from Hydralisk)	Cooldown: 37
Requires: Hydralisk Den, Lair	Production Hot Key: L

One of the newer and deadliest Zerg Strains is the Lurker. These creatures serve as defensive warriors for the Hive Clusters and outlying Zerg colonies. Bred from the [Hydralisk](#) strain, Lurkers emit waves of supra-dense spines against their enemies. However, Lurkers must actually Burrow underground to release these subterranean attacks. Any warriors on the surface who are caught by these spines are instantly impaled. These spines themselves are capable of tearing into flesh, steel, and even reinforced armor plating. The only weakness of the Lurker is that it is virtually defenseless while above ground.

Once underground, a Lurker can utilize a series of spines that rip up through the ground in a straight line from the Lurker to its target. These spines continue to their maximum attack range, regardless of where the targeted unit lies within that path and every enemy unit in the path of the spines will take damage. Note, however, that the damage will also be inflicted on allied units as well, so take caution when attacking with an ally, lest the Lurkers ravage friendly forces as well.

The Lurker Push

With the advent of the Lurkers, enemy forces must become more active with their detection. Should the enemy become lax with their detection, make full use of the Lurker to quickly raze their bases and forces. For situations like those where the detection is lacking, proceed with a Lurker Push (much like the Terran Siege Tank Push). To execute the Push, set up Lurkers just outside the enemy base perimeter and begin bringing in more Lurkers or by one closer to the enemy base. Once the front line has been "pushed" close to the enemy line, Unburrow the rear line and re-Burrow them ahead of the frontline (like a game of leapfrog). Continue this procedure until the Lurkers have "pushed" their way into the heart of the enemy base. If backed with Hydralisks/Mutalisks and Zerglings, the Lurker Push can be quite devastating to an unprepared opponent.

On the defensive front, Lurkers can also be a very valuable commodity. Placing a few Lurkers near your resources can help deter any drop attempt, whether it be in the form of Reavers, Marines, Tanks, Hydralisks, etc. Often the Burrowed Lurkers will catch a dropping enemy by surprise and can inflict major damage before they have the chance to retaliate or retreat. On the flip side, Lurkers are great for dropping against an enemy base and can often halt a resource operation in a matter of seconds. Always keep an eye out for opportunities to utilize this strategy, particularly at enemy expansion bases, since a successful Lurker drop can quickly turn the tide of battle in the Zerg's favor.

Despite the many advantages the Lurker possesses, it does have a few disadvantages that you should be aware of. As mentioned before, the Lurker must be Burrowed to attack, and should a Lurker be caught en route to a target location by an enemy force, it will be completely vulnerable to attack. The Burrowing process takes time, and an enemy might be able to kill a Lurker before it can finish Burrowing. The Lurker also has no defenses against attack from aerial units. Should an enemy air force with detection find a group of Lurkers, the Lurkers are as good as dead. For this reason, Hydralisks or Mutalisks should accompany an attacking Lurker group whenever possible.

Countermeasures

Terrans

- Missile Turret/Bunker blockades work well in stopping incoming Lurker forces. In the later game, fortify the blockades with Siege Tanks and the Lurkers will have no chance.
- Get a ComSat Station as soon as possible so that a Scanner Sweep can be used to reveal Lurkers in any portion of the map.
- Science Vessels provide mobile detection against Lurkers and Irradiate can be used to put a quick end to offensive Lurkers.

Protoss

- Use Photon Cannons in the early game to provide detection against Lurkers at bases and choke points.
- Observers provide cloaked mobile detection and are a key for countering Lurkers.
- Use the High Templar's Psionic Storm to quickly eliminate a Lurker threat.
- Use Scouts and Carriers to attack the Lurkers with complete impunity.
- Use Reavers to maul Lurkers from a distance.

Zerg

- Keep Overlords at every base/expansion as well as at key choke positions to watch for Lurker movement/attack.
- Zerglings and Hydralisks can quickly destroy Lurkers, but if possible, keep them spread out to minimize the damage taken from the rows of spines.
- Mutalisks or Guardians can quell a Lurker threat from the air with complete impunity.
- Use the Queen's Spawn Broodling to instantly destroy a Lurker.
- Catch Lurkers above ground with the Queen's Parasite ability to take away their advantage of being burrowed.

Zerg Strategies

Upgrades

Missile Attacks

Level 1 - 100 100
Level 2 - 150 150
Level 3 - 200 200

Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Missile Attacks - Each upgrade adds +2 to Missile Attacks for a total of +6 when fully upgraded.

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Hive Level Units

Defiler

Hit Points: 80	Energy: 200 (Upgrade to 250)
Size: Medium	Base Ground Attack: N/A
Supply: 2	Base Air Attack: N/A
Cost: 50 150	Base Armor: 1
Build Time: 50	Range: N/A
Produced at: Hive/Hatchery	Sight: 10
Requires: Defiler Mound	Cooldown: N/A
	Production Hot Key: F

This breed is very rarely encountered, and we can be thankful for that. Vaguely resembling a scorpion in appearance, Defilers are veritable cancer factories. They generate a number of virus-like biochemicals which are capable of overpowering even the most effective anti-toxins. Defilers also appear to feed on other Zerg for biomaterial to produce these chemicals, and are often found with Zergling escorts. This self-destructive behavior only underscores the Zerg's single-mindedness.

The Defiler draws its strength from the metasyntactic energy it creates. With that energy, the Defiler can unleash abilities like Plague and Dark Swarm that can demolish enemy forces unfortunate enough to be caught by the effects. In addition, the Defiler can also be evolved to include the ability to Consume other Zerg units from the same brood. Upon consumption, the Defiler's energy is partially recharged, allowing it to continue to use its other abilities without having to waste the time it usually takes to wait for energy to recharge. For more details about these abilities refer to the Special Abilities section below.

Despite its awesome abilities, the Defiler has a key weakness: the complete lack of a physical attack. This leaves the Defiler very vulnerable and should it be caught unescorted, even a simple Drone, SCV, or Probe can put an end to the Defiler threat. Because of this, the Defiler should always be in the company of friendly support units. If the occasion ever arises where the Defiler is alone, it should use the Burrow ability to hide and recharge its energy stores safely.

Countermeasures

The Defiler is completely vulnerable to attack from any source and should be hunted down whenever the opportunity arises with whatever units are immediately available.

Terrans

- Use any unit with a ground attack to eliminate Defilers on sight.
- Siege Tanks in Siege Mode can nail Defilers before they can get within range to use their abilities.
- Use Scanner Sweeps from the ComSat Station to reveal Burrowed Defilers and use any available units to destroy them where they are.
- Use Science Vessels to find Burrowed Defilers and Irradiate them.

Protoss

- Use any unit with a ground attack to eliminate Defilers on sight.
- The High Templar's Psionic Storm can be an effective counter to approaching Defilers.
- Use Observers to find Burrowed Defilers and follow up any discovery with a quick strike to kill them where they are.

Zerg

- Use any unit with a ground attack to eliminate Defilers on sight.
- Use the Queen's Spawn Broodling ability to quickly destroy Defilers before they have a chance to unleash any of their own abilities.

- Always keep Overlords in key positions to spot Burrowed Defilers that may be nearby.
- Ultralisks are unaffected by Dark Swarm, and are not completely crippled by a Plague. Use them to charge Defilers whenever possible.

Upgrades

Burrow

100 100

Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Metasyntactic Node

150 150
(+50 Defiler energy)

Burrow - Use the Burrow ability to keep Defilers safe while their energy recharges. Burrow also comes in handy for setting up ambushes with the Defiler.

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Metasyntactic Node - This upgrade is a must. It increases the energy limit of a Defiler to 250.

Special Abilities

Consume

100 100
Cost: None
Range: 1

Consume gives Defilers the ability to instantly gain 50 energy by metabolizing a Zerg unit within close proximity. The Defiler can only consume units from its own brood (yours or your teammate's). This ability does not affect the Defiler's maximum energy capacity, and therefore can never give more than 200 energy (or 250 if the Defiler has been evolved with a Metasyntactic Node).

The metabolized unit is destroyed in the process of Consume and since the amount of energy gained is NOT dependent on the size of the target unit, it's usually a good idea to use the least expensive unit as Consume fodder -- the Zergling. At only 25 Minerals per Zergling, the Defiler can be completely recharged for a very minimal cost and when a Defiler is used in combat, it should always have an escort of Zerglings nearby for a quick energy refill.

Note that the Defiler has the ability to Consume units even when they are Burrowed. This can come to your advantage if your opponent sees the Defiler but no nearby units and assumes that the Defiler has no means of a quick recharge. Some may attempt to redouble a failing attack if they feel that there is no chance of being affected by a Dark Swarm or Plague when in fact there is a very real possibility of your Defiler using those abilities over and over.

Dark Swarm

Cost: 100
Range: 9

Dark Swarm is created from a countless number of smaller creatures that typically cover the Defiler. The Defiler has the natural ability to launch these creatures to a projected position, creating a thick cloud of living insects that prevent any units outside from accurately targeting any units within the cloud.

The Dark Swarm covers a 6x6 matrix area and lasts approximately 60 seconds. Ground units within the cloud cannot be hit by ranged attacks from either ground or air, however this will not stop melee attacks or splash damage from affecting the units inside the Dark Swarm. Note that while ranged attacks will not affect units within the cloud, ranged attacks from units inside the cloud can still hit units outside of the cloud. Also, ranged attacks from units within the cloud will not work against other units inside of the Dark Swarm. To further clarify, listed below are a few strategies to use with Dark Swarm.

By launching a Dark Swarm over enemy ranged attack forces, defensive structures, or a projected battle area, you can give your own melee attack units (Zerglings or Ultralisks) a short period of invulnerability while attacking. A Zergling/Dark Swarm combination makes the Zergling much more valuable. A typical blockade of Bunkers or Photon Cannons can easily be overrun if they're covered with a Dark Swarm and attacked by Zerglings.

Dark Swarm can also serve as protection for your own Hydralisks from enemy ranged attacks. This is especially useful for countering fleets of Carriers or Battlecruisers or even forces of Dragoons, Marines, Goliaths, etc. One thing to watch for when using Dark Swarm on your own units is the enemy trying to sneak in to use it to their advantage. Keep your units at the edge of the cloud to get the most out of the units' attack range as well as to prevent enemy units from sneaking in. Should the enemy approach your Dark Swarm with melee attack units, do everything you can to keep them out. Once they manage to make their

way in, they will be able to ravage your ranged attack units within the cloud and turn the advantage against you. If there is no way to stop an incoming melee attack group, retreat far enough so that the enemy is no longer protected by the Dark Swarm and resume the attack.

While Dark Swarm will prevent damage from ranged attacks, it will not protect from ranged special ability effects. Psionic Storm, Maelstrom, Plague, Ensnare, Irradiate, EMP Shockwave, etc. will all still be able to affect units beneath the Dark Swarm.

Terrans are especially vulnerable to Dark Swarm since every Terran unit, except for the Firebat, has a ranged attack and therefore are unable to attack any units within the cloud. A flood of Zerglings protected by a Dark Swarm can easily ravage a Terran base or force. With multiple Dark Swarms covering a large area, the Zerglings have an even greater advantage with free reign over the entire affected location. Be sure to eliminate Firebats and Siege Tanks in Siege Mode first to ensure the advantage they have with the Dark Swarm.

