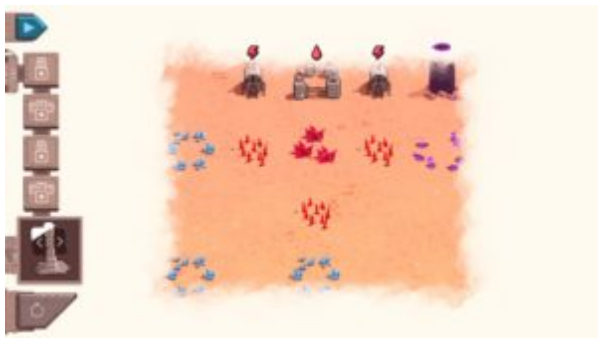


Mars Power Industries

2022/02/20

Mars Power Industries is a relaxing puzzle game that surprised me with the subtle way the game changes throughout. Also, it doesn't hold your hand while doing this, which I could appreciate. The difficulty isn't too hard, so you can probably play through this in a few hours. It's available on android (on which I played it, version 5.8.2), iOS and PC. It has 150 levels now and the game costs 2 euro (2022-02-14). For that price I'd definitely recommend it if you like zen-like puzzlers with a good atmosphere.

The basics



Playing grid and building queue

So what's the game about? Well, basically you are expanding a colony on Mars by powering up new colony buildings. For each level you get a queue of possible buildings and then you place these in order in a small grid shaped map. Graphically it's simple, but pretty and it definitely brings across the theme of building a colony on Mars nicely. I also appreciate the animations related to the storyline. They are cool and add to the experience.

Subtle changes

This happens by introducing new mechanics once in a while which is to be expected of any puzzle game. However these additions are generally very thematic and change the gameplay (and even the user interface) way more than I expected. There are also multiple hidden (sets of) levels with more different mechanics that you can unlock. For instance if you achieve certain bonus objectives which weren't immediately obvious initially. There's also a secret ending which I did end up looking up because clues for it are pretty obtuse.

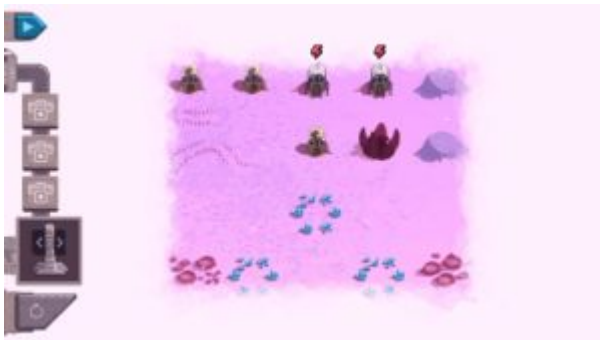
No hand holding



Both level and story telling

Another thing I really enjoyed was that the game didn't hold your hand too much. For new mechanics you generally just did a bit of trial and error to figure out how they worked. This made the experience for me more thematic (no distractions) and it made me feel like I was being smart. Because of that I think it I ended up enjoying it more then if everything had been explained along the way. This does not apply to the storyline though, which was way too vague for me to be interesting. Just like 2001: Space Odyssey on which it is apparently based. So I would have preferred something more understandable there.

Other thoughts



You might even meet some aliens

- The level design is excellent in general. No level really feels the same and there are a bunch of pretty hard one's that took me a few tries and had me stuck for a bit. Also: Apparently every level can be solved within 5 moves maximum. I like that.
- The level changing screen ("YEAR XX") is pretty ugly / basic. I am not sure whether that's a conscious choice. It didn't really bother me, but I'm curious whether that's intentional. And as I am already talking about not that important things: The achievements are not that interesting.

- The game is interestingly currently not that highly rated on Google Play. That might have to do with the no hand holding as that's probably not for everyone.