

## A6 README

LINK TO PROTOTYPE [HERE](#)



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# Grow Your Good Times.

Welcome to your very own, personalized virtual memory garden! The Arbor app is a place for documenting, reflecting on, and sharing your past, positive memories. In our needfinding, we found that there is a tendency to dwell on negative memories, and a desire for a space to reflect positively on the past, and cement uplifting experiences for the future. With Arbor, we hope to provide just that: a garden of memories as rich as your own life experiences, that prompts you to engage with your past in a healthy and regular fashion.

Here, memories are captured in the form of trees. They start off as seeds, which you can acquire at the marketplace. When you plant a seed in an empty plot in the garden, you can log the memory it represents by adding text, photos, videos, and even embed a song that captures the right vibe. As this seed grows into a tree over time, it then starts to bear fruit, which reminds you of the memory as you feed it to your character to keep them happy and healthy. You can also share memories with others, by sending seeds through the mail to your contacts, which they can then plant in their respective gardens.

# Operating Instructions

## Navigation

To move around the garden, you can press on the white arrows present on the sides of the screen. In menus, tap on objects and buttons to select them, or press the “x” to move back one screen.

## Town Area

The central screen of the app is the town area, where your character can interact with several buildings. In the top left corner is **your home**, which would typically be a customizable indoor location where you could change your character’s outfit or browse through your memories by viewing an almanac of seeds. In the top right, there is the **farmer’s market**, where you can acquire seeds that allow you to plant memories. In the bottom left, there is the **post office**, where you can view incoming mail from friends on the app, or share memories by sending seeds through the mail. Lastly, there is the **general store** in the bottom right, where you can unlock accessories, clothing, seeds, and pets for your character! Due to the fact that this is a medium-fi prototype, your home and the general store are not yet functional.

## Garden Areas

To the left and right of the town are the garden areas, where you can plant memories or review them by revisiting trees. To plant memories, simply tap on an empty plot and log the associated event. As the seeds grow into trees, they will start to bear fruit, which will trigger a notification prompting you to tap on the tree and review whichever memory is associated with it. In the final version of the app, you will be able to tap on any tree to view its associated memory, as well as move trees around to suit your design preferences.

# Tools

We relied on two main tools for developing this prototype:

## 1. PISKEL

The first tool we used was Piskel, an application for creating, editing, and animating pixel art. Given that Arbor is completely realized in pixel art, we relied on this tool almost exclusively to create the app's environment.



Some pros of this service were: easy development of assets; ability to create multiple keyframes for animation; ability to export as png, sprite sheet, or gif; and easy to resize graphics. At the same time, some cons were the limited selection of design tools and the fact that complex design features are harder to use.

## 2. Figma

The second tool we relied on was Figma, which we used to host our medium-fi prototype, as well as our assets and brand materials.

Using Figma allowed for a collaborative and intuitive means for realizing our prototype. Although it had a slight learning curve, it allowed us to easily resize/crop assets, and otherwise design



for a mobile audience.

# Limitations

For the sake of time and complexity of implementation on Figma, several aspects of our product were left out of the medium-fi prototype.

1. **Animation:** Since we used Figma to implement our prototype, we decided to leave out animations of the assets (i.e. swaying of the trees, movement of water, character movements) which would otherwise be present, as this would be difficult to animate.
2. **Other Memories:** Furthermore, in the actual app, you would be able to tap on any tree in the garden, and view a popup of the associated memory. However, this was not deemed relevant to our task flows, and would require hard-coding a large amount of memories.
3. **My Home:** In the final app, you will be able to tap on your character's house, which is in the top left corner of the town. From here, there will be a customizable interior which houses an Almanac of all the seeds and a mirror for changing your character's outfit. Given that implementing this would not affect our three task flows, and would require creating a large amount of pixel art assets, we decided to leave it out for now.
4. **General Store:** Another feature we left out of the town area (for similar reasons to the above) was the general store, where users will be able to unlock new outfits, seed types, and pets for their character.
5. **Making Friends:** Since our app does not have a user base, we had to hard-code friends into the product.
6. **More Roaming Space:** In the final app, you will also be able to move up and down the farm as well. However, this was not necessary to showcase the functionality of the app.
7. **Information Inputs:** As discussed in the next section, inputs for logging a memory are hard-coded in, as the Figma prototype does not support this feature.
8. **Background Music:** In the final version of the app, there would be music in the background to help immerse the user in the environment.
9. **Aesthetic Customization:** In the final version of the app, the user would be able to move objects around in the garden, change their character's clothing, and customize their house's interior. Given that these were all complex aesthetic changes, we did not include them in the medium-fi prototype.

# Hard-Coded/Wizard of Oz Features

Several aspects of our prototype were hard-coded, so as to maintain the audience's immersion in the product while also illustrating use cases for the product:

1. **Multi-media Inputs:** Due to implementation on Figma, our prototype does not support multimedia inputs, and thus we hard-coded text, photo, and embedded media when planting seeds and reviewing memories.
2. **Social Component:** Since our app does not yet have a user base, we hard-coded friends into the system. Thus, if you tap on the post office, there is hard-coded mail from friends, and a list of contacts you can send seeds to.
3. **Customization of Garden:** Seeing as our Figma prototype does not support full customization of the character or garden (as this would involve exponentially upscaling the number of screens we would have to generate), the character's outfit and the layout of the garden are hard-coded in, as if the user set up their app this way.
4. **Seed Inventory:** For similar reasons as the previous point, we had to hard-code the seeds in the user's inventory at the time of planting or sending mail, as keeping track of the seeds they acquired at the marketplace would be too complex for a Figma prototype.

Thank you for reading, and **have fun!**