The Protoss, with their Zealots and Dark Templar, are better able to defend against a Dark Swarmed invasion. However, depending on the number of Protoss defenders, a flood of Zerglings protected by Dark Swarm can still be too overwhelming. Watch for Psionic Storms within the Dark Swarm, since they will still ravage hordes of Zerglings at a time. Also keep an eye out for Archons, as their attack does a small amount of splash damage even to units protected under a Dark Swarm.

Opposing Zerg broods can be difficult to use Dark Swarm against, since they can produce their own Zerglings in which case the Dark Swarm is useless. However, Dark Swarm can be used to protect your bases from Guardian/Mutalisk or Hydralisk attack but, once again, be sure to have lots of Zerglings at hand to really turn the tide of battle.

Here is a list of units that are NOT affected by Dark Swarm:

Terrans:

- SCVs
- Firebats
- Siege Tanks in Siege Mode (can still inflict splash damage)

Protoss:

- Probes
- Zealots
- Dark Templar
- Reavers (can still inflict splash damage)
- Archons

Zerg:

- Drones
- Zerglings
- Lurkers (can inflict both direct and splash damage)
- Ultralisks
- Broodlings
- Infested Terrans (can inflict both direct and splash damage)

When facing these units, it is usually not worth it to use the Dark Swarm unless you have the numbers to overwhelm them.

One thing to note is that Dark Swarm does not affect buildings in any way or form. Should they be covered in a Dark Swarm, they will NOT be protected from ranged attack either from units inside or outside the cloud, they will take damage as normal.

Plague

200 200
Cost: 150
Range: 9

Once evolved, the Defiler has the ability to produce and project a batch of corrosive spores that quickly corrodes and destroys anything caught within its effects. Plague is indiscriminate in its effects and can seriously damage both units and structures, friendly or not. Once the corrosion process begins, Plague will cause 25 points of damage per second to each affected unit. After Plague has run its course, an affected unit will have taken 300 total damage, though Plague will not cause a unit to actually die (the Plague continues, but damage from Plague stops if a unit has only 1 HP). The Terran Medic's Restore ability is the only way to halt the course of the Plague. Note that when Protoss units are Plagued, their shields are unaffected--only their HP are reduced.

Like Ensnare, Plague can reveal any cloaked units within the area of effect and the corrosion begins as quickly with cloaked units as it does with normal units. Plague will not affect Burrowed units, however if a unit is infected with a Plague before it Burrows, it will still take the damage after it Burrows until the infection runs its course.

To take full advantage of Plague, be sure to follow it up with an attack to finish off the affected units or buildings. Plague will never destroy a target on its own and if the targets are left on their own, they may get

repaired, have their shields recharged or regenerate their HP (depending on their race).

To truly unleash a large epidemic of Plague, have Zerglings nearby to quickly recharge the Defiler's energy with Consume and use Plague in areas containing tightly packed groups of enemy units or structures. A Plagued unit will not take damage more quickly if it is Plagued again, so for the best effect, each burst of Plague should cover as many unaffected units as possible.

Ultralisk

Hit Points: 400	Base Ground Attack: 20
Size: Large	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: 6	Base Armor: 1
Cost: 200 200	Range: 1
Build Time: 60	Sight: 7
Produced at: Hive/Hatchery	Cooldown: 15
Requires: Ultralisk Cavern	Production Hot Key: U

The Zerg use these massive creatures as living tanks. Their immense mandibles have a monomolecular edge, enabling them to cut through armored vehicles and infantry alike. A handful of these creatures are believed to have been responsible for the death of an entire Confederate garrison on Timul IV. The best way to deal with these beasts is from the air.

The enormous Ultralisk is the crown of Zerg evolution, with its 400 HP of vitality and 20 base damage it can inflict in a single blow. The amount of punishment an Ultralisk can take is almost unreal and in groups, these gargantuan monsters can tear down even the most stalwart defenses of any race. With their ability to withstand immense firepower, the Ultralisks are best used as damage absorbers or cannon fodder to divert attention away from ranged attack units like the Hydralisk, Mutalisk or Guardian. Keep the Ultralisks in the front line whenever possible so that they can deal their damage while facing the brunt of the enemy's attack.

The mere sight of one Ultralisk can often intimidate a foe and this psychological advantage can prove very useful in the later game. Using Ultralisks for their scare value can easily turn the tide of battle and often an enemy's focus of attention on the Ultralisk can be their undoing when support units unleash their attacks, often in greater numbers with higher damage potential.

Despite their huge size, Ultralisks can still be transported within Overlords or through Nydus Canals and can prove to be a nasty surprise in a sneak attack or ambush. Use this to your advantage whenever the opportunity arises to break through the usual meager defenses at the rear of enemy bases and wreak havoc on the colony. One drawback is that their size does prevent them from being able to Burrow properly and are the only Zerg ground units that are unable to Burrow once the ability has been evolved at a Hatchery/Lair/Hive.

Although the Ultralisk's sheer power is daunting, it does have a few weaknesses. For one, the Ultralisk is helpless against attack from aerial units. For all of its vaunted strength, an Ultralisk can fall prey to a lone Wraith, Mutalisk or Scout. Another weakness is the Ultralisk's slow movement. Although the Ultralisk can be evolved with Anabolic Synthesis (faster movement upgrade), it can still take some time for the Ultralisk to reach the front lines of battle, so if you do plan to use Ultralisks, prepare for their use ahead of time and make sure they precede any support groups that might be used with them. Finally, the Ultralisk size can prove to be a hindrance in certain situations where they will not be able to travel through a narrow choke point and as a result they can hold up the movement of an entire force should they get "stuck" trying to get through such areas.

To best protect the investment in an Ultralisk (they are rather expensive), be sure to get all the Melee Attack, Carapace, Anabolic Synthesis and Chitinous Plating upgrades at the Evolution Chamber and Ultralisk Cavern. Fully upgraded, the Ultralisk is truly something to fear.

Countermeasures

Terrans

- Siege Tanks in Siege Mode can nail Ultralisks during their approach. But be sure to stagger Tank positions so that should an Ultralisk reach the Tank line, each of the Tanks will be able to defend each other.
- Wraiths can deal damage against the Ultralisks with complete impunity, but unless they substantially outnumber the Ultralisks, their attack may not even be noticed by an Ultralisk.
- Battlecruisers using Yamato Gun blasts can quickly turn the tables on an Ultralisk force.
- Use Irradiate with Science Vessels to quickly diminish an Ultralisk's HP by 250.

Protoss

- Zealots in numbers can help slow down an Ultralisk giving ranged attack units like Dragoons more time to take down an Ultralisk.
- Dark Templar can help stop an Ultralisk rampage, as long as they remain undetected.
- The High Templar's Psionic Storm can cause some damage to the Ultralisk, but not enough to really slow them down. It may require several applications of Psionic Storm to actually kill an Ultralisk.
- The Dark Archon provides several key counters to the Ultralisk. Maelstrom to stop Ultralisks in their tracks, immobilizing them for a short time and giving other defenders a chance to take out the Ultralisks before they can recover. Mind Control the single best solution against Ultralisks as power of the Ultralisk is turned against its former master.
- Scouts and Carriers in numbers can attack Ultralisks with complete impunity and with a large enough group can destroy Ultralisks within a reasonable amount of time.

Zerg

- Zerglings can quickly tie up an Ultralisk's attack and with their relatively cheap cost they make perfect fodder while groups of Hydralisks or other support units finish the Ultralisks off.
- Mutalisks and Guardians can attack with complete impunity.
- The Queen's Spawn Broodling ability is the single best counter against Ultralisks for the Zerg. The Ultralisk has no chance against the instantaneous death the Spawn Broodling ability inflicts.
- Use the Defiler's Plague ability to bring down an Ultralisk's HP by 300.

Upgrades

Melee

Level 1 - 100 100
Level 2 - 150 150
Level 3 - 200 200

Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Anabolic Synthesis

200 200

Faster Ultralisk Movement

Chitinous Plating

150 150

Improved Ultralisk Armor

Melee - Each upgrade adds +3 to Melee Attacks for a total of +9 when fully upgraded.

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Anabolic Synthesis - This alteration of the glands that produce endorphins and adrenal fluids serves to increase the reflexes and rate of movement of the Ultralisk.

Chitinous Plating - This evolution imbues the Ultralisk strain with a hardened exoskeletal shell, enhancing the already impressive natural defenses of the Ultralisk. This hardened shell provides an additional two points of armor.

Guardian

Hit Points: 150

Size: Large

Supply: 2

Cost: 50 100

Build Time: 40

Produced at: N/A (from Mutalisk)

Requires: Greater Spire

Base Ground Attack: 20

Base Air Attack: N/A

Base Armor: 2

Range: 8

Sight: 11

Cooldown: 30

Production Hot Key: G

Believed to be the nesting form of the Mutalisk, this is a secondary stage that has a much thicker armored carapace and a longer ranged plasma attack. The Guardian is, however, noticeably slower than the Mutalisk, and as such is used primarily to defend the vulnerable Zerg Larvae.

Producible once the Spire is evolved into a Greater Spire, the Guardian is morphed from the Mutalisk. Once the transformation is complete, the Guardian form is permanent and the Mutalisk is no longer recoverable.

The Guardian is one of the most powerful Zerg assault units with an incredible attack range and an attack that inflicts a full 20 base points of normal damage. In addition to the awesome attack potential, the Guardian also has 2 points of base armor, making it more resistant to attack than most units.

The Guardian's attack range gives it the advantage of being able to fire on ground targets while hovering in safety over high ground, water or space. The only ground unit truly capable of retaliating at that distance is the Terran Goliath with the Charon Booster Upgrade. But even that unit is limited by where it can roam, while the Guardian can fly to a safe haven in any safe haven in a given area. If possible try to keep Guardians away from open ground to make the best use of the attack range.

Guardians make great blockade breakers, particularly against Terran Siege Tank/Bunker combinations and Protoss Photon Cannon clusters. However, when approaching these blockades, use the terrain to your advantage (as described above) and always target the perimeter units/structures first. Failing to do either can be devastating to a Guardian force should they wander into the attack range of enemy units, nullifying any advantage they might have had.

The powerful Guardian attack can be very useful in eliminating specific targets while support units distract and divert an opponent's attention. Use the Guardians to eliminate the more powerful enemy units quickly (i.e. Siege Tanks, Reavers, Ultralisks, etc.) so that not only do the Guardians have less to worry about, the support units will have a better chance of surviving and causing more damage.

The Guardian does have a few weaknesses and these keep it from being a self sufficient unit. First, Guardians have no defense against attack from aerial units since their Spore attack works only against ground targets. This makes them particularly vulnerable to attack from Scouts, Corsairs, Carriers, Wraiths, Valkyries, Battlecruisers, Mutalisks and Devourers. Also, Guardians move very slowly and have a difficult time retreating from a battlefield when the tide turns in the enemy's favor. To alleviate these problems, always keep a support group of Mutalisks or Hydralisks nearby to deal with any unforeseen circumstances.

Guardians, like the Mutalisks, also tend to stack when grouped and commanded to travel to a target area. Stacking can be an advantage since enemy units will have a more difficult time targeting a specific unit in the group, however this can be a very large hindrance when facing area effect abilities or attacks. Abilities like Psionic Storm, Plague or Irradiate can be very hard to dodge and units like the Mutalisk, Valkyrie and Corsair with their bounce/splash damage attacks can prove to be fatal to stacked Guardians. So if and when possible, keep your Guardians in smaller clusters and separated to avoid these pitfalls.

