

# Squirrel

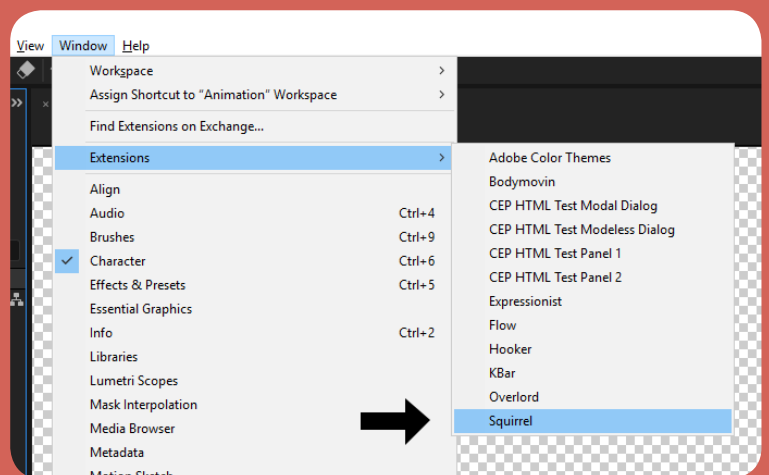
## *The Layer Tree Browser*

V1.5 ©2018 Mike Overbeck

### *Installation:*

If you haven't already, download the ZXP Installer from aescrpts + aeplugins:  
<https://aescrpts.com/learn/zxp-installer/>

ZXP Installer will instruct you on how to install Squirrel. To launch Squirrel, navigate to Windows/ Extensions/ Squirrel. You may use Squirrel in trial mode, or if you have purchased a license, you can enter it and use Squirrel indefinitely without any restrictions. Trial mode has a time limitation and disables color labeling.



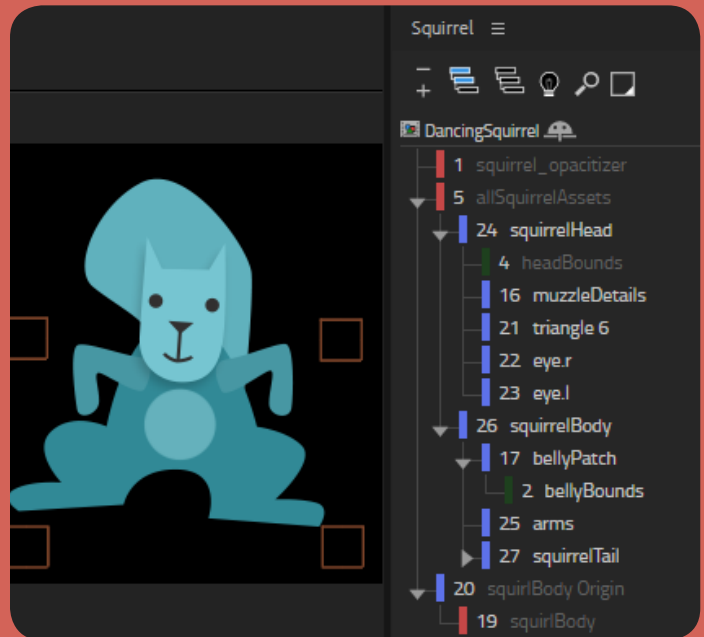
### *Using Squirrel:*

Squirrel is a layer heirarchy manager for After Effects. With Squirrel, compositions with many layers are far easier to navigate, and you'll no longer find yourself pre-comping layers as a form of housekeeping. Squirrel will look familiar to people who use the outliner or object manager from 3D applications, or layer managers in any other Adobe app.

Interacting with Squirrel is pretty intuitive. When you launch it, you'll get an empty panel. To refresh it with the data from an open comp, just select your comp or time-line and wave your cursor over it.

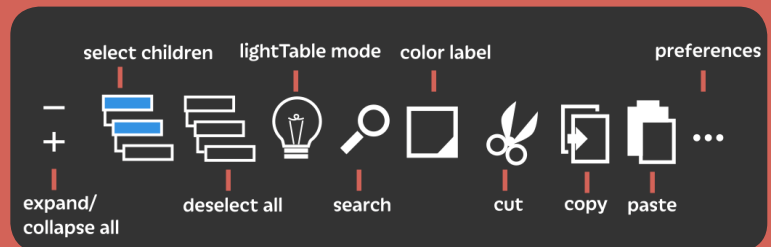
Squirrel will populate with a vertical treeview list. You can easily manage parenting by dragging and dropping layers within Squirrel.

Clicking on a carrot (those little triangles) expands and contracts its hierarchy. Alt-clicking it will expand or contract them recursively. Clicking on a layer will select it. Shift-click to select multiple sibling layers. Command-click to select non-continuous or non-sibling layers. You can alt-click a layer to rename it. You can unparent any layer by dragging it above its parent. If a layer has a left or right arrow next to it, that means it is active before or after the current time. Click on that arrow to move your playhead to the nearest time when that layer is active.



