

Light

Correct lighting is the single most important factor in getting *Nepenthes* to produce pitchers.

Use bright light from a south or west window.

Alternatively, use artificial lighting. Both work fine.

Nepenthes will even grow happily outside in the spring and summer, so long as they stay under shade. Bring them in before fall.

Also keep in mind that *Nepenthes* may stop pitching in the shorter, darker days of winter.

Humidity

Some more specialized *Nepenthes* require especially high humidity, but many can grow perfectly well in homes.

A terrarium is also an option, but remember that *Nepenthes* can grow quite large!

Feeding

Some people use a weak fertilizer solution in the pitchers. It's best to learn more before attempting to fertilize—and go easy at first!



Nepenthes miranda



Nepenthes ventrata




Nepenthes sanguinea

Photos by @bobertobeer



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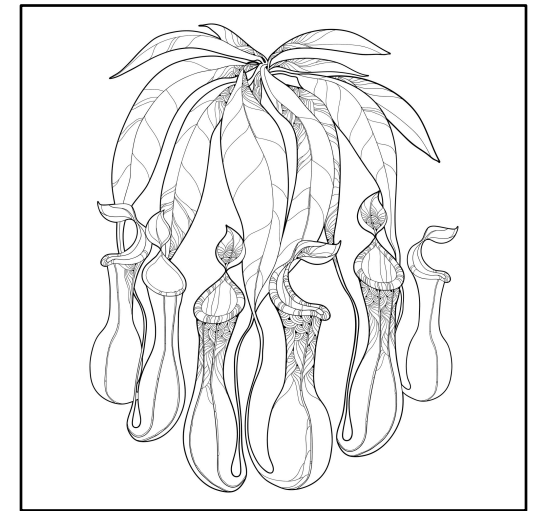
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Nepenthes ("Monkey Cups")

With 171 species and counting, *Nepenthes*—or Asian Pitcher Plants—are far more varied than the American or Australian pitcher plants. They're also completely unrelated to them.



Pitcher plants are an excellent example of what is known in biology as convergent evolution; that is, two unrelated groups of plants evolving similar mechanisms to meet similar needs. Many have strikingly different lower (rosette) and upper (vine) pitchers.

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Trapping

While the details vary, Nepenthes employ a combination of nectar and color to attract insects. Slippery surfaces ensure insects stay trapped. The plant secretes a pool of digestive enzymes. This liquid is viscous, making it very difficult for prey to escape. Many Nepenthes also have lids to prevent the liquid from being diluted by rainwater.



A few have even evolved to serve as “toilets” for forest shrews. Among these is a pitcher that has abandoned insect trapping altogether, to serve instead as a bat “hotel,” reaping the benefits of their high-nitrogen feces.

Types

Nepenthes can be divided into two main groups according to their native habitats: Highland and Lowland Nepenthes.

Highland Nepenthes, which grow on mountaintops, require cool temperatures, from 45-65 degrees—though many can withstand higher temperatures for short periods. They all appreciate a nighttime drop in temperature.

Lowland Nepenthes prefer nighttime temperatures of at least 70 degrees, and daytime temperatures in the 80s and 90s.

These can be challenging to provide for. However, there are intermediate species and hybrids which are much more tolerant of typical home conditions.

Three of the easiest are Nepenthes “ventrata,” Nepenthes “miranda,” and Nepenthes “sanguinea”, which has many different forms (see photos on back).

Soil

Unlike sarracenias, most Nepenthes are not bog plants. They prefer a light, well-aerated medium. There are as many different combinations as there are growers, but a few that work well are:

- Coconut fiber and Sphagnum moss
- Sphagnum moss and orchid bark
- Live Sphagnum, chunky peat, large perlite, and silica sand.
- Bark, sphagnum, and wood charcoal.

Nepenthes also resent root disturbance, so repot very carefully!

Water

Unlike bog carnivorous plants, you never want to leave Nepenthes standing in water. Instead, water frequently (once the top surface is dry) and allow them to drain completely. Always use a pot with a drainage hole.