Countermeasures

Terrans

- Cloaked Ghosts can catch Guardians by surprise and with their own range of attack can probably destroy the Guardians before they can get away.
- Goliaths with the Charon Booster upgrade can stand toe to toe against Guardians in terms of both firepower and range.
- Wraiths and Valkyries can make quick work of unescorted Guardians.
- Science Vessels with Irradiate can depopulate stacked groups of Guardians in a short time.
- Battlecruiser firing their Yamato Guns can quickly decimate a pack of Guardians

Protoss

- Scouts, Corsairs and Carriers can easily destroy or force a Guardian group to retreat.
- High Templar with Psionic Storm can wreak havoc on a stacked group of Guardians.
- Dark Archons can immobilize Guardians with Maelstrom or take control of them entirely with Mind Control.

Zerg

- If they can get within range, Hydralisks in numbers can make quick work of Guardians (especially beneath a Dark Swarm).
- Scourge wreck any Guardian unfortunate enough to be targeted.
- Mutalisks and Devourers can attack the Guardians with complete impunity.
- Defilers can use Plague to heavily damage stacked groups of Guardians.
- Queens can Ensnare Guardians, making it more difficult than it already is for them to escape.

Upgrades

Flyer Attack

Level 1 - 100 100
Level 2 - 175 175
Level 3 - 250 250

Flyer Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Zerg Strategies

Flyer Attack - Each upgrade adds +2 to the Flyer Attack for a total of +6 when fully upgraded.

Flyer Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded

Devourer

Hit Points: 250	Base Ground Attack: N/A
Size: Large	Base Air Attack: 25e
Supply: 2	Base Armor: 2
Cost: 150 50	Range: 6
Build Time: 40	Sight: 10
Produced at: N/A (from Mutalisk)	Cooldown: 100
Requires: Greater Spire	Production Hot Key: D

Bred from the Mutalisk strain, the Devourers are a deadly addition to the Swarm. These large, flying behemoths are capable of spewing their vile acid at any airborne ships or creatures, causing significant corrosive damage. The venom of the Devourer consists of toxins that can eat through any known substance, including the reinforced armor plating of Terran and Protoss capital ships. The venom also contains Acid Spores that hinder the fighting ability of the target, and these Spores often splash off the target to hit additional nearby enemy craft.

The Devourer is the heavy air assault attacker for the Zerg. Despite its large size, the Devourer can travel through the air at surprising speeds (much faster than its Guardian counterpart). Once the Devourer arrives at the battlefield, any enemy aerial unit at the scene will have something to worry about. The Devourer's massive 25 explosive damage attack is quite destructive, but on top of that, the acid spores that splash off the direct impact hinder the enemy in two important ways. Each Acid Spore attached to an enemy unit will increase the Cooldown of the enemy's weaponry by 1/8th of the original cooldown value. The effects of the Acid Spores are cumulative, but any unit can only possess up to nine Acid Spores at any one time. Units with already long Cooldown periods between attacks such as the Valkyrie, Devourer or Battlecruiser suffer tremendously from the Spores, while units such as the Protoss Carrier suffer little since they have no direct attack.

To make matters worse for the enemy, with every Acid Spore that's attached, the unit takes an additional point of damage whenever it is attacked. At a maximum of 9 Spores attached, the affected unit will be taking SERIOUS damage from enemy attacks. Even a non-upgraded Mutalisk will do 18 points of damage per attack with its bounce attack doing 12 and 10 points to any other nearby enemy units that also have 9 Spores attached. So as you can see, having air support for Devourers will not only help protect the Devourers, but they will also help take down the enemy at an incredibly quick rate.

One of the interesting side effects of the Devourer's Acid Spores is that the Spores can be used to counter cloaked units. Once an Acid Spore is attached, cloaking becomes completely ineffective for the affected unit. However, in order for you to use this to your advantage, you must either strike the target before it cloaks or be able to detect it long enough for an Acid Spore to be attached.

While the Devourer is an excellent countermeasure against aerial units, they have no defense against ground based units with an air attack. This makes them particularly vulnerable to units like the Dragoon, Goliath and Hydralisk so be sure to keep them with a support group of Hydralisks, Mutalisks or Guardians.

Devourers cannot attack ground targets, and fire very slowly. If Devourers are not combined with Mutalisks, or lots of Hydralisks, or are not in very large numbers, they can be easily destroyed. When Devourers are not used according to the Air Balance Model, they are very susceptible to attacks.

Countermeasures

Terrans

- Stimpacked Marines can be useful for quickly hunting down Devourers.
- Goliaths with their explosive surface to air missiles can quickly bring down a group of Devourers.
- Cloaked Wraiths have a good chance of thinning a Devourer pack, if undetected.
- Use Irradiate with Science Vessels to heavily damage groups of Devourers.
- Use the Battlecruiser's Yamato Gun to quickly even the odds against Devourers.

Protoss

- Dragoons make an excellent countermeasure against Devourers with their explosive damage attack. (Especially in numbers.)

- Use Scouts and Corsairs to hunt down packs of Devourers but be sure to keep them in small groups or completely separated to avoid the splash spore effect.
- The High Templar's Psionic Storm is excellent for catching Devourers off guard. However, it may take several applications of Psionic Storm to completely kill the Devourers.
- Carriers are relatively immune to the Devourer's Acid Spores and can be useful for wiping them out.
- Archons can easily dispatch groups of Devourers with no fear of counter attack.
- The Dark Archon can use Maelstrom to immobilize Devourers in midair or take complete control of them with Mind Control.

Zerg

- Large groups of Hydralisks can be used to easily fend off Devourers and cause heavy damage to them.
- Scourge can quickly eliminate Devourers before they can properly counterattack.
- Masses of Mutalisks can make quick work of Devourers, but be sure to prevent them from stacking to avoid being massively affected by the splashing spores.
- The Defiler's Plague ability can severely reduce the Devourer's HP in a very short period of time.

Upgrades

Flyer Attack	Flyer Carapace
Level 1 - 100 100	Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 175 175	Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 250 250	Level 3 - 300 300

Flyer Attack - Each upgrade adds +2 to the Flyer Attack for a total of +6 when fully upgraded.

Flyer Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Flyer Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded

Infestation Units

Broodling

Hit Points: 30	Energy: 180
Size: Small	Base Ground Attack: 4
Supply: N/A	Base Air Attack: N/A
Cost: N/A	Base Armor: 0
Build Time: Instant	Range: 1
Produced at: N/A	Sight: 5
Requires: N/A	Cooldown: 15
	Production Hot Key: N/A

When a Queen uses its Spawn Broodling ability, the target creature unwillingly fertilizes and serves as the breeding ground for a near instantaneous metabolization and birth of a pair of Broodlings. These Broodlings have a limited lifespan and are weak attackers, however, their mere presence should be a reason to rejoice since in their place an enemy host (hopefully a powerful one) had to die to give birth to them. Broodlings are born instantly acquiring nearby units for attack and can cause slight damage before they are typically wiped out. In the event that there are no nearby enemies, they await for a command from their Cerebrate, and can be used to scout. Their relatively quick ground speed makes them better suited for this purpose than for an attack. The Broodlings last for approximately 180 seconds before exploding on their own, so it's better to use them to attack or scout than to let them go to waste.

Upgrades

Melee Attacks	Carapace
Level 1 - 100 100	Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 150 150	Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 200 200	Level 3 - 300 300

Melee Attacks - Each upgrade adds +1 to Melee Attacks for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Infested Terran

Hit Points: 60	Base Ground Attack: 500es
Size: Small	Base Air Attack: N/A
Supply: 1	Base Armor: 0
Cost: 100 50	Range: 1
Build Time: 40	Sight: 5
Produced at:	Cooldown: N/A
Infested Command Center	Production Hot Key: I
Requires:	
Infested Command Center	

Zerg Queens have the ability to infest severely damaged Terran Command Centers, saturating them with parasitic bio-toxins. Once the Command Center is fully infested, its previous occupants can be turned into mindless suicide soldiers capable of mass destruction known as the Infested Terrans.

The infested victims of the Zerg are completely consumed by the will of the Overmind. Their bodies twisted and mutated to produce extremely unstable chemicals, infested soldiers long only to find the Swarm's enemies and destroy them by detonating their own bodies in a cloud of toxic fluid. As with other Zerg ground units, an Infested Terran also has the ability to Burrow.

The Infested Terrans have the capability to inflict up to 500 points of explosive splash damage to any unit or structure. To reach their full destructive potential, an Infested Terran must be commanded to target a specific unit or structure, but they can also be commanded to target an area within the proximity of several units or structures. The splash damage from the exploding Infested Terran will cause massive damage to all nearby targets.

Although their kamikaze attacks can cause quite a bit of damage, they must be able to reach their targets in order to inflict harm. Should they be destroyed en route before their internal toxins can properly detonate, the Infested Terrans simply die without inflicting any of the damage they normally unleash. To avoid wasting the resources spent to create them, Infested Terrans should be used as stealthily as possible to gain access to critical enemy structures. Overlords can transport 8 of them at a time, and with a successful insertion into the enemy's rear lines an Overlord full of Infested Terran cargo can quickly devastate the heart of an enemy's base.

Infested Terrans have no anti-air attack capability and therefore require either a diversion to be successful or an escort of some sort to provide protection during their attack runs. The Infested Terran's need to explode right next to the target makes one particularly vulnerable to ranged attacks and if an enemy ranged attack force is large enough, Infested Terrans will have a very difficult time doing any harm.

Countermeasures

Terrans

- Stimpacked Marines can put a quick end to any incoming Infested Terrans. (Note that Bunkers do not provide a very good defense against Infested Terrans unless heavily supported by Tanks or additional Bunkers.)
- Siege Tanks can put a stop to Infested Terrans before they can come within range to actually destroy anything.
- Wraiths and Battlecruisers can attack Infested Terrans with complete impunity and should do so whenever the opportunity arises.
- Science Vessels with Irradiate can kill Infested Terrans before they have the chance to start their attack run.

Protoss

- Large numbers of Dragoons with the Singularity Charge upgrade can destroy Infested Terrans before they can come within range to do harm.
- The High Templar's Psionic Storm can easily stop Infested Terrans in their tracks.
- Scouts and Carriers can attack Infested Terrans with complete impunity.
- Reavers can eliminate Infested Terrans before they can approach close enough to destroy anything.
- The Dark Archon's Maelstrom can immobilize Infested Terrans. Infested Terrans can also be taken over completely with Mind Control.

Zerg

- Masses of Hydralisks with the Grooved Spines upgrade can eliminate Infested Terrans from a distance.
- Mutalisks and Guardians can destroy Infested Terrans from the air.
- Queens can use Spawn Broodling to instantly destroy any incoming Infested Terran.

Upgrades

Carapace

Level 1 - 150 150
Level 2 - 225 225
Level 3 - 300 300

Carapace - Each upgrade adds +1 to the Carapace for a total of +3 when fully upgraded.