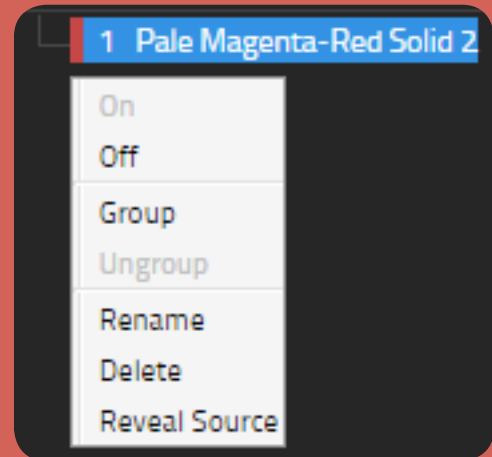
### Squirrel has a handy dandy toolbar:

- The expand/collapse all button does just that.
- Select Children will select immediate children of your selected layers. Holding alt while clicking will select child layers and deselect parent layers. Holding shift will select all children recursively.
- Deselect All will deselect everything. Holding Alt while clicking will invert your selection.
- LightTable mode is enabled by clicking the lightbulb icon. It puts a temporary effect on all your layers (except for those assigned as trackmattes) that reduces their opacity. This is the native Transform effect. When you select a layer in LightTable mode, it disables that effect giving you a clear view of your selection. Disabling lightTable mode removes the temporary effect from all layers.
- The search bar is revealed with the magnifying glass icon. Use it to search through your layers by name.
- the Color label icon lets you quickly reassign the color labeling of your selected layers.
- Cut and Copy will cut or copy your selected layers. Holding shift will also cut/copy child layers recursively. Layers in the clipboard will be sorted to preserve the current stacking order when pasted.
- Paste will paste your clipboard. Same as Edit/Paste.
- Preferences is the same as the preferences in the flyout menu, for easier access.



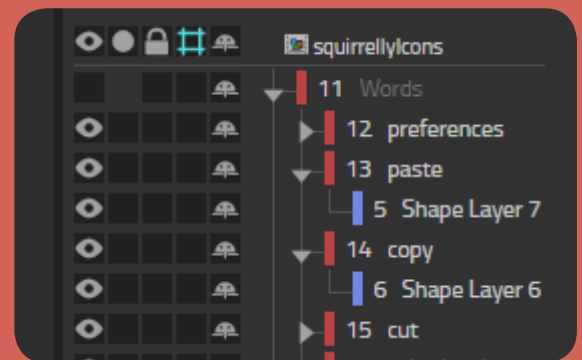
## Right-click any layer in Squirrel to bring up its context menu:

- You can turn selected layers on and off. Equivalent to clicking the eyeball icon in the timeline.
- Grouping selected layers produces a parent null placed in the average position of your selected layers. Its default name is Squirrel Null. All layers will be parented to this null, which you may rename and collapse. You may select any parent layer and choose Ungroup. This will unparent all of its immediate children.
- Rename allows you to rename your layer. Confirm by hitting Enter or clicking OK. Cancel by clicking Cancel or hitting esc.
- Delete will simply delete your selected layers.
- Reveal Source will reveal the source footage of your selected layer in the Project panel, if that layer is a footage item.



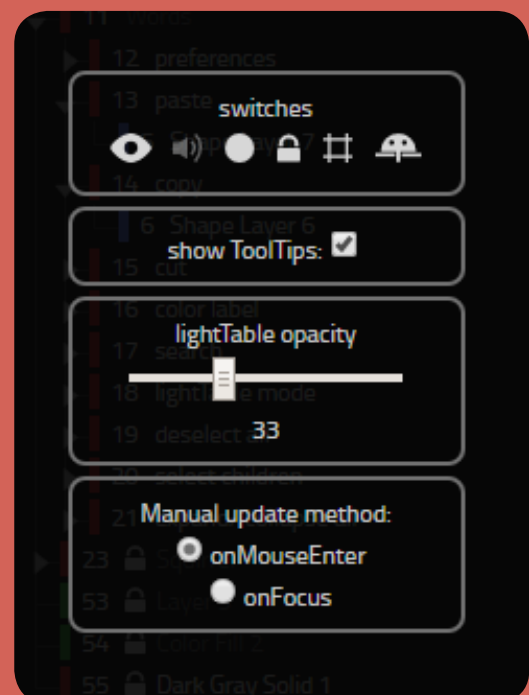
## NEW! Switches!

- In your preferences, you can choose which switches you would like to have visible.
- click-dragging can toggle many switches at once.
- Holding down shift will toggle switches in child nodes recursively.



## Find Squirrel preferences in the flyout menu:

- Choose which switch columns you would like present in your switches panel.
- Show ToolTips will toggle tooltips for tools in the toolbar.
- Adjust lightTable opacity to assign opacity of non-selected layers when in lightTable mode.
- For Manual update method, you can choose the default onMouseEnter mode (refresh by hovering mouse over panel) or onFocus (refresh by clicking inside Squirrel panel).
- All preferences are saved as you adjust them. Exit the preferences window by clicking the X.



I'm excited to be able to share this powerful tool with you. If you'd like to check out some more of my tools available, go to my author page at aescrpts + aeplugins.  
[aescrpts.com/authors/m-p/mike-overbeck/](https://aescrpts.com/authors/m-p/mike-overbeck/)

*-Mike Overbeck*

Squirrel would not have been possible without the help of JsTree, a free open-source jQuery plugin. It allows the creation and customization of interactive web-based treeviews. Go to [www.jstree.com](http://www.jstree.com) for more info.

Special thanks to Zack Lovatt, rendertom, Kyle Martinez, and Lloyd Alvarez for their color labeling snippet help! Thanks to my beta testers - full list in my About panel.