Hot keys

S - Select Larva U - Burrow G - Guardian Aspect D - Devourer Aspect L - Morph to Lurker Units D - Drone Z - Zergling O - Overlord H - Hydralisk M - Mutalisk S - Scourge Q - Queen U - Ultralisk F - Defiler Special Abilities Queen R - Parasite B - Broodlings E - Ensnare I - Infest C.C. Defiler W - Dark Swarm G - Plague C - Consume	Drone Mutation B - Basic Mutation Then... H - Hatchery C - Creep Colony E - Extractor S - Spawning Pool V - Evolution Chamber D - Hydralisk Den V - Advanced Mutation Then... S - Spire Q - Queen's Nest N - Nydus Canal U - Ultralisk Cavern D - Defiler Mound Upgrades Hatchery L - Upgrade to Lair. Lair/Hive H - Upgrade to Hive B - Evolve Burrow V - Evolve Ventral Sacs A - Evolve Antennae P - Evolve Pneumatized Carapace	Spawning Pool M - Evolve Metabolic Boost A - Evolve Adrenal Glands Hydralisk Den M - Evolve Muscular Augments G - Evolve Grooved Spines L - Evolve Lurker Aspect Spire D - Upgrade Flyer Attacks C - Upgrade Flyer Carapace G - Mutate into Greater Spire Queen's Nest B - Evolve Spawned Broodling E - Evolve Ensnare G - Evolve Gamete Meiosis Defiler Mound G - Evolve Plague C - Evolve Consume M - Evolve Metasynaptic Node Ultralisk Cavern A - Evolve Anabolic Synthesis C - Evolve Chitinous Plating
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Special Abilities

Burrow

Cost: None

While burrowed a Zerg unit can not do anything except unburrow. While burrowed, the unit's owner sees nothing but a pockmark on the ground. He can select the pockmark to get the unit's status info. Enemy player's see nothing unless they have a detection unit nearby. Even with a nearby detection unit, the enemy will only see the pockmark. Depending on the terrain and cover, the pockmark can still be hard to see.

Countermeasures

Consume

Cost: None

This ability, once researched, will allow you to regain energy points by sacrificing the life of one of your own Zerg units. You can use the ability an unlimited amount of times, but the Defiler still may not hold more than the energy maximum (200/250 with upgrade). The range for consume is very short. Consume will not work on Terran or Protoss units even if they are on your team. Since using Consume means the death of a Zerg unit, you normally want to use the cheapest units possible: Zerglings. Put a group of Zerglings next to your Defiler like a box of ammo. Burrow them to keep them safe while they are waiting. You can't consume Larva but you CAN consume Eggs, and Mutalisk Eggs.

You can use consume on burrowed units.

Dark Swarm

Cost: 100

Range: 9

Dark Swarm appears on the battlefield as an orange smoke cloud. The cloud encompasses a 6x6 matrix area. Units within the cloud take no damage from ranged attacks. Only units with melee, splash, or special weaponry are able to affect a unit underneath a Dark Swarm. Note that the Swarm will only protect units, and any buildings in the cloud are still vulnerable to attack by ranged weapons.

Since all airborne units possess ranged attacks, Dark Swarm is a particularly effective tool against an attack from the air when you place

Hydralisks under the cloud. When used as part of an attack or defense on the ground, care must be taken to prevent enemy units from also using the Dark Swarm as protection. The Dark Swarm can also protect enemy units from the ranged attacks of your own Hydralisks, Mutalisks, and Guardians. Position your own ground forces to block the path of the enemy troops into your protective cloud.

The following units are able to damage units underneath a Dark Swarm with their normal attacks:

Protoss: Probes, Reavers, Dark Templar, Zealots, Archons

Terrans: SCVs, Firebats, Siege Tanks in Siege Mode

Zerg: Drones, Zerglings, Lurkers, Ultralisk, Broodlings, Infested Terrans

Many special abilities are also completely unaffected by the presence of a Dark Swarm including: Yamato Cannons, Spider Mines, Irradiate, EMP Shockwave, Psionic Storm, Maelstrom, Feedback, Plague, Ensnare, and Spawn Broodling.

Plague

Cost: 150

Range: 9

Plague is an area effect ability that affects any unit or building with a 3x3 matrix of the target. A unit affected by a Plague slowly begins to lose hit points until either the maximum of 300 points of damage is done or the unit reaches one health. Plague alone cannot kill anything, but the effects can still be rather crippling. Plague is particularly devastating to Terran Buildings, as will continue to take further damage from burning if the building has less than 1/3 of its original hit points. The Protoss are able to better withstand Plague, as their Psi-based Shields are unaffected by the biotoxins of the Plague. Plague does not affect burrowed units, but if a unit is infected, then burrows, the unit will still continue to take damage. The viscous biotoxins of a Plague will also stick to Cloaked units, revealing them as long as the Plague lasts.

Infest Command Center

Cost: None

By infesting a Terran Command Center with her parasitic bio-toxin, the Queen brings volatile new creations into the Swarm.

Once a Command Center has been infested it can produce Infested Terrans. It also will further regenerate its hit points when damaged.

Parasite

Cost: 75

Range: 12

Parasites are used by a Zerg brood to provide battlefield reconnaissance information. Queens can launch the parasitic creatures onto the unsuspecting host from up to 12 matrices away. Once the Parasite is attached, the controller of the Parasite can now see what the affected unit sees. If a unit with cloak detection has an attached parasite, then cloaked units will also be seen by the Parasite. The owner of the affected unit can detect the parasite in two ways. When the unit is selected as part of a group, the border of the unit's wireframe diagram will turn green. If just the single affected unit is selected, a "Parasite Detected" warning in green text will appear along with the rest of the unit's statistics.

The only way to remove a Parasite to have a Medic use her Restoration ability on the affected unit. If Medics or restoration are not available, destroying the host will also destroy the Parasite. A Zerg drone with an attached Parasite could also be turned into a Zerg building to remove the annoyance.

Ensnare

Cost: 75

Range: 9

The viscous green goo expelled when a Queen uses her Ensnare ability will cover any unburrowed unit in a 4x4 matrix area. Units covered with the goo have their movement rate cut by half. This can cause a host of problems for the enemy. Ensnared melee units will face additional rounds of ranged fire before reaching their targets, units will not be able to spread out as effectively to fire on their targets, and retreating can become difficult. Ensnare will also reveal the presence of units hiding under the protection of a cloaking field until the goo wears off.

Spawn Broodling

Cost: 150

Range: 9

The Spawn Broodling ability is one of the most feared weapons in the Zerg arsenal. A Queen with this ability can instantaneously destroy any non-robotic ground unit in the game, including units such as Templar, Ultralisks, and Siege Tanks. While the energy cost for this ability is high,

the ability to rapidly turn the tide of battle with the destruction of a key unit is not to be underestimated. The Broodlings resulting from the destruction of the targetted unit are also not to be completely ignored. Broodlings receive the same Melee and Carapace upgrades as a Zergling or Ultralisk, and their attacks are quite swift. If a pair of Broodlings are left unattended by the enemy, the Broodlings can cause decent damage to defenseless buildings or troops. Broodlings will also quickly fall to any kind of organized defense, having only 30 hit points. Broodlings also die on their own approximately 120 seconds after their creation.

Basic Strategies

The Creep

Zerg structures are effectively giant organs, making a Zerg colony a living creature. To provide the required nourishment and infrastructure, the Zerg produce a living carpet of bio-matter that invading forces have dubbed the Creep. Creep, produced by both Hatcheries and the aptly named Creep Colonies, will spread rather quickly across any fertile ground. The Hatchery is the only structure that can be built without the benefit of existing Creep since it has been genetically designed to automatically produce enough to fuel its own growth. The Creep itself is extremely durable and capable of near-instantaneous regeneration, only retreating from infested ground when a Hatchery or Colony is destroyed. During the early game, the Hatchery produces enough Creep to build the early tech tree structures. However as a battle progresses you'll want to build Creep Colonies to extend the Creep for colony growth as well as to lay down the defensive foundation for the colony, converting them to Sunken or Spore Colonies as resources allow.

One of the quirks of the Creep is that it will provide the nourishment for any Zerg structure built on it whether they are friendly or not. This presents several very interesting possibilities with early and late game strategies. Early in the game, scout quickly, find the enemy base, and build your own Creep Colonies on the outer edges of their Creep and convert to Sunken Colonies as quickly as possible. In some cases, this will catch another Zerg brood by surprise and can devastate their colony before they know it. Note that this is only a viable strategy on smaller maps, since traveling the long distances to an enemy base on large maps will give the enemy enough time to build ample defenses whether they suspect this strategy coming or not.

In the later game, use flying units or Parasites to gain sight of enemy Creep. Then build a Nydus Canal and place the exit node on the enemy Creep. Note that if the node is built within enemy Sunken Colony attack range, the node will be attacked, so be careful with the exit node placement. If the node goes unnoticed by the enemy, once it finishes building you'll be able to flood the enemy town with all your ground troops from within their own base.

Health Regeneration

Perhaps the greatest advantage of the Zerg and their biological nature is an amazing healing and regenerative ability. A Zerg colony will remain viable unless every creature and structure is completely destroyed, as even a Zerg on the verge of death will eventually return to full health.

The Zerg ability to regenerate health makes the option to retreat from battle an extremely viable one. Should your units get damaged in a battle, retreat and use a new force to press the attack while the injured force uses time to their advantage as they heal. By cycling between two major forces and healing between attacks, you'll save time and money as newly produced units can be used to bolster your forces rather than replace them. To further protect the injured units during their healing phase, Burrow them to keep them out of the enemy's sight and prevent further damage.

Attack/Defense Upgrades

With the sheer number of units the Zerg can produce, getting upgrades can make a noticeable difference in the battlefield. Unless both you and your opponent go for a heavy air battle strategy, you will usually want to get the upgrades for the ground based units first. To help speed the upgrade process, build 2 or more Evolution Chambers early to upgrade both the attacks and carapace as quickly as possible. Fully upgraded Zerglings and Hydralisks can really turn the tide in a battle, especially since in most cases, they will outnumber the enemy 2 to 1 with their cheap cost and quick production.

Burrowing

Once this ability is evolved at a Hatchery/Lair/Hive, every Zerg ground unit (with the exception of the Ultralisk) will be able to Burrow. Burrowing can provide several advantages for the Zerg both offensively and defensively and the ability should not be underestimated.

First of all, as mentioned before, Burrowing can help preserve units that need to regenerate their health. If possible, Burrow these units at your main base so that should the base need immediate protection, these units

can provide the last line of defense, even in their injured condition and perhaps give you the advantage of surprise as they Unburrow.

Another key use for Burrowing is for reconnaissance. By using Burrowed Zerglings, you can keep an eye on every resource node on the map as well as any key choke points at a minimal cost. The placement of these Burrowed Zerglings can also be a strategy in itself. Burrow Zerglings at the optimal build area (nearest to both the minerals and gas) to prevent your enemy from building there and either forcing them to build further away or moving to another expansion area. If you wish to watch enemy expansion a little more passively and wait to pounce on them, Burrow your Zerglings right behind or next to a Mineral cluster. Even if they can detect the Burrowed Zergling, this will help make it more difficult for the enemy to spot your scout.

Burrowing can also be highly useful in expansion attempts. In the early to mid game, send out and Burrow Drones at key expansion areas and keep them there in hiding until you are ready to expand. Should your main base be invaded and lost, these Drones will also provide you the chance to quickly rebuild without having to worry about getting a Drone past the invading forces. This comes in handy particularly in Team or Allied games where you have a better chance at rebuilding while your teammate or ally occupies the enemy.

Finally, use Burrow to set up ambushes. The element of surprise can greatly affect the outcome of a battle and you should use it to your advantage whenever possible. Choke points are excellent locations for ambushing (See the side image) and even if the enemy outnumbered you, these positions can give you the advantage. By placing your units at a choke point exit, they'll be able to overwhelm enemy units trying to cross in a line no more than 2 or 3 units wide. Using this method, your force should be able to take an enemy army twice their size with a minimum of effort.

The key in this type of ambush is to Unburrow just before the enemy can make it out of the choke point. This will maximize the element of surprise and ensure that you can kill a few of the enemy before they can retreat. Also if possible, keep a row of Melee Attackers (i.e. Zerglings) in the front line closely backed by ranged attack units (i.e. Hydralisks) to make the ambush as destructive as it can be.

Advanced Strategies

Six Pool Rush

The Zerg have the fastest rush found in the game and on the smaller maps, this can be quite devastating to an opponent. Simply set the first four Drones to gathering Minerals, produce the 5th and 6th Drones as soon as you have enough minerals and command each to gathering minerals as soon as they are produced. While your Drones mine, send your Overlord to quickly find the enemy base and keep it there to observe what your enemy may be doing. Keep an eye on the Mineral amount indicator in the top right of the screen and once the mineral count rises above 130 Minerals or so, grab the last Drone to drop off its Mineral load and bring it out of the mining area and prepare to set down the Spawning Pool as soon as the Mineral counter tops 150. While the Spawning Pool builds, build one more Drone and send it to mine and continue to allow the other Drones to mine. As soon as the mineral counter tops 100, build another Overlord. By the time the Pool finishes, you should have over 150 minerals, enough to convert the 3 Larvae at your Hatchery into 3 pairs of Zerglings. Use these to quickly rush to the enemy base and target enemy workers one at a time (queue up the targets if possible by selecting all your Zerglings, right clicking on an enemy worker, then hold down **Shift** and continue to right click on more workers). This should effectively disrupt their mining operation and if your opponent fails to effectively counter with their workers, your Zerglings should be able to finish off the entire enemy base.

This strategy is quite limited in its usefulness though. The keys are finding the enemy quickly and hoping that you can hit them shortly after the Zerglings are produced. On larger maps like Killing Fields or Sherwood Forest, the time it takes to find the enemy and actually hit them with the rush would give your opponent more than enough time to build up defenses or even just enough workers to overwhelm your rush force, so if you do decide to use this tactic, limit it to 128x128 or smaller maps if you want to pull it off successfully.

Note that on very small maps like Blood Bath, you can even pull a **Four Pool Rush** by only mining with your initial 4 Drones and waiting til you have enough for the Spawning Pool and proceeding with the rush in the same way as the Six Pool Rush. This tactic provides an extremely quick rush but if it fails after the first two waves, consider yourself dead since you will not be able to produce quickly enough to press the advantage.

While both rushes have the potential to be devastating, an experienced player can defend against even these quick attacks in which case, they will most likely outmine and outproduce you in a short period of time. Weigh these options before electing to use these particular tactics.

Multiple Hatcheries

Typically, your initial Hatchery serves as both the source of all your initial units as well as being the point where incoming resources are processed. While one Hatchery provides sufficient larva for the early needs of a Zerg Brood, to truly produce the Zerg hordes, you'll want to build multiple Hatcheries at your main base solely for unit production. Having these extra Hatcheries will help alleviate the resource surplus you'll usually have at this stage of the game and also allow you to produce and replace units quickly between and during battles. Should your resources allow, also build extra Hatcheries at your expansions. In the event that your main base is overrun, the additional expansion Hatcheries will give you the extra Larvae you'll need to quickly rebuild. Once you have multiple Hatcheries set up, use the hotkeys to speed up production. You can assign each Hatchery to a **Ctrl** group by selecting the desired Hatchery then holding down **Ctrl** and then the number you wish to assign it to (i.e. **Ctrl - 1**). Once assigned, pressing the number will reselect the Hatchery.

After a Hatchery has been selected, the option of Select Larva becomes available and by hitting the hotkey **S**, all the Larvae for that Hatchery will be selected.

After the Larvae are selected, all you need to do is hit the hotkey for the unit you want produced, and the selected Larvae will morph into that unit. The hotkeys for the units are as follows:

D	-	Drone
Z	-	Zergling
O	-	Overlord
H	-	Hydralisk
M	-	Mutalisk
S	-	Scourge
Q	-	Queen
U	-	Ultralisk
F	-	Defiler

Once you have learned these skills, use them in quick succession to produce your units at an incredible rate. For example - if you've assigned your main base Hatcheries to the numbers **1**, **2** and **3**, you can mass produce your units by pressing **1 - S - H**, **2 - S - H**, **3 - S - H** and Hydralisks will be produced using all available Larvae at each Hatchery. If you wish to make any other units, just substitute the **H** in each combination with the hotkey of the unit you wish to produce. Using this method, you should be able to produce units even in the midst of a battle and by the time the battle has ended, you should have a fresh force awaiting command at your Hatcheries.

Unit/Ability Combinations

The special abilities of the Defiler and Queen provide a deadly compliment for the main combat units of the Zerg Horde.

Zerglings with Dark Swarm/Consume

Use Dark Swarm over an enemy force or base and a group of Zerglings will be able to reign freely beneath the cloud. Produce masses of Zerglings to get the full benefit of the Dark Swarm and use multiple Dark Swarms to quickly cover an entire area. The Zerglings will be able to quickly move from target to target while remaining relatively protected from enemy fire. Also by keeping the Zerglings close at hand, Defilers can Consume them to rapidly recharge their energy stores so that they can continue to produce Dark Swarms for the Zergling attack force.

Mutalisks/Devourers with Ensnare

Use the Queen's Ensnare ability to slow down an enemy air force's movement. Should you be attacked by Cloaked Wraiths, Ghosts or Protoss forces under the protective cloaking of a nearby Arbiter, Ensnare will reveal the hidden units and even the odds. Swoop in quickly with your Mutalisks or Devourers and inflict damage to the enemy while they remain affected/revealed by the Ensnare. Devourers add to the Ensnare affect with their own acid spores further affecting the enemy forces' cooldown rate.

Ground Forces with Spawn Broodling

Use groups of Queens to quickly clear out the enemy's most powerful non-robotic ground units and before they have a chance to react, hit them quickly with your ground forces (Zerglings, Hydralisks, Ultralisks). Spawn Broodling

is particularly useful against Terrans using Siege Tanks as the linchpin of their defensive formations.

Devourers/Mutalisks/Scourge with Plague/Ensnare

This combination can be deadly for enemy capital ships (i.e. Carriers or Battlecruisers). Use Plague first to begin the HP drain, then quickly follow up with a few Devourers to attach their acid spores to cripple the enemy's ability to counterattack. Before they can get away, use a quick Ensnare to slow them down and then once the effects have taken their toll, use Mutalisks and Scourge to finish the job. With practice, enemy capital ships can be taken down in a very short time span whether they are alone or in groups.

Nydus Canal

The precise origin of the Nydus Canal is unknown, and the exact process of its operation is also a mystery. Once the initial canal entrance/exit is created, a sister entrance/exit node can be opened at another site (as long as there is Creep to grow on). The Canal then enables Zerg ground units to travel from one end to the other at extremely high speeds regardless of intervening terrain. This enables multiple Hatcheries located across a large area to function as one unified nest, with Zerg warriors traveling from one combat zone to another quickly and efficiently.

With the ability to instantly travel from one location to another with Nydus Canals, the Zerg can quickly defend and invade often before an enemy can react. Typically, you will want to build all the entrance nodes at the main base and their sister nodes at each of your expansion colonies. This will allow quick travel from one base to another, at most with only one stop between locations. By building a solid network of Nydus Canals between your main base and all of your expansions, you can make sure that each thrives with a mobile force protecting them.

While one Nydus Canal at each area is usually sufficient, in some cases, you may wish to build backups at heavily attacked areas to ensure that your force will be able to arrive in full force. Should the enemy target one of the Nydus Canal and manage to destroy it, your force should have enough time to pour through the 2nd Canal to stop complete destruction of the colony. These redundant Canal systems can be the saving factor in a heated invasion.

The one drawback with building multiple Nydus Canals is that they all look alike and determining which node goes where can become quite confusing. To help prevent this type of situation, plan the construction and placement of each node so that you can distinguish where each goes. One suggestion is to build the Nydus Canals on your main base Creep to indicate which direction each transports to. For instance, if you wish to make a Nydus Canal that has an exit node at the top left resource area on the map, build the initial Nydus Canal at the top left part of your main base's Creep. Whether you use this convention or make one of your own, by building up a solid system for Nydus Canal construction, you'll be able to avoid confusion in the middle of a critical situation and get your troops to where they need to be at any given moment.

The Nydus Canal can also be used as an invasion tool against other Zerg. While the initial entrance node of the Nydus Canal must be set down with one of your Drones, the sister exit node can be placed on the Creep of any Zerg Brood as long as you have direct sight of the location you wish to set the node down. This means that once you build the first node, use one of your flying units (Scourge, Queen, Mutalisk or Devourer) to take a look at the enemy's Creep and then produce the Nydus Canal's exit node at the enemy base. If there are any Sunken Colonies within range of the Nydus Canal, they will instantly attack, however, if you can find a remote position somewhere on the enemy Creep, the chance of a successful node being set up increases and once it finishes, you'll be able to send all your ground units through to invade the enemy from within their own base. Be sure to have a full attack force ready to go through before you set down the exit node, that way they can take advantage of the situation before the enemy finds the node.

Another use for Nydus Canal building on foreign Creep, is to use them to link with a teammate's/ally's Zerg base. By using these Canals with friendly forces, you'll be able to send reinforcements quickly should the need arise

Overlord Drops

Overlord Drop Description

The Overlord Drop can be a deadly weapon for the Zerg. In many situations a massed Overlord drop of combat units can turn the tide of a losing battle or turn a vicious stalemate into a decisive victory. This strategy is particularly viable for the Zerg since they usually have the most transport units during any one game. The large number Overlords that are required for growth of a Zerg brood become transports once the Ventral Sacs upgrade is researched. Overlord Drops can be used to

overwhelm a defensive set up, flying past enemy lines and dropping an enormous force right into the heart of the enemy base.

Overlords can fly into an enemy base from almost any angle and this ability should be used to its full extent. Many players try to use the terrain to their advantage by setting up extensive blockades on ramps to high ground or across bridges. In these cases, Overlords can be used to completely bypass those defenses. By dropping from the rear of an enemy base or some other unexpected position, the Zerg can quickly ravage an enemy base before the defenders even realize what is happening.

The Overlord Drop tactic works best when the attack comes as a complete surprise. If the enemy spots your preparations, quite formidable counters can often be deployed. Even when the enemy knows about the imminent attack, using Overlords to transport your forces could still be more effective than charging a strong defensive line. Be ready to abort the attack and unload your ground troops in the event a strong air force shows up. Losing a strong ground force while loaded into an Overlord can be a crushing blow to your chances of victory.

Double Lair Upgrade

If you plan on using the Overlord Drop as early possible, the fastest way to achieve the ability is to make two Hatcheries. Once your Spawning Pool is complete, then upgrade both Hatcheries into Lairs. Once the Lairs are complete, simultaneously begin to evolve both the Pneumatized Carapace (faster movement upgrade) and the Ventral Sacs (transport ability). This will quickly give your Overlords both the transport ability and speed they need to successfully accomplish a Drop on the enemy. When the upgrades finish, you should have a group of Hydralisks ready to go. To save time, position both your Overlords and Hydralisks as close to the enemy as you dare.

Executing the Overlord Drop

The first and foremost element of a devastating Overlord Drop is early reconnaissance. You'll need to find the enemy base and determine the best entry point for the drop. Take advantage of any favorable terrain available to you. A nearby undefended ridge of high ground can provide your units with a clear advantage over the defenders below. If the terrain does not provide one clear area to place your forces, you can then consider a Drop much closer to the enemy.

Find the area that is the least defended from air attack and use that area as your target Drop location. The target area doesn't need to be completely undefended for your attack to be successful. If your opponent only has one or two defensive towers guarding your target area, don't let them deter you. Having a mass of Overlords when you Drop will ensure that those light defenses will not be sufficient to block the brunt of the attack. If you have any flying units available, use them to distract the defenses. Immediately follow up with the Drop and pull back the aerial units. If you have no flying units available, just use a lone empty Overlord to serve as the decoy. The loss of one Overlord is nothing compared to the loss your opponent will feel in a successful Drop.

If the enemy base is heavily fortified from all sides but feel that a Drop is necessary to claim victory, there are two options: use a massive overwhelming Overlord drop complete with decoys and diversions or use a stream of Overlords for a quick drop. The first option is probably the best solution, but in some cases where you are tight on resources, you might want to opt for a quick drop. This involves keeping your Overlords on the move at all times. The idea is to command your Overlord to move to the target drop location and have a return location queued up for a quick turn around once the Overlord reaches the drop spot.

To do this, select your Overlord, right click on the area you wish to drop on, then hold down **Shift** and right click on a return location. Once you have the flight path set, keep the Overlord selected on its run and as soon as the Overlord reaches the drop location, quickly click on the top left wireframe of the units the Overlord is carrying. (Keep clicking on that wireframe until all the units have been dropped). This will not disturb the Overlord's flight instructions and will drop the units while the Overlord remains moving. Note that this requires a bit of micromanagement and if you need to drop more than one Overlord's worth of units, you'll need to be very quick with Overlord selection and unit dropping. This tactic will move your Overlord into and out of trouble as quickly as possible and requires some practice. But successfully used, it can be a very effective at dropping ground forces with a minimum of loss.

Lurker Drop

One of the best units for a drop is the Lurker. With their ability to burrow and attack, they make the perfect choice for a quick infiltration

and destroy mission. Their Subterranean Spines can quickly raze any nearby stationary detectors. Once the enemy no longer has detectors available, the Lurkers will have free reign over the area. To help keep the area clean of detection, bring a few Scourge along with the Overlords in the Drop. They quickly clear out any Observers, Science Vessels, or enemy Overlords nearby.

Zerg vs. Terran Marines and Firebats

The biggest early threat to a Zerg brood when facing a Terran opponent will be the Marine and Firebat. Both of these units will tear through Zergling hordes when either Stimpacked or protected by bunkers. Should the Terran infantry be backed by Medics, the situation becomes even worse. The best early game solution is to outproduce your opponent and use a mixed force of Zerglings and Hydralisks. While Zerglings will not fare very well against Firebats, the Zerglings can distract the Marines while your own Hydralisks take out the Firebats. If the Marines and Firebats are accompanied by Medics, you will need much larger numbers, better upgrades, or a favorable defensive piece of terrain to hold off the Terrans with just Zerglings and Hydralisks. The Subterranean Spines of the Lurker are the first definitive counter the Zerg has against Terran infantry. A few Lurkers at a chokepoint can hold off huge numbers of Marines and Firebats, even if the Lurkers are detected by the Terran.

If your opponent continues to massively produce Marines or Firebats during the later stages of the game, use Ultralisks to mow through the enemy infantry lines. If the Ultralisk's Carapace is fully upgraded, the Marines and Firebats will inflict very little damage. Even a single Ultralisk can destroy entire squads at a time. The fast and long ranged attack of the Guardian will also annihilate Terran infantry in an effective manner.

Vultures

Vultures can be a nuisance to a Zerg force with their quick speed and Spider Mines, but their power should not be underestimated. Vultures have the capability to execute quick hit and run raids against your Drones, and the Vulture's attack does excellent damage to the small Zerglings. Fields of Spider Mines also prove fairly nasty to an unsuspecting Zergling attack force. Masses of Hydralisks have little to fear from either the Vultures or Spider Mines, but the speed of the Vulture usually allows the Terran to retreat from any engagement. The best counter to the Vulture is the Mutalisk. Since the Vulture has no anti-air capability, the hover bikes make easy targets for the fast moving Mutalisks.

Siege Tanks

Siege Tanks are a rather powerful component of the Terran arsenal. Siege Tanks in Siege Mode protected by Bunkers and Missile Turrets can be annoyingly difficult to uproot. The Zerg Swarm does have quite a few counters available for the power of the Siege Tank.

The single best counter to a Siege Tank is the Queen's Spawn Broodling ability. Each use of this ability will instantly destroy a Siege Tank. A group of Queens can quickly clear out an entire Tank blockade. Since the ability is reusable, Queens only need to recharge their energy before being able to wreak havoc against more Siege Tanks. When using Spawn Broodling, be sure to pick the Tanks that are in the middle of a Tank group or right next to a Bunker or Missile Turret. As soon as that Tank is destroyed, any other Tanks within range will open fire on the Broodlings in their midst. The Siege Tank fire will cause splash damage to any units that are nearby, friendly or not.

Another solution for the Siege Tank is the combination of Dark Swarm and Zerglings. Once covered with Dark Swarm, Siege Tanks will be unable to inflict direct damage (although Siege Mode will still cause considerable splash damage) to the incoming Zerglings. Nearby Bunkers will be unable to deal with the Zergling threat as long as the Dark Swarm remains over the Zerglings. Zerglings with the Adrenal Gland upgrade can quickly dispatch any Terran unit or buildings beneath the cloud.

If the timing of this combined attack proves too tricky, use Guardians against enemy Siege Tanks. Their superior attack range ensures that any nearby Bunkers or Missile Turrets will be insufficient to stop the Guardian attack. Unless there are Wraiths, Valkyries or Battlecruisers nearby, the Guardians will quickly ravage any Siege Tanks present.

Prevent Offensive Bunkering

A sneaky tactic the Zerg must watch for in the early to mid game is the use of offensive Bunkers possibly supported by Siege Tanks. These blockades can easily pin a Zerg colony and allow the Terran to expand unimpeded across the rest of the battlefield. Unless the blockade is broken, the Terrans will also continue to extend the defensive web into the very heart of your Brood. The best and simplest counter to these tactics is to prevent the blockade from even being built. Use Zerglings

and Drones to keep an eye on the area near the colony to keep it free of any Terran presence. Should a Terran attempt to pull an offensive bunker maneuver in the late game, use Guardians to quickly smash the attempt. If you don't have any Guardians, Queens can use their Spawn Broodling ability on the SCVs constructing the Terran defenses. You can then send in waves of Hydralisks and Zerglings to crush the Terran.

Goliaths

The Terran Goliath is a deadly threat to Overlords, Guardians and Devourers, particularly if the Goliaths have been upgraded with Charon Boosters (increased attack range). The explosive anti-air weaponry of the Goliath does not fare as well against Mutalisks, but overwhelming numbers of Goliaths and the long range of Charon Boosters can hide this weakness. The primary problems of the Goliath are the slow firing ground attack and the large size of the vehicle itself. Both Zerglings and Hydralisks prove effective weapons against a Goliath army.

Cloaked Wraiths

Cloaked Wraiths in the hands of a competent Terran commander can prove quite a thorn in the side of the Zerg. Although Overlords can easily detect their presence, Cloaked Wraiths can also kill an Overlord in a matter seconds. If you know there are Cloaked Wraiths around, keep a large group of Overlords with your attack forces at all times. Wraiths are surprisingly fragile and are easily driven off by Hydralisks if the Wraiths cannot overcome the nearby detector presence.

To provide defense for your bases, set up Spore Colonies to both detect and repel Cloaked Wraiths.

Valkyries

The Terran Valkyrie is a fairly recent addition to the Terran air force, and a rather unwelcome one from the Zerg perspective. Their cluster missiles damage all air units in a target area and can quickly annihilate groups of Overlords or Mutalisks with a minimum of effort. Fortunately Valkyries are slow moving and make prime targets for Scourge and Hydralisks. Hydralisks have nothing to fear from the Valkyrie since the Valkyrie has no ability to attack ground unit. Scourge can strike Valkyries before they have a chance to unleash their missile volleys.

Irradiate

Irradiate is one of the deadliest threats to the Zerg. An Irradiated Overlord is guaranteed to die (unless a Terran Medic uses Restoration to cure it.) Tightly grouped or stacked groups of Hydralisks, Zerglings, Mutalisks, or Guardians take heavy damage from an Irradiate. Whenever a Science Vessel is spotted, destroy the blasted thing immediately with Scourge. Should your forces encounter a Science Vessel, try to spread them out to reduce the effects of Irradiate. Equip your Hydralisk horde with Burrowing to help combat Irradiate. An irradiated Hydralisk will surely die even if burrowed, but burrowing the Hydralisk does prevent the Irradiation field from damaging other nearby Zerg units.

Battlecruiser Fleets

Battlecruisers are quite possibly the most fearsome unit in the game. In large numbers they can be nearly unstoppable. To counter them, you'll need to use a combination of special abilities and your air and ground forces to defeat them. Since the Battlecruiser moves rather slowly, you should always have some time to set up a good defense after the Battlecruisers reach your outside picket lines. The Defiler's Plague will reduce their HP rapidly while a Queen's Ensnare will slow down the Battlecruisers to a snail's pace and prevent retreat. Follow up with the Acid Spore attack of your Devourers, increasing the amount of damage they take per hit and increasing their weaponry's cooldown. Finish them off with Mutalisks, or use Hydralisks protected beneath a Dark Swarm. If the Battlecruisers weaponry is already distracted with other units, Scourge can even be used.

The main key to completely defeating a Battlecruiser fleet is not allowing the ships to retreat back to their home base. Should the Battlecruisers make it back safely, they can be repaired and back at full strength within a few minutes.

Infesting Command Centers

It's often easy to forget, but the Terrans provide a unique opportunity for the Zerg. Should one of their Command Centers be severely damaged the Zerg Queen can infest it and bring it under the control of the Zerg. These Infested Command Centers can produce Infested Terrans bound completely to the Zerg will. Infested Terrans work particularly well when attacking lone Terran Bunkers and any other unprotected Terran structures on the ground.

To infest the Command Center, simply place a Queen near the Command Center. As soon as the building becomes damaged enough, the Queen will automatically move in and infest it.

Remember that as soon as a Command Center is infested, any nearby Terran defenses will immediately treat it as an enemy presence and open

fire. If possible, infest Command Centers that are not too heavily defended. As soon as the Command Center is infested, lift your new building off and fly it to a safe haven where you can begin producing Infested Terrans.

Zerg vs. Protoss

Zealots

Zealots are the earliest attack unit available for the Protoss. While they are relatively expensive, Zealots can cause massive damage in melee combat. Zerglings can defeat Zealots if the Zerglings outnumber the Zealots at least 4 to 1. This ratio can vary depending on upgrades and terrain. Should you choose to face Zealots with Zerglings be sure to group them together before attacking. If a group of Zealots catches a mass of Zerglings streaming in single file rather than as a massive wave, the Zealots can take out more Zerglings than you might think. Also try to separate the Zealots apart to allow more Zerglings to attack each individual Zealot. For Zerglings to remain effective you should upgrade their Carapaces. If the enemy Zealots have an attack upgrade advantage, a Zealot will rip a Zergling apart in two attacks instead of three.

If Hydralisks are used to back a Zergling attack, the Zealots fall much more quickly. Be sure to evolve the Grooved Spines (increased attack range) upgrade. The additional range will allow more Hydralisks to engage the enemy. Keep in mind that to keep the edge over Zealots, you'll need superior numbers in both Zerglings and Hydralisks. Use multiple Hatcheries to maintain those numbers.

When defending against Zealots at your home colony, have Sunken Colonies built to aid in the defense. Tie up the invading Zealots with Zerglings and let the Sunken Colonies hit the Protoss from range.

In the mid to late game, use Mutalisks and Guardians to make short work of the Zealots (which are unable to retaliate against air units). Lurkers can also help tip the odds in your favor. Should the Zealots lack the support of a nearby Observer or Photon Cannon, they are easy prey for the Lurker's Subterranean Spines.

Dragoons

Although the Dragoon's ranged attack power should not be underestimated, they are relatively easy fodder for Zerglings upgraded with Metabolic Boost (faster movement) and Adrenal Glands (faster attack rate). The Dragoon's slow attack is no match for a frenzied horde of Zerglings. Unless the Dragoons have the advantage in numbers, the Zerglings will almost always prevail. Use Hydralisks to help speed up the process of dispatching Dragoons wherever possible.

In the later stages of a game, use Guardians and the Queen's Spawn Broodling to destroy Dragoons from long range. Lurkers also make a great weapon against Dragoons. With their long range splash attacks, the Lurkers can quickly shred a group of Dragoons before they can realize what is happening.

Dark Templar

When faced with Dark Templar, the Overlord becomes the key unit to defeating them. Make sure the Overlord has the Pneumatized Carapace (faster movement) and Antennae (increased sight range) upgrades to unmask any Dark Templar that may be roving around. The Dark Templar melee attack is extremely deadly to any Zerg ground unit, but the attack is thankfully slow. Zerglings and Hydralisks can defeat Dark Templars, but expect casualties. If available, use Mutalisks or Guardians to attack from above. The Dark Templar has no response to an attack from the air. If there no Overlords are nearby, use the Queen's Ensnare or the Defiler's Plague to reveal the Dark Templar. Your forces can then quickly dispatch the the marauding assassins.

If you suspect your opponent will use these warriors, build a few Spore Colonies at each of your bases to provide an additional layer of detection. Keep them surrounded by Sunken Colonies to help repel attacks. To further bolster base defenses, keep a few Lurkers burrowed around your important base structures and mining operation..

High Templar and Psionic Storm

The deadliest weapon the Protoss have at their disposal is the High Templar's Psionic Storm. Even just one Templar with Psionic Storm can wipe out masses of Zerg units with little effort. Psionic Storm can often be the deciding factor in a Protoss vs. Zerg encounter. Destroy any High Templar on sight, keep your units spread out, and hope that you can destroy them before they have sufficient energy to unleash a Psionic Storm.

One of the quickest and safest methods of exterminating High Templar is the Queen's Spawn Broodling ability. Spawn Broodling has a long range, and one Queen can instantly kill a single Templar. Before you attack is usually the best time to use this ability. With the Templar safely eliminated, your ground and air forces can quickly take advantage of the situation to mount an effective attack.

Since Zerglings are so cheap and easy to produce, they also make a good tool for targeting and destroying enemy High Templar. Even if hit by a

Psionic Storm, the Zerglings can easily be replaced. If even one Zergling can reach a defenseless Templar, then the sacrifice will be well worth it. Ultralisks also serve as an excellent countermeasure for High Templar. The immense vitality of an Ultralisk will keep them alive through multiple Psionic Storms. Any High Templar is as good as dead once an Ultralisk reaches him.

Avoid using Mutalisks or Guardians to attack High Templar unless you're sure the Templar have run out of energy. Psionic Storms will ravage stacked groups of Mutalisks with great efficiency, and Guardians are too slow to move out of the Psionic Storm before taking extreme damage.

Reavers

Reavers are a very powerful threat to Zerg ground forces and should be handled with extreme caution. Should you be caught in a situation where you need to destroy them, the best unit for the job is the Mutalisk or Guardian. If neither unit is available, you should instead use a combination of Zerglings and Hydralisks to take the Reavers out.

The key to destroying a Reaver is taking advantage of its slow firing rate and the Reaver's tendency to attack the first unit to enter its acquisition range. Use Zerglings one at a time and place them in front of the rest of the attack group. These Zerglings will act as bait to draw the fire of the enemy Reavers. As soon as the Reaver fires and destroys the decoy, rush in immediately with the rest of the Zerglings and Hydralisks to destroy the Reaver during its cooldown cycle. Try to arrange the Zerglings so they completely surround the Reaver and don't let your Zerglings cluster at the front of the Reaver. If the Reaver does manage to fire another Scarab, that one shot could kill every attacking Zergling.

If you don't have any Zerglings around to deal with the Reaver, use the same decoy strategy with your Hydralisks. Send one in front of the rest of the group as cannon fodder, then quickly follow up the decoy with the rest of the group. Between Reaver cooldown cycles, spread your Hydralisks apart and attempt to surround the Reaver. If your Hydralisks do take fire from the Reaver, at least they'll only die one at a time rather than in entire groups.

Reaver and Zealot Drop

A favored Protoss tactic is the Reaver or Zealot Drop at the back door of a Zerg Colony. To counter this strategy, build a few Spore Colonies to destroy the incoming Shuttle and a few Sunken Colonies near your Drones gathering resources. If available, also place a few Lurkers around the workers. Lurkers will almost always take a Reaver or Zealot Drop by surprise, and the Lurkers can destroy the dropped force in short order. Scourge also make a very good deterrent to drop attempts. Place a few Scourge around the back edge of your colony and order them to patrol around your resources. With luck the Scourge will surprise any incoming Shuttle and destroy the invaders before having the chance to unload.

Scouts

The Protoss Scout is one of the deadliest air to air combat units found in the game. Once upgraded with Gravitic Thrusters (faster movement) they can challenge any air force for control of the skies. They can also hit ground targets, making Scouts a very well rounded unit able to serve many purposes. To counter this threat you'll need to significantly outnumber the Scouts with Mutalisks, Scourge and Devourers, or use smaller groups of those units in combination with some of the Zerg special abilities.

If you have Queens available, use Ensnare to slow down the Scouts then hit them hard with your air units and any ground forces in range. Defilers can both Plague the Scouts or provide Hydralisks with the cover of a Dark Swarm.

Remember to not allow the Scouts to escape. If they can retreat back to a Shield Battery or two, the Scouts can quickly rejoin the battle at full strength.

Corsairs

Like the Scout, the Corsair is also an air-to-air superiority fighter. Groups of Corsairs can make very quick work of large groups of Mutalisks, and they also make extremely efficient Overlord hunters. The Corsair's strength lies in their fast firing splash damage attack and their fast movement. Use the Queen's Ensnare to take away their speed advantage. Then use Hydralisks to destroy the Corsairs. If you have any Devourers available, use them to attack the Corsairs and increase their cooldown. Once their firing rate is crippled, use Mutalisks and Scourge to finish them off one by one.

If you have neither Ensnare or Devourers to counter the Corsair, be prepared to flee. Mutalisks stand no chance against Corsairs unless in grossly superior numbers. The only chance for survival is to spread apart and surround the Corsairs, limiting the splash damage done by the Corsair's attack.

Keep Overlords within Spore Colony protection and if you notice any Corsairs about, bring all of your Overlords into the safe haven of Spore

Colonies. Be sure to bolster the Spore Colonies with Hydralisks since Spore Colonies alone cannot hope to fend off a sizeable force of Corsairs, especially if the Corsairs have Disruption Web available.

Observers

Observers serve as the eyes and ears of a Protoss commander and should be destroyed on sight. Use Overlords to detect their presence, then use a single Scourge to destroy the Observer before it can escape. Killing Observers on sight will help prevent the enemy from spying on you, and also help make your Lurkers and other burrowed units more effective.

Archons

Archons are the physical manifestations of Protoss psionic might and are deadly to tightly packed groups of units, particularly Mutalisks. Lone Archons do not present too much of a problem, but in groups Archons become a definite threat to the Zerg.

Use Guardians to attack from afar, but don't make the mistake of approaching them over open ground. If the Guardians come within Archon attack range, they can be ravaged as easily as the Mutalisk. If you have no Guardians available, use Hydralisks and Zerglings in sheer numbers to overwhelm them.

Archons are immune to the effects of Spawn Broodling and are nearly immune to the effects of Plague and Dark Swarm. Ensnare can be used to slow the Archons down, and their slowed approach can allow your Guardians and Hydralisks more firing opportunities before the Archons finally close to their own firing range.

Dark Archons

The enigmatic Dark Archons are not seen too often, but when they are, be very wary. The Dark Archon possesses an arsenal of abilities that can wreak havoc on the Zerg ranging from the immobilizing Maelstrom, the Queen and Defiler killing Feedback, and the all powerful Mind Control. Maelstrom can stop any Zerg unit in its tracks for a few moments, allowing nearby enemy Protoss units to hammer your forces. Feedback can, depending on the target unit's energy stores and vitality, instantly destroy a Queen or Defiler by turning the unit's energy against itself and creating a fatal backlash. The most feared ability of the Dark Archon is Mind Control. The Dark Archon can instantly remove a Zerg force's detection support if an escorting Overlord is Mind Controlled. Even worse, should a Dark Archon capture and whisk away a Zerg Drone, the Protoss can build an entire Zerg brood under their control.

All these threats make the Dark Archon a unit to be feared. However, the Dark Archon has no means of physically protecting itself. Should its energy stores be depleted, the Dark Archon becomes a very vulnerable target. Use Zerglings, Hydralisks, Mutalisks or Guardians to quickly dispatch a Dark Archon whenever possible.

Carriers

Carriers are always a threat when they come into play, but the Zerg have the means to take care of them. Hydralisks beneath a Dark Swarm can do wonders against Carriers, but be sure to target the Carriers and not the interceptors. If the Interceptors can be distracted, Scourge can make excellent Carrier killers. Only 5 Scourge will take out one Carrier.

Countering Shield Battery Tactics

The Protoss have no means of repairing or health regeneration. However, they can quickly recharge their Plasma Shields with the aid of a Shield Battery. Many Protoss lives are saved with the use of these Shield Batteries and the Zerg should be wary of their use. When invading a Protoss establishment, keep a watchful eye out for Shield Batteries. Should you decide to invade, make sure you have enough units to overwhelm the Protoss even if they recharge their Shields during the battle.

Scouts are notorious for being avidly used in conjunction with Shield Batteries. They can quickly strike a Zerg base, retreat to recharge, then return to the frontlines for more combat. To prevent this type of tactic, attack the Scouts with Mutalisks, Devourers or Hydralisks at an angle that blocks their escape route to a Shield Battery. Hopefully you can destroy the Scouts before they can retreat back to safety.

Zerg vs. Zerg

To defeat another Zerg brood, you must know the full extent of the strengths and weaknesses of each unit and structure. Since you and your enemy both have the same units and strategies at your disposal, expect a fiercely fought combat. Production speed is extremely important, as is the manner you decide to develop your Brood structures.

Overlord Scouting

Early reconnaissance with the first Overlord is a risky tactic, but the tactic can really pay off. If you can find your opponent early and see what they are building, you'll be able to adjust your own building order

to properly counter or exploit the enemy's starting tactic. This provides you with an important, tangible advantage over your enemy who does not have this information. Once over your enemy's base, your Overlord will not have much to fear until your foe begins producing Hydralisks or building Spore Colonies. At this point your Overlord should retreat to a safe distance as soon as possible to avoid being destroyed.

The drawback of early Overlord scouting is the possible revealing of your position to the enemy. This gives them the opportunity to plan an offensive or defensive strategy of their own based on your location and what you could do from those starting spots. Two starting locations very close to each other usually results in a brutal Zergling rush fest. Starting spots that are a little further away usually results in Sunken Colonies being built, then both players traveling up the tech tree.

Early Game Disruption

One of the quirks in a Zerg vs. Zerg encounter is that every player can build on each other's Creep, even the enemy's. If you can quickly find the enemy with an Overlord or Drone scout, you can send your own Drones over to your opponent's Creep and begin building Creep Colonies. With this tactic you'll need a quick Spawning Pool to convert those Creep Colonies into Sunken Colonies. If done quickly enough, you should be able to severely hamper an opponent's early game build and strategies.

Burrowing

The ability to burrow can be very effective all throughout a game. You can use it to save your Drones when your resource areas are attacked. Once your defending units have secured the area, the Drones can unburrow and continue their work. You can also use it to quickly burrow Zerglings around the map to keep an eye on key expansion locations.

Burrowing can also be useful for ambushing enemy forces, hiding extra Drones at potential expansion spots, and protecting valuable ground units such as the Defiler. Watch for enemy Overlords that may be searching for burrowed units. Should a burrowed force be attacked while underground, they face a slight disadvantage. Unburrowing takes a small amount of time, and during this time your units are vulnerable to attack.

Zerglings

Zerglings are the first available attack unit for the Zerg. With their extremely low cost and ability to spawn in pairs Zerglings can terrorize enemy colonies very early in a game. Their power comes from their sheer numbers, and when upgraded with Adrenal Glands (faster attack rate) and Metabolic Boost (faster movement) Zerglings are truly an awesome combat force. If built in very large numbers (100+), Zerglings can be used to completely flood an enemy base and tear everything down in a very short period of time. Even Hydralisks, Mutalisks, Guardians or Ultralisks have a difficult time dealing with such an immense number of Zerglings.

To counter a "flood" tactic of that magnitude, use Lurkers as your primary counter unit. Their Subterranean Spines can rip through entire waves of Zerglings before the Zerglings can get close enough to cause major damage. If Lurkers are not available, you'll need masses of your own Zerglings supported by Sunken Colonies, Hydralisks, or Mutalisks to fend off that type of attack. Use choke points to your advantage when stopping floods of Zerglings, as using favorable terrain may sometimes be the only way to stop a massive Zergling rush. On open ground where the Zerglings can surround and outnumber ground units five or even ten times to one, Adrenalized Zerglings will definitely have an advantage.

In most land based maps, you will want to continue Zergling production throughout the game, not just at the beginning. Combining Zerglings with Dark Swarm is another extremely useful tactic and if your opponent is using Hydralisks or other ranged attack units to make up the core of their forces, Zerglings covered by Dark Swarm will make quick work of them or remain protected while razing an enemy base.

Hydralisks

As the most versatile ground unit for the Zerg, the Hydralisk appears in almost every Zerg battle. Understand all the strengths and weaknesses of the Hydralisk so that you can exploit them to your advantage. For more details, check the [Hydralisk](#) section.

Probably even more so than with Zerglings, having the clear advantage in Hydralisk numbers will determine the outcome of a Zerg vs. Zerg battle. In addition to just relying on sheer numbers, a wily Zerg Brood will use their Hydralisks creatively to gain victory. Set up choke point ambushes with Burrowing, use them to drop on the enemy from behind, or maybe use them as a decoy force so that units like Mutalisks or Guardians can accomplish a task elsewhere. Use the versatility and usefulness of the Hydralisk to the full extent and they can save you in any Zerg vs. Zerg encounter.

Stopping Hydralisks can be a little tricky, particularly in ground battles. Use Plague, Ensnare, and Zerglings with Dark Swarm cover as often as

possible against masses of Hydralisks. If you have Mutalisks or Guardians available, use the terrain to your advantage and attack from over ridges, water, or space to dwindle their numbers without taking massive return fire.

Lurkers

Lurkers are excellent tools against the other Zerg ground units. They can tear Zerglings and Hydralisks to shreds and even the mighty Ultralisk has something to fear from the Lurker. Use them for colony defense and ambushing invading forces at choke points or high ground ramps. The one drawback when using them against other Zerg is that any Zerg opponent will typically have an abundance of Overlords to detect a burrowed Lurker. Once detected, the Lurker is vulnerable to air attack from Mutalisks and Guardians as well as the Spawn Broodling ability of the Queen.

Mutalisks

Much like the Hydralisk, the Mutalisk is also an extremely versatile Zerg unit, only the air is the Mutalisk's domain. Mutalisks are not hatched cheaply, but their ability to fly and attack both ground and air proves most useful in a battle between Zerg broods. Keep several pairs of Scourge with your Mutalisk groups at all times on the chance that they run into an enemy Mutalisk group. The Scourge will help tilt the tide of battle in your favor.

Should your opponent build masses of Zerglings, Hydralisks, and defensive Sunken Colonies, your best bet will be to build Mutalisks. First take care of any Hydralisks and Spore Colonies present then finish off the rest with relative ease. If the Hydralisks outnumber your Mutalisks, use your enemy's structures for your own benefit. Maneuver your Mutalisks in circles and pick off Hydralisks one by one as they try to make their way through their own base. If you have the advantage in numbers, just get it over with and attack the entire force head on and continue with the razing at your leisure.

Mutalisks tend to tightly stack when attacking a target and are particularly vulnerable to area affect attacks or abilities. Ensnare, Plague and Devourer Acid Spores can all quickly affect your entire Mutalisk horde. Dark Swarm covered Hydralisks can also be deadly to Mutalisks over open ground.

While Spore Colonies can deal significant damage to Mutalisks, the Colonies must be built in large clusters to effectively repel a large Mutalisk group. If the Spore Colonies are spread apart and not all in range of each other, large Mutalisk forces can pick them off one by one from the outer perimeter to the colony core.

Scourge

Scourge can be the key in a heavy air based battle. They can quickly destroy an invading Guardian force and any Devourers that may follow as escorts. Scourge make the perfect Overlord killers. Depending on how closely your opponent keeps his population count to the population limit, Overlord hunting with Scourge can quickly cripple an enemy's unit production. Scourge do not work as well against large groups of Mutalisks, especially if the Mutalisks are well managed. If an enemy Mutalisk force is distracted by your own Hydralisks, Mutalisks or Devourers, then the Scourge may come in handy to destroy Mutalisks one by one.

If you opponent uses Scourge heavily, the best counter is Scourge hunting with a few of your own Mutalisks or Overlords. Use the Scourge's quick tendency to auto-acquire enemy targets to lure them into traps or suicide traps. If more than two Scourge impact and destroy an Overlord, your enemy has wasted a large number of Scourge. Quick moving Mutalisks can also lure Scourge over your own Hydralisks and Spore Colonies. Since Scourge require extensive Vespene gas to produce, causing your foe to lose Scourge in such a fashion can be quite painful to your enemy's economy.

Overlord Hunting

The Overlord serves many different functions for the Zerg and should be protected whenever possible. Unless you have a definite need for early scouting, try not to send Overlords out by themselves. This makes them particularly vulnerable to Overlord hunts and every time you lose one, you lose eight control units, a potential transport, and a detector. Keep them within the safety of Spore and Sunken Colonies or with an attack force adequate enough to protect them. One thing NOT to do with Overlords is try and hide them in a corner of the map, hoping the enemy will not notice. Most experienced players will find them and left unprotected, you can lose an entire group of Overlords in a matter of seconds depending on the attacking units.

On the flip side, if your opponent disregards the advice above, take every opportunity to hunt down any stray Overlords your enemy might have around the map. A pair of Scourge can destroy an Overlord before your enemy realizes what's happened. Packs of Mutalisks can quickly

travel around the map and eliminate any unprotected Overlord presence with ease.

Queens

The Queen's abilities are quite useful against other Zerg broods and should be used at every opportunity. Since most Zerg units travel in tight packs, they can be ensnared en masse, making the units ripe for attack. Enemy Ultralisks or Hydralisks can be easily dealt with using Spawn Broodling. Parasite is extremely helpful when trying to keep an eye on enemy movement and unit production. Use Parasites on Overlords to gain their detection abilities, especially on Overlords in enemy bases protected by Lurkers. Parasites can also keep an eye on any transporting activity of the affected Overlord. With a few fully charged Queens, you should be able to Parasite the majority of an enemy's Overlord population.

To deal with enemy Queens, the best solution the use of pairs of Scourge to pick the Queens off one by one. Mutalisks also work well as Queen hunters, but they run a higher risk of being hit by an Ensnare or being parasited.

Guardians

Guardians are a typical unit used when breaking into a well defended Zerg colony. With their long ranged attacks, Guardians have little to fear from defending Spore Colonies or enemy ground troops. They do, however, need to worry about any Mutalisks, Scourge or Devourers that may be nearby. For that contingency, always keep your Guardians escorted by Mutalisks, Scourge or Devourers of your own.

Devourers

Devourers are an excellent answer to enemy Mutalisks. Their splashing Acid Spores can seriously cripple a group of Mutalisks, making them vulnerable to attack from your own Mutalisks and Scourge. Devourers also work very well against Guardians, slowing down their attacks before the Devourers can finish them off.

If you need to deal with enemy Devourers, Scourge again prove to be the best answer. If you can catch the Devourers over open ground, you can also use Hydralisk groups to destroy them. If using Hydralisks, position your horde beneath the Devourers before opening fire to cause the most damage possible before the Devourers can escape.

Ultralisks

Ultralisks can be quite fearsome, especially in groups. Use them to take down enemy Sunken/Spore Colony defenses, ravaging packs of Zerglings, or Hydralisks. They are unaffected by Dark Swarm and Plague is not as devastating to Ultralisks and their 400 hit points.

Enemy Ultralisks can be easily dealt with using a Queen's Spawn Broodling ability. If Queens aren't available, use Mutalisks and Guardians to destroy Ultralisks from the air.

Nydus Canals

In the late game, Nydus Canals become a key threat for both sides. Their ability to quickly transport units from one location to another can nullify the mobility advantage a Mutalisk force possesses.

One of the strange properties of the Nydus Canal is its ability to be built on anyone's Creep, friendly or not. In the case of the Nydus Canal, all you need to build the exit node is to see the enemy Creep. Using this tactic, you can invade their base from within using all the ground forces you have available. This can be especially useful on "island" maps where transporting large numbers of units can be tricky or impossible if your foe has a superior air force.

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Compiled by Gde Eka Pradipta & D Edwin Tosansyah July, 